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Board of Directors Update

Your Egg Farmers of Alberta (EFA) Board of Directors would like to thank Egg Farmers of Canada and BC Egg, for organizing the recent National Egg Producer Conference, which was held in Kelowna. The entire Board was in attendance for the summer meetings, which included a review of the annual table disappearance and quota allocation.

The Board would also like to make producers aware that the National Farm Animal Care Council’s review of the Recommended Code of Practice is currently in the processing mode, with a particular focus on hen housing and density. The Board has met with one of the committee members to discuss the progress, and the new code is expected to be completed within the next two years, and will address the transition plan away from conventional cages.

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EFA Vision Statement

Healthy Food, Healthy Farms,
Healthy Families.

EFA Mission Statement

Cultivating a sustainable egg
industry together with farmers,
consumers and other stakeholders.

EFA Office Hours

Our office will be closed on
Monday, September 7 for Labour
Day, and Monday, October 12 for
Thanksgiving. We hope this will not
cause any inconvenience.

Egg Price Update

Effective from **January 4th, 2015:**

Grade A

X Large	\$2.030
Large	\$2.030
Medium	\$1.800
Small	\$1.430
Nest Run	\$1.911
Pee Wee	\$0.270

Grade B \$0.750

Grade C \$0.150

*From the minimum paying price,
processors can only deduct charges
as authorized by the EFA Board.
Farm-gate pickup rates were set in
August 2010 and no increase in
individual freight rates have been
approved since that time.*

Field Statistics Update

Here's an update on how our farmers are doing with their on-farm
programs so far this year:

- 83 SC-SC Layer evaluations have been completed in 2015
 - Alberta's average score: 99.68%
 - 58 Alberta farmers have scored a perfect 100% rating
- 83 Animal Care Program evaluations have been completed in 2015
 - Alberta's average score: 99.4%
 - 68 facilities have received a rating of 100%
- 53 SC-SC Pullet evaluations have been completed in 2015
 - Alberta's average score: 98.62%
 - 32 Alberta Pullet Growers have scored a perfect 100% rating
 - 9 pullet growers are newly accredited in the SC-SC Pullet program

We'd like to thank our farmers for their commitment and hard work each
and every day to ensure that safe, quality eggs are produced humanely.

Clarification on Ammonia Exception Rule

Under the Animal Care Program, producers are required to measure and
record ammonia levels in their barn monthly from October to March each
year. In 2012, an exception to this requirement was introduced, which EFC
has recently clarified.

Under the exception rule, as long as producers have two full years of
records, they do not need to test monthly for ammonia levels during the
winter months. EFC has now clarified that the exception rule stands for the
life of the facility. New records would be needed if and when the facility
was rebuilt or retooled with new equipment. To qualify for the exemption
producers need to remove manure once per week and keep 2 years of
records, showing no issues with ammonia over 25ppm.

Code Review Update

The Layer Code Development Committee met in June 2015, with another
meeting planned for September. A summary from the June meeting is
available at www.nfacc.ca/progress-report-layers. The public comment
period is now scheduled for spring 2016 with publication of the new Code
targeted for early 2017.

Producer Website

To keep current on avian influenza, including information on active outbreaks, preventative measures and wild bird surveillance data, keep an eye on our website. We are posting regular updates on our homepage and also provide links to other sites with relevant avian influenza information.

Visit EFA's Producer Website:

www.albertaeggproducers.ca

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

AFAC Alert Line

With the current dry conditions in Alberta, we want to try and be proactive with livestock welfare as we are anticipating problems due to lack of feed and water. We want to ensure that farmers know how to access the ALERT line if they are ever in need of help or if they suspect that somebody else is. The ALERT Line number is: **1-800-506-2273**

CleanFARMS

Coming to southern Alberta in the fall of 2015, this will be an opportunity to return unwanted or obsolete pesticide and livestock medications.

EFA Welcomes New Entrants for 2015!

Congratulations to the 13 successful applicants who were chosen as recipients of quota through the Egg Farmers of Alberta's New Entrant Program. This is the second year EFA has offered the New Entrant Program to those who are interested in becoming egg producers. Each of our New Entrants are eligible for 1,500 layers of New Entrant Quota!

Cherilee Day, Calmar

1875286 Alberta Ltd., Sherwood Park

South Shore Enterprise Ltd., Lacombe

Brenton Goossen, Edberg

Koekoek Farms, Lethbridge

Brio Developments Inc., Lethbridge

Deanna Hiemstra o/a D2H Poultry, Lethbridge

Harry & Elaine Makkinga, Ponoka

Birch Hills Colony, Wanham

Peter Neudorf, Sexsmith

Rodney Friesen, Fort Vermillion

Byslma Farms Inc., Cranford

Real Letourneau, Edmonton

It is vital to the long-term sustainability of our egg industry that new farmers and new investments are encouraged. The New Entrant Program (NEP) was established to assist individuals and families who want to own and operate an egg farm in Alberta by alleviating some of the producer's start-up costs.

