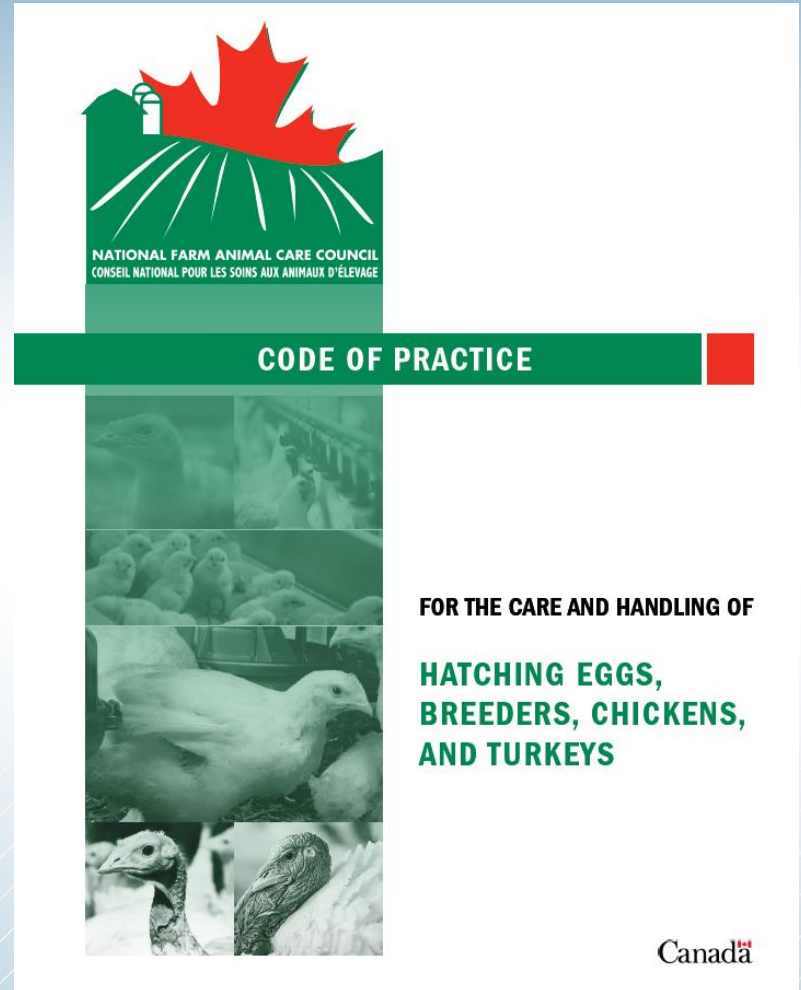


New Poultry Code of Practice



Background

- > Chicken Farmers of Canada (CFC) has been working with the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) to update the current poultry code of practice
- > The Codes of Practice are nationally developed guidelines for the care and handling of farm animals
- > Involved a 60 day public comment period when anyone (farmers, general public, consumers, associations and companies) could comment on the Code

Background

- Diverse group of stakeholders involved: farmers, transporters, veterinarians, animal welfare and enforcement agencies, processors, governments and researchers
 - » Credibility
- Consultations took place with the Production Committee, provincial boards, and Directors throughout
- CFC was actively involved in Code Committee discussions and represented the interests of farmers at Code meetings

Background

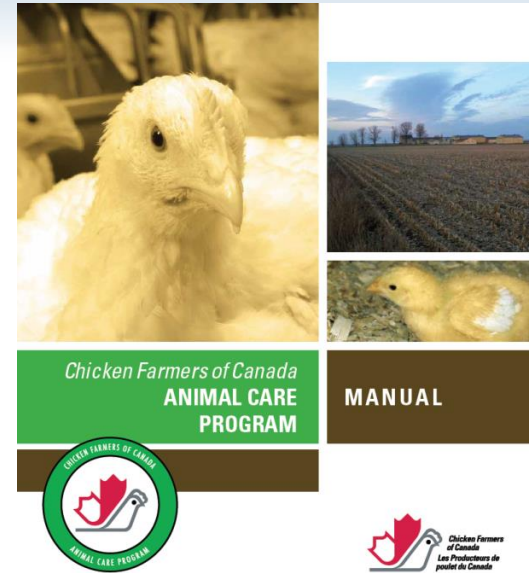
- The Code process is collaborative and consensus- based
 - » Represents a balance between the interests of all stakeholders involved
- The standards are based on the best available science, taking into account what is practical and manageable

