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Board of Directors Update

Your Board of Directors would like to thank their fellow egg farmers, government and industry representatives, for the fantastic turnout at the three recent AEP Regional Meetings. It is always great to see and hear from producers, to gain valuable insight and input, which helps AEP address the challenges facing the Alberta egg industry.

The Regional Meetings are also a tremendous opportunity to educate and inform producers. EFC provided a detailed description about all the changes to various on-farm programs, ARD provided an overview of the challenges posed by phosphorus and manure, and the Pullet Growers of Canada provided a status update. AEP staff discussed the future of hen housing in Canada and provided quota, levy, market development, research and marketing updates. Dr. Darko Mitevski was also on-hand with interactive demonstrations to remind producers how important it is to have an effective bio-security program in place, to maximize hen health and food safety. Thanks to all who attended!

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PURPOSE OF THE AEP

AEP exists so there will be an environment in which Alberta egg producers can thrive within the Canadian industry, at a cost that demonstrates good stewardship of resources.

AEP OFFICE HOURS

Our office will be **closed on Monday, February 20th** for Family Day and **closed on Friday, April 6th** for Good Friday. We hope this will not cause any inconvenience.

EGG PRICE UPDATE

Effective: **September 4th, 2011**
(Week #37)

Grade A

X Large	\$1.980	↑
Large	\$1.980	↑
Medium	\$1.760	↑
Small	\$1.380	↑
Nest Run	\$1.865	↑
Pee Wee	\$0.270	---

Grade B \$0.750 ---

Grade C \$0.150 ---

EGGNOTES SUBSCRIPTION INFO

Do you know someone who wants to subscribe to EggNotes? Simply have them send their name, company or organization, fax number and email address to:
info@eggs.ab.ca

US Egg Industry Update

During the 2012 International Poultry Expo in Atlanta, Georgia, representatives from United Egg Producers (UEP) provided an update on the status of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) / UEP agreement on the housing of egg layers. Legislation (Bill HR3798) that would enshrine the HSUS/UEP agreement into law has been drafted and has been formally introduced, which means that the process of moving this through Congress is now underway.

This initiative still faces significant opposition from many groups, including several other animal livestock commodities. In addition, given all of the other significant challenges the US is currently facing with their economy and the pending Presidential election, the priority that will be given to this Bill in 2012 is unknown. The fact that the Bill is supported by both parties (HSUS and UEP) and is not going to cost the government any money, coupled with plans by both parties to heavily lobby their respective representatives to support speedy passage of this Bill, is an encouraging sign for the Bill's odds of success.

Finally, UEP noted that roughly 80% of new cage housing installations in the US are enriched colony system.

Field Statistics Update

The final numbers are in from the 2011 Start Clean – Stay Clean (SC-SC) and Animal Care Program (ACP) evaluations. The results clearly demonstrate the dedication and passion of Alberta egg farmers, as well as their commitment to achieving a level of excellence.

- 166 SC-SC layer evaluations were completed in 2011
 - ✓ Alberta's average score: 98.6% (highest provincial average!)
 - ✓ 37 Alberta producers have scored a perfect 100% rating
- 204 ACP evaluations were completed in 2011
 - ✓ Alberta's average score: 98.0%
 - ✓ 115 Alberta producers have scored a perfect 100% rating
- 97 SC-SC pullet evaluations were completed in 2011
 - ✓ Alberta's average score: 96.0%
 - ✓ 49 Alberta producers have scored a perfect 100% rating
 - ✓ 20 Alberta producers received accreditation in the program

AEP would like to thank all our producers for their commitment to these programs and their hard work every day, ensuring that Albertans continue to have a safe supply of high quality eggs that are produced with a high standard of animal care.

AEP PRODUCER WEBSITE

Do you have a quota lease to renew? Are you interested in learning more about quota credits? Do you want to submit your marketings report, but can't find your form?

The AEP producer website has all of the common forms stored in one convenient location, along with helpful tips on how to complete the forms and policies for each. Many of the forms can be submitted from the website; remember to keep a printed copy for your records.