There were 51 qualified candidates who were all included in the draw for the 13 available lots of quota. A welcome reception and training workshop for our New Entrants will take place in Calgary on November 3 and 4, 2015.

Quota Leasing

If you do not have the capacity to place the quota that you were allotted in May of 2015, and this quota is still in your reserve, we ask that you make arrangements to lease the quota as quickly as possible. While many producers have arranged leases, there is still a significant amount of quota that has not yet been leased out. There are producers with capacity that are looking to lease quota into their facilities. Egg Farmers of Alberta can assist you in connecting with these producers by adding your name to the *Quota Lessor List*. To add your name to the list, you will need to fill in a Lease List Request Form which can be obtained on our producer website or by contacting Egg Farmers of Alberta.

Please keep the following policies in mind when making your plans to lease over base quota:

- All leases of over base quota from the May 17, 2015 allotment must be filed in writing at the Board office by no later than November 18, 2015 or the over base quota will revert to the Board.
- Over base allotments can be leased out for a maximum of 10 years.
- Over base allotments cannot be sold.

EFA Levy Update

As discussed at the June Regional Meetings, there have been a few adjustments to the EFC levy since their 2015 budget was first approved. During the July Board Meeting, the EFA Board reviewed the national levy changes and our current fund balances and determined that it would decrease **levy** to \$8.052/bird/annum effective August 9, 2015 (week 33/15) for registered producers and \$.3165/dozen for non-regulated producers shipping to a registered grading station.

Revised levy schedules are in the mail and adjustments to payment amounts will be for the August 15, 2015 payment.

Alberta Egg Market Update

The Nielson retail sales data is available up to June 27, 2015 and indicates that in the latest 4-week period, 2.74 million dozen eggs were sold in Alberta; a 3.8% increase from the previous 4-week period (ending May 30) and a 2.7% increase in sales compared to the same period in 2014.

Nielson retail sales in the last 52 weeks are down 0.1% over the previous 52 weeks in Alberta, to 35.62 million dozen eggs. Specialty eggs (excluding Omega-3 eggs) have seen the largest sales growth in the last 52 weeks in Alberta; an 18.8% increase over the previous 52 weeks, to 2.66 million dozen eggs (7.5% of the total eggs sold in AB).

Obtaining Separate Designation

For the purpose of SE testing, multi-age facilities in Alberta are sampled and tested as one, unless there is full segregation of the flocks and separate designation has been officially obtained. If you have a barn that houses more than one flock, for example layers and pullets or two ages of layers and you think your barns could be treated as separate facilities for the purposes of SE testing and response, you must go through the process of obtaining separate designation through EFA with support from Alberta Agriculture. This process will look at whether or not we can truly call your barns separate by looking at the ventilation system, manure handling system, biosecurity, pest management, and barn layout and design. In the event that SE is found during sampling, obtaining separate designation can mean the difference between having just one flock, or all of your birds, considered SE positive. If you think you might qualify for separate designation, speak to your Field Coordinator, Murray or Dave, to discuss it further.

It is important to note that separate designation cannot be granted for multi-species facilities (i.e. broilers and layers in the same barn). Any producers housing multiple species in a facility with a common foundation need to be aware of the impact on their CEIRA insurance. To be covered for SE under CEIRA your production facility must only be used for businesses related to the **regulated egg industry**. The only way to ensure full insurance coverage is to move multiple species out of the same facility.

Lessons from Avian Influenza in the United States

As we approach the fall migration of wild birds, the threat of Avian Influenza (AI) is again high. In July, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued a preliminary report on their investigation from turkey and egg farms that were infected with AI this spring. There are some valuable lessons and good reminders of best practices that can be drawn from this report.

While it is believed the AI virus was initially introduced to areas across the United States (and Canada too) via wild birds, the widespread outbreak is being attributed to **farm-to-farm transfer**. The preliminary study conducted by the USDA was unable to pinpoint any one factor that was common to all of the farms surveyed, however, they did make some observations that can help all poultry producers prepare to better protect their flocks. Below is a summary of the highlights from the reports.

The following observations were found in looking at biosecurity practices at farms affected by Avian Influenza:

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About EggNotes



EggNotes is the official newsletter of the Egg Farmers of Alberta.

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

Submission deadline for the next issue of *EggNotes*:
September 25, 2015

Next issue of *EggNotes*:
October 9, 2015

“Yokes” of the Month



Guaranteed to crack you up!