Significance of Codes

- Some provinces incorporate the Codes by reference in regulations (Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, PEI)
- Used to determine 'generally accepted agricultural practices' in law
 - » Example: OSPCA Act
- Helps to maintain one national standard for farmers
 - » The Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council support the CFC Animal Care Program because it is based on the Code

What's changed

- The ACP will be updated to be based on this new Code
- Here are the highlights of the main changes in the new Code compared to the Animal Care Program
 - » Note: Sections are divided differently and in a different order in the Code. Highlights will be provided according to the ACP sections
 - » The Code includes MD (requirements), and HR items- only the MD elements will be included here



Feed and water

- > No major changes in the Code

Temperature

- Bird behaviour must be observed and necessary corrective action taken as soon as possible if birds are displaying signs of thermal discomfort
 - » The ACP describes what to observe for thermal discomfort but does not have a specific requirement about it

Air Quality

- Same requirement to take steps if ammonia is too high, but the harmful level is provided as a range: 20 to 25 ppm (instead of just 25ppm)
 - » The range is in line with ammonia test strips, which are sensitive between 20 and 25ppm
 - » The wording in this section indicates that a monitoring device, and not just smell, should be used to detect ammonia
 - Research has shown that an individuals' sense of smell can become accustomed to the odour

Lighting

- After the first 24 hours chicks must have 1 hour of darkness
- The dark period must be gradually increased to a minimum of 4 hours by day 5
- Minimum 4 consecutive hours of darkness must be provided from day 5 until 7 days prior to catching
- Darkness = 20% of the intensity of the light period
 - » Example: if daytime is 10lux, night time must be no more than 2lux

Lighting

- Provides the range of 5 to 10 lux as adequate daytime lighting level
- Light intensity may only be reduced temporarily to correct abnormal behaviour
- Light control systems must be inspected regularly and maintained in working order

Lighting

- This represents a change from the current ACP, but is in line with recommendations in Cobb and Ross production manuals
- Significant research exists to support these lighting requirements, both in terms of animal welfare and productivity
- International programs all require 4 or more hours of darkness regardless of the feed type

Back-up Systems

- No major changes in the Code

Stocking Density

- Density limits remain at 31 and 38 kg/m²
- Conditions for going above 31kg/m² are the same, with the addition of developing a flock health plan (described in Code section 5.1)
- Health and injury data, if available from processors, must be used to determine if density is contributing to recurring health or welfare problems (e.g. foot pad and breast lesions, cellulitis, bruises)

Housing system and litter management

- No major changes in the Code

Bird monitoring and handling

- Birds must not be carried solely by the head, neck, wing, or tail feathers

Health care practices

- > Culls, in addition to mortalities, must be recorded daily
- > Appendix B in the Code has a table listing acceptable euthanasia methods
 - » Almost all methods are acceptable with conditions (exception is anesthetic overdose)
 - Example: with cervical dislocation, crushing of the neck bones must not occur
 - Example: mechanical devices must be purpose-designed and appropriate for the size of the bird
 - » When equipment is used for euthanasia it must be properly maintained and proven effective
 - The committee members generally agreed that proven effective means that peer reviewed research is needed

Catching and loading

- Flocks must be evaluated for fitness prior to transport
 - » Birds unfit for transport must be euthanized, separated or transported with special provisions for treatment
- Wet birds must not be loaded in cold weather if there is a risk they will become chilled

Catching and loading

- The flock and environmental conditions, as well as expected journey duration, must be taken into consideration when loading birds
- Birds not loaded for transport and not euthanized must continue to be cared for in accordance with the Code (feed, water, temperature, ventilation)

Catching and loading

- When building new barns or renovating, take into account the way birds are moved to facilitate safe and humane transfer
- Openings through which birds pass must be large enough so birds are transferred in a way that minimizes injury
- Driveways and yards must be maintained to facilitate unobstructed, safe, and easy access by transport vehicles
 - » These three points are already described in the ACP, but are not MD elements

Pest control, biosecurity and sanitation

- No major changes in the Code
 - » All covered by OFFSAP

Workers and management

- A code of conduct covering bird welfare must be developed and communicated
 - » Appendix A provides a template
- Personnel must be monitored and receive additional training as necessary

Summary

- Main changes in the new Code are in terms of:
 - » Lighting
 - » Euthanasia
 - » Catching and loading
 - » Ammonia monitoring
- CFC is consulting with provincial boards, the Production Committee, and CFC Directors as the Animal Care Program is updated
- Changes to the ACP will be communicated to producers well ahead of being implemented



***Chicken Farmers
of Canada***

***Les Producteurs de
poulet du Canada***