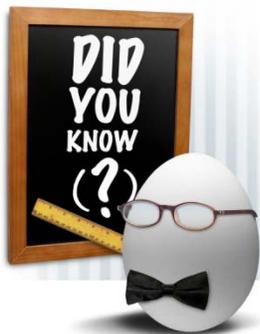
If you are looking for information about the egg industry, including:

- ✓ Forms
- ✓ SC-SC Manuals
- ✓ Past editions of EggNotes
- ✓ Quota Price Statistics
- ✓ Much, much more...

Please be sure to check out AEP's producer website at:

www.albertaeggproducers.ca

For a username and password, please call the AEP office.



Producer Services Update

National Enriched Housing Interim Policy

The Egg Farmers of Canada (EFC) Board of Directors approved an interim policy on Enriched Housing, effective November 8th, 2011. This interim policy utilizes the EU standard for Enriched Housing density, until a scientific panel can better ascertain an appropriate housing density for Canada.

- Density requirement is a minimum of 116.25 square inches total space per bird (including nest box) and a minimum of 93 square inches of usable space per bird (excluding nest box)
- Enriched housing systems must contain a nest box and perches as a minimum, but may also contain other amenities, such as scratch pads and a dust bath
- Producers must meet these minimum density requirements, in order to receive an Enriched Housing System Certificate, which will be reviewed annually
- Producers must still meet the overall requirements of the Animal Care Program to receive an ACP Certificate
- This interim policy will allow producer to be grandfathered in with the implementation of any future EFC policy on enriched housing density, if they meet or exceed these density requirements

Start Clean – Stay Clean™ (Layer/Pullet) & Animal Care Program Updates

EFC has been making updates to the on farm programs, in order to ensure that they reflect the best practices and knowledge of the industry today. These changes have been made through a comprehensive process that seeks feedback from Provincial Boards, before changes are approved.

The following changes to the **SC-SC Layer program** are effective as of **February 1st, 2012**:

Eggs are gathered at least once daily in systems with egg rollouts and minimum twice daily for systems with no rollouts. Eggs that come into regular contact with hens can become contaminated and are prone to cracks. Increased rollouts aim to reduce the number of cracks from a farm and reduce the possibility of contamination. If eggs aren't gathered in accordance with this requirement, 3 points will be lost on the part 1+2 SC-SC evaluation.

...Continued on Page 4

EGG FARMING BEST PRACTICE

AEP Egg Farming Best Practice is a new *EggNotes* feature, which provides a tip for how best to address one of the top-10 corrective actions identified during 2011 SC-SC layer evaluations.

Create a parking area away from your poultry barn. Ideally, this designated parking area should be at least 50 feet from the production facility. Parking should also be away from air exhaust and intakes, to avoid cross contamination of the vehicle and production unit. If you need a poultry parking sign for your production facility, please contact the AEP office.

BIO-SECURITY TIP

Maintain a visitor logbook, with room for name, date, contact number and signature.

CONGRATULATIONS!

AEP would like to extend hearty congratulations to Dr. Thomas Inglis, the recipient of the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association (ABVMA) Veterinarian of the Year award!

Dr. Inglis, a poultry veterinarian from Poultry Health Services, will receive his award at ABVMA's Member Recognition Banquet, on **February 11th**. For more information, please visit:

www.abvma.ca

Producer Services Update, Continued from Page 3

Material on floors, walls and ceiling constructed from material that is durable, smooth and cleanable. There are a number of barns that are insulated with a styrofoam substance. This material is neither durable to wet washing or clean, as it is porous and could allow for bacterial growth that would cause a disease or food safety issue on the farm. To comply, walls must be covered with a non-porous material, such as painted wood, vinyl or metal paneling. Farms that fail to meet this requirement will lose 1 point on the part 1+2 SC-SC evaluation.

Refrigerated storage insulating material covered with building material that is durable, smooth and cleanable. Egg coolers must be lined with a non-porous material, in order to prevent bacterial growth. If this requirement is not met, 2 points will be lost on the part 1+2 SC-SC evaluation.