Q. How do comedians like their eggs?

A. Funny-side up!

Q. What do chickens call tests?

A. Eggs-aminations!

Lessons from Avian Influenza in the United States continued from page 4

- Only 9% of infected turkey farms had locked gates on farm (limiting access) and 38% of infected barns could not be secured with locks.
- 69% of farms used a common break area for farm workers (making it easier for infections to move from barn to barn).
- A hard surface entry-pad which can be disinfected was shown to be protective from AI.
- 83% of infected farms received a feed delivery 3-10 days before the onset of AI.
- 63% of farms reported waterfowl near their farms. 96% reported small perching birds. Studies show that sparrows and chickadees are susceptible to AI and can shed the virus.

During the AI outbreak in the US, airborne transmission was identified as a possible route for infection. Some results of the survey support this theory.

- Physical proximity to a farm infected with AI increased the likelihood of becoming infected with AI.
- Two farms developed AI 5-8 days after moving birds in windy conditions.
- Two farms developed AI three to four days after depopulation of a nearby farm that was infected.
- Barns with separate pens reported that the progress of AI through their barn appeared to follow the ventilation pattern from inlet to exhaust.
- Sustained high wind speeds over successive days was indirectly related to clusters of outbreaks. Air sampling was performed to determine whether virus attached to dust particles could be isolated from air. 78% of air samples within a house containing an infected flock were positive. This rate declined to 24% at a distance of 15' from the barn and to 4% over 200 to 500'.
- Farms located more than 100 yards from a public gravel or dirt road were better protected from AI.
- Sharing of equipment was connected to the spread of AI among farms. Shared egg racks and pallets which were not disinfected were also implicated in the transmission of AI.
- Service personnel visiting the farm regularly, such as renderers, etc. increased the odds of getting AI, showing that a common vehicle moving among farms was involved in spreading the infection.

To read the full reports, you can visit: http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_dis_spec/poultry/downloads/Epidemiologic-Analysis-July-15-2015.pdf.

We urge all of our farmers to review your biosecurity practices and to ensure every person entering your barn is following your protocols. This is your best protection against Avian Influenza.

Upcoming Events

August 26 & 27

EFA Stakeholder Engagement
Workshop on Environment

August 28

AFAC Board Meeting

September 3

Incident Command Training

September 9

EFC Meeting (Closed)

September 15

AB PMC Meeting

September 22 & 23

PACCO Training

September 28 & 29

EFA Board Meeting

September 29 & 30

EFA Strategic Planning

October 1

Staff Planning Day

October 6

ILWG Meeting

October 9

AB Research Committee Meeting

EFA Staff Update

We would like to thank Angie Migliaro for filling the Admin Assistant – Customer Service role, on a temporary basis until Peggy returns. We appreciate her hard work and positive presence in the office.

Air Quality and Animal Care in Laying Hens

Emmanuel Opoku Yeboah, MSc., Jesse Hunter, BSc., and Clover Bench, PhD

Generally the upkeep of animal well-being, health and productivity in most livestock operations is dependent on regular maintenance of air quality within a barn (Chioniere and Munroe, 1997). In comparison with other livestock species raised in confined environments, air emissions within poultry barns can pose great challenges and limitations, especially for laying hens (Herber, 2004). Environment and air quality have been noted as the most important production factor for the maintenance of good farm welfare (Green et al., 2009), as poor air quality not only affects birds but is also a major concern for personnel working in a facility.

Factors Related to Poor Air Quality in Layer Barns

Factors both inside and outside the poultry barn can have a profound impact on air quality. Some of these factors include:

A. Housing:

Tauson (2005) reported that increased ammonia and dust levels drastically influence air quality, and higher concentrations of irritants are often found in non-caged systems compared to caged systems.

B. Management:

Management decisions at the farm level (eg., stocking density and production schedules) and barn conditions are some of the criteria used to determine indoor air quality, as they can all significantly impact the barn environment (Chioniere and Munroe, 1997). Other activities in layer barns such as feeding, egg production and general bird movement can result in pollutants or dust, which creates an uncomfortable atmosphere and environment for birds. Particularly irritating pollutants that need to be considered are carbon dioxide (CO₂), hydrogen sulphide (H₂S), ammonia (NH₃) and aerosolized particulate or dust (McQuitty et al., 1985). For laying hen facilities, NH₃ is the most prevalent and arises from the degradation of nitrogenous compounds in poultry feces (McQuitty et al., 1985). Important consideration should be given to the environmental temperature and humidity as these can influence ammonia levels and dust in barns (Green et al., 2009).

C. Ventilation:

Ventilation is defined as the free movement of fresh air and the removal of excess moisture (Hill, 1950). Research has shown that ventilation discomfort in layer barns may be related to irritation from greater concentrations of carbon dioxide and reduced available oxygen as a result of lower ventilation rates.