The following changes to the **SC-SC Layer/Pullet programs and ACP** are effective as of **May 8th, 2012**:

The seven day downtime is NOT replaceable by rapid Salmonella test, and the seven day downtime is defined as 168 hours. This means the barn must be empty for a full 7 days between flocks. For example, if the last flock is removed by noon on Monday, the new flock cannot be placed before noon on the following Monday. Less than 7 days of downtime will result in points lost during part 1+2 SC-SC evaluation, as well as a suspension of part 3 certification. If there are circumstances beyond the producer's control, which prevents the 7 days of downtime from being completed, written explanations and supporting documents must be submitted to your EFC auditor and AEP. The cost of production formula includes a 7 day downtime allowance, so producers are effectively already compensated for this period.

Monthly ammonia test is required from October to March for layer and pullet (6 weeks of age and older) facilities unless exempted. Monthly ammonia testing in layer and pullet barns, from October to March, continues to be a requirement. Failing to record required ammonia levels will result in points lost during part 1+2 SC-SC evaluation. No ammonia test is required for pullets less than 6 weeks of age. In addition, if a producer has 2 years of verified records from previous flocks to demonstrate ammonia levels consistently below 25 ppm, the producer would be exempted from the monthly testing. The best time to do this would be during your next annual audit. Hydrion ammonia test paper that can determine ammonia levels in the barn are inexpensive and easy to use.

...Continued on Page 5

UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR

February 1-2

EFC Meeting

February 9

AEP Board Meeting

February 13-14

AEP Research Committee Meeting

February 27

PECK! Producer Training

February 28

AEP AGM

March 2

BC Egg Marketing Board AGM

March 7

Manitoba Egg Farmers AGM

March 14

AEP Production Management
Committee Meeting

March 15

Saskatchewan Eggs AGM

March 20-22

EFC Meetings and AGM

March 21-22

AFAC Livestock Care Conference

March 27

AEP Board Meeting

March 28-29

Egg Farmers of Ontario AGM

March 28-30

Innovations in Egg Utilization R&D
Forum

Producer Services Update, Continued from Page 4

Cages cannot be modified to increase their capacity unless the cage was designed for that intended purpose. This new element under ACP would affect facilities that have modified cages. Improper modification may compromise the integrity of the cage and thus endanger the safety of hens. Therefore, unless a supporting letter from the cage manufacturer or a professional engineer is provided, points will be deducted for the animal care ratings.

Monthly litter pH testing for pullets (6 weeks of age and older) reared on litter. This is a new element under the SC-SC Pullet program and is required for pullets raised in a loose housing system. Litter pH can be determined using soil testers. Points will be lost during the part 1+2 SC-SC evaluation, if pH testing on litter is not completed when required.

Exception to monthly litter pH testing for pullets and layers reared on litter. No litter testing is required for pullets less than 6 weeks of age. Monthly litter pH testing for pullets (6 weeks of age and older) and for layers is not required if the ammonia level in the barn is below 20 ppm.

Portions of this article were taken from Manitoba Egg Farmers' Eggcerpts newsletter and used with permission.

If you have any questions about the National Enriched Housing Interim Policy or these changes, or would like a complete list of revisions to the SC-SC™ Layer/Pullet programs or the Animal Care Program, please contact Christina Robinson at ext.125.

Congratulations!

AEP would like to congratulate Philip Entz, from Rock Lake Colony, for being drawn as the lucky winner from all those egg producers that completed the Assessing Information Needs Questionnaire. AEP would also like to thank all producers who participated!



ABOUT EGGNOTES



EggNotes is the official newsletter of the Alberta Egg Producers.

Submissions should be sent to:
info@eggs.ab.ca

Submission deadline for the next issue of *EggNotes*:
March 23rd, 2012

Next issue of *EggNotes*:
April 5th, 2012

"YOKES" OF THE MONTH



Guaranteed to crack you up!

Q: What do chickens call a school test?

A: An eggs-amination!

Q: What do you call an excited chicken?

A: Hen-thusiastic!

Environmental Farming

Fans can have a large impact on your energy use and, therefore, your environmental footprint. Not only do fans require a lot of energy to operate, but the management is closely linked to the heating energy required in the barn.

New models of fans have more efficient designs than older models. Due to the frequency of use of fans, the value of the energy they consume can quickly become more than the capital value of the fan itself. It is therefore valuable to have a fan replacement policy. A fan with a rewind motor will be 3-5% less efficient than it was originally, so even if a new fan costs more, you may not actually gain over the long run.

When purchasing new fans, energy efficiency comparisons should be made, based on the cubic feet of air per minute per watt (CFM/W) rating, rather than amperage. The CFM/W rating may be provided for various static pressure ratings, so you should compare them all at the same static pressure. The higher the CFM/W rating, the more energy efficient the fan is. It is worth noting that if the CFM/W rating decreases substantially as the static pressure increases, the fan is not recommended for windy areas. If your barn is in an area of high winds, you should also install windbreaks or wind hoods, to achieve optimal airflow.

Improper fan maintenance can also prevent you from achieving optimal performance. It is important to conduct regular cleaning and maintenance of the fan blades and shutters. Fans are particularly prone to heavy soiling and build-up of dirt, which reduces the efficient passage of air and throughput. As well as costing more to run, dirty ventilation systems are less effective and fan motor life is shortened. It is also useful to check the belt tension regularly, when applicable; if it is too loose the fan output will be lower and, if it is too tight, the bearings may fail early. One large belt-driven fan is more energy efficient than several small direct-drive fans. However, fan size should be noted, since fans that are too large waste energy, due to constant on and off cycling.

Guards generally decrease fan performance less than 5% and should always be left in place for safety reasons.

AEP AGM

AEP is gearing up for its Annual General Meeting (AGM), which is being held on **February 28th** in Red Deer, Alberta. AEP looks forward to a large turnout of egg farmers and industry representatives. Following a review of AEP's Annual Report, elections will be held for 2 positions on the AEP Board of Directors, and the Producer of the Year Award will be presented.

AEP is pleased to announce two distinguished speakers for the AGM:

- Dr. Jean-Pierre Vaillancourt is a Full Professor at the College of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Montreal, who has advised animal industry leaders and government officials from around the world, on bio-security and regional poultry disease control.
- Dr. Tina Widowski is the Chair in Poultry Welfare at the University of Guelph, leading research on laying hen welfare and egg production.

AEP is also pleased to announce that Bruce Vincent, a third generation logger from Libby, Montana, will be the keynote speaker at the AGM banquet. AEP strongly encourages all producers to attend the banquet and take note of his inspirational, timely messages for our industry.

Banquet tickets can be purchased from the AGM registration desk, at a cost of \$30 per ticket.

Research Update

There are a number of unanswered questions about the impact of shifting away from conventional cages. As discussed at the AEP Regional Meetings in January, there is a lot of research going on in this area, to try and answer these questions.

At the University of Guelph, research led by Dr. Tina Widowski is looking at the optimal density for animal welfare in enriched cages. At the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Dr. Michelle Jendral is looking at the impact of housing systems on bone density.

With support from AEP, EFC and the University of Manitoba are conducting research into understanding the costs of an enriched system and its ongoing operation, factoring in production and revenues. Producers considering converting obviously have a lot of questions about cost and how they will be compensated. The researchers will be conducting site visits in Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec, with up to 3 enriched and 3 conventional systems being visited in each province. The goal is to have cost and revenue data from two consecutive production cycles, for a total of 9 enriched and 9 conventional systems included in the research. When the project is completed, they will have an economic model that will assist producers in financial planning, by indicating both the capital and variable costs of converting.

In addition, there is a North American group called the Coalition for Sustainable Egg Supply (CSES), which is conducting research to better understand food safety, worker safety, hen health and well-being, environmental impact and food affordability, as they relate to the various hen housing systems. CSES is being led by Michigan State University (MSU), the University of California, Cargill Kitchen Solutions, McDonald's USA, American Humane Association and the Center for Food Integrity. Closer to home, EFC, Egg Farmers of Ontario, BC Egg Marketing Board, the University of Guelph and Burnbrae Farms are members. Commercial scale aviaries, conventional and enriched cage facilities were built at MSU, that will house the same density and strain of bird, put into lay at the same time of year, to monitor food safety, animal welfare and economic indicators (ie: rate of lay and egg quality). The goal is to remove confounding factors that were identified in the existing literature. Preliminary data from the first flock will begin to be analyzed in the spring.

As information is received from these studies, AEP will provide further updates, to assist farmers in making informed decisions about their choice of which hen housing system to utilize on their farm.

PECK! PRODUCER TRAINING

The Alberta Poultry Industry Emergency Management Team is proud to present an education event for producers – **PECK!** The event, which will be held on the afternoon of **February 27th** in Red Deer, Alberta, will bring producers from Alberta's 4 commercial feather industries together, to learn more about the importance of emergency preparedness, response and prevention. There will be an interactive workshop mixed with "edutainment" presented by the University of Alberta's 'Heifer in your Tank' group.

Please RSVP to the AEP office, to confirm your attendance. A formal invitation will be sent to producers, along with their AEP AGM invitation and 2011 Annual Report.

LIVESTOCK CARE CONFERENCE

The Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) **12th Annual Livestock Care Conference** will be held in Red Deer, Alberta. The conference is scheduled for March 21st & 22nd.

March 22: Full day of the Livestock Care Conference

→ *AEP recommends that all egg producers should attend this day!*

Further details on the program, speakers, registration, travel, media and other conference information can be provided by contacting the AEP office the conference website:

www.afac.ab.ca/lcc

Intensive Livestock Working Group (ILWG) Update

Land Use Planning – It is becoming apparent that the evolution of government policy on water, air and land issues will be delivered through the development and implementation of regional plans as directed by the Land Use Framework. ILWG has and will continue to put a major emphasis on influencing the development of regional plans that protect livestock/poultry producer interests. The South Saskatchewan Regional Plan will set the template by which many of the other regional plans will be developed over the next 3 to 5 years.

Water Policy – The Alberta government is expected to review the Water Act after the 2012 provincial election. The most critical issue for livestock producers is that the water policy review may include consideration of new forms of water allocation. It is an ILWG priority that producers' water rights are protected through the retention of the "first-in-time, first-in-right" water allocation policy.

Phosphorous Strategy – ILWG is making progress in the development of a pilot project that will help guide nutrient management planning, as well as the development of government policy in addressing the impacts of phosphorous on water quality. The prime objective is to develop a tool that helps confined CFOs identify risks and opportunities associated with their existing nutrient management system. The tool will also present mitigation options that can reduce phosphorous loss through runoff.

Managing Odour – This project was part of an industry commitment to the Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA) to conduct a thorough analysis of NRCB's odour complaint data from the past nine years, to identify areas where odour from CFO's could be considered a significant problem. Major contributions were made by ARD and the NRCB to complete the project. The analysis identified that 'problem areas' are limited to a few operations receiving greater than 10 complaints (over the nine year period) and these operations are randomly spread throughout the province. Further analysis indicates significant improvements have been made by these operations over the past three years. It is concluded that there are no 'problem areas' and that odour may be a large problem for some people living near a relatively small number of operations. Odour does not seem to be a major industry issue affecting a large number of operations. As another commitment to CASA, ILWG and ARD have jointly developed an odour management plan assessment tool, with a format similar to that used by the Environmental Farm Plan. The tool has been reviewed by a number of ILWG member organizations and in the field with producers (beef, dairy, pork and poultry). It is in for final formatting and will be available to producers at the AEP AGM.

ALBERTA EGG MARKET UPDATE

The Nielson preliminary retail sales data is available up to December 17th, 2011 and indicates that in the latest 4-week period, 2.66 million dozen eggs were sold in Alberta; a 2.9% increase from the previous 4-week period (ending November 19th) and a 2.1% increase in sales compared to the same period in 2010.

Nielson retail sales in the last 52 weeks are up 3.5% over the previous 52 weeks in Alberta. Omega-3 eggs have seen the largest sales growth in the last 52 weeks in Alberta; a 9.5% increase over the previous 52 weeks, to 3.4 million dozen eggs (10.5% of the total eggs sold in Alberta).

AEP ONLINE!

Remember to tell everyone you meet about the AEP website, where you can find lots of eggcellent information about being an egg farmer, how an egg a day can be part of an active, nutritious lifestyle and a wide variety of delicious recipes! *Get Cracking* to eggs.ab.ca



Marketing Update

Alberta Egg Producers is looking forward to an *EGG*ceptional 2012!

AEP would like to remind everyone that our website should be your first choice for egg and egg industry information, facts about egg nutrition, resources for teachers and health professionals, as well as mouthwatering egg recipes. *Get Cracking* to eggs.ab.ca today!

Help AEP Choose a New Name!

Alberta Egg Producers is contemplating a name change and, until the end of February, we are asking YOU for your input! When you visit our website, you will have the chance to vote for your favorite name, or even suggest your very own idea. AEP also encourages you to explain why you voted the way you did. One lucky voter will win a *Get Cracking* cooks kit, for taking the time to help AEP choose a new name!

AEP 2012 Highlights

- Total # of events attended: 2
- Total # of events sponsored: 18
- Total # of promotional items distributed: 3,170
- Total # of resources distributed: 6,693

Upcoming Events

AEP is proud to be participating in these *EGG*cellent events:

- AG Expo Lethbridge
@ Exhibition Park in Lethbridge, AB Feb 29 – Mar 2
- Alberta College of Family Physicians Annual Scientific Assembly
@ Rimrock Resort Hotel in Banff, AB February 23-25
- Mom, Pop & Tots Fair
@ Northlands Expo Centre in Edmonton, AB March 9-10
- Calgary Health Show
@ Big Four Hall 'A' in Calgary, AB March 17-18

If you have any questions about AEP's marketing initiatives, please feel welcome to contact David Webb at ext.126. Don't forget to stay in touch to keep us updated about what's happening in your area.



EGG HEALTH FACTS

Choline is an essential nutrient produced naturally by the liver, but most people do not make enough to reap the positive benefits that the nutrient offers. University of Alberta nutritionists have been looking at choline metabolism and deficiencies in animal models for the last two years. To get enough choline, people should consume it in their diets by eating foods such as egg yolks, meat, liver and dairy products. When consumed in adequate amounts, choline has been shown to reduce risk of fatty liver disease and muscle damage. Few Albertans appear to be eating the current recommended amount of choline.

Eggs are a very rich source of choline, with the highest amounts being found in those eggs with the largest yolks. According to the team's recent analysis of eggs available in Alberta, the average large egg contains 160mg of choline, which is more than a third of the daily recommended choline. Almost all of the choline in eggs is in the form of phosphatidylcholine, which the team's studies are suggesting is a form of choline that may provide additional benefits to immune and intestinal health.

Researchers hope to develop new phosphatidylcholine supplements from eggs and meats, thanks to funding from ALMA, Alberta Innovates Bio Solutions and AEP.

Thanks to Andrea Hill, a Journalism Student at Carleton University.

Feature Recipe: BREAKFAST PIZZA



Makes: 6 servings • Preparation: 5 minutes • Cooking: 10 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 10" (25 cm) focaccia, flat bread or baked pizza base
- 8 eggs
- ¼ cup (50 mL) yogurt or sour cream
- ¼ tsp (1 mL) salt
- ¼ tsp (1 mL) pepper
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) each chopped fresh dill, chives and parsley
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) butter or olive oil
- 6 oz (175 g) thinly sliced smoked salmon

DIRECTIONS:

- 1) If focaccia is thicker than 1" (2.5 cm), cut it in half horizontally and freeze the second half for later use.
- 2) Warm focaccia in a preheated 350°F (180°C) oven for 10 minutes.
- 3) In a large bowl, whisk eggs with yogurt, salt, pepper and herbs, until just mixed.
- 4) In a large non-stick skillet, melt butter over medium heat
- 5) Add eggs to skillet and stir gently as they cook, so that curds form but mixture is still moist.
- 6) Spoon eggs on top of warm focaccia.
- 7) Loosely drape slices of smoked salmon over eggs.
- 8) Sprinkle additional salt, pepper and herbs to season, as you like.
- 9) Serve in wedges.