Continued on page 6

Trans-Pacific Partnership

Update

Despite a serious effort made by negotiators and Ministers in Maui at the end of July, there was no agreement for a final Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) deal. TPP Ministers did release a joint statement indicating that they remained committed to build on the momentum and continue their intensive engagement to find common ground. Although supply management continues to come under heavy scrutiny in the media, agriculture was one of several key topics mentioned as sticking points in the negotiations. For his part, Canadian Trade Minister, Ed Fast, has let it be known that he would not conduct negotiations through the media.

As egg farmers working under the uniquely Canadian system of supply management, it's not too late to have your voice heard. You can reach out to your MP by calling them, writing them a letter, or even inviting them out to your farm, in the interest of preserving supply management as a system that benefits both farmers and consumers.

Customer Service

EFA staff are committed to customer service excellence, which includes providing courteous, professional and timely service that aligns with our core values. To see a copy of our customer service policy, check the EFA Policy page on the producer website.

Air Quality and Animal Care in Laying Hens continued from page 5

Harmful Effects of Poor Air Quality

A strong, irritating odour is often associated with ammonia at concentrations of 5 to 10 ppm (Chioniere and Munroe, 1997; Xin et al., 2011). However, higher concentrations of ammonia (> 25 and 50 ppm) can result in more severe irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, in addition to a decrease in egg production (Green et al., 2009). Improper litter management practices in non-caged system can lead to the direct release of airborne pollutants such as smaller particles (eg., dust) into the atmosphere, which can be inhaled more easily and deeply into the lungs thereby contributing to long-term respiratory ailments and increased irritation (McQuitty et al. 1985). Additionally, lack of ventilation can predispose barn workers to headaches, drowsiness and general fatigue. Bird discomfort due to poor air quality can predispose them to stress behaviours, including panting, which can have a negative impact on welfare and hinder bird productivity.

Strategies for Air Quality Maintenance

Barn Monitoring:

When birds are kept under free range systems, contaminated air is gradually dissipated to the outside environment. Regardless of the ventilation system used, management should keep the potential negative impacts of poor air quality in mind, and strive to improve general welfare within the barn. In both caged and cage-free systems, be sure to regularly assess litter and air quality, as well as individual bird health. If birds are teary-eyed, the air quality is likely poor and needs remedy. Therefore it is necessary to also ensure that the barn humidity is at a tolerable level.

Increase Ventilation Rates:

Increasing fan speed can cause a drastic reduction in ammonia and humidity levels in the barn. The primary role of any ventilation system is to provide an adequate supply of fresh air inside the barn, in order to control the temperature and to obtain acceptable levels of moisture, gas, dust and odour. Increasing the ventilation rate increases the air velocity thereby decreasing the concentration of ammonia and other irritants in the barn (Nimmermark and Gustafsson, 2005). Ventilation rates in the winter should be monitored to balance both conserving heat while providing fresh air (Hill, 1950). Summer ventilation strategies will differ from winter months. Summer ventilation should aim to keep birds cool on hot days while maximizing fresh air circulation (Green et al., 2009).

Monitor Temperature:

Regulating the barn temperature is an important mechanism for minimizing the activities of micro-organisms, including the production of unpleasant odours in the barn. Check the barn daily and look for signs of discomfort in birds:

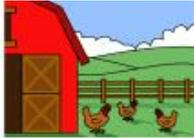
Continued on page 7

Upcoming Events

Come visit the EFA booth at these EGGcellent events:

- Beakerhead
September 16 - 20, in Calgary
- Edmonton Women's Show
October 17 & 18, 2015
- Calgary Women's Show
October 24 & 25, 2015

Classified Ads



WANTED:

Looking for 1,000 pullets from Sept 1st to Oct 22nd (19 week date). Call Ron @ Oaklane: 403-223-2950 ext 704.

FOR SALE:

Terra battery operated sweeper. Contact Sammy @ Keho Lake Colony: 1-403-757-2330.

2015 Marketing Statistics

- Total # of events attended: 12
- Total # of events sponsored: 66
- Total # of school and health presentations: 63
- Total # of resources distributed: 62,440
- Total # of promotional items distributed: 132,101

Air Quality and Animal Care in Laying Hens continued from page 6

- Too hot: Panting and wings spread
- Too cold: Huddling and inactivity

Make sure to adjust barn temperature settings accordingly, paying attention to outdoor temperature and indoor ventilation rates.

Take Home Message

Air quality in laying hens is a major tool for assessing bird welfare and is dependent on a number of factors. Many of these factors can be managed effectively to minimize impact on bird welfare. Inattention by farm managers and/or producers could lead to animal and worker discomfort in addition to a decrease in productivity. It is important to monitor these factors throughout the entire laying cycle for enhanced bird welfare and sustained production efficiency.

From Your Industry Development Officer

In February, the EFA Board and Research Committee held a session to revisit EFA's research priorities. Having previously been set in 2012, it was time to revisit the priorities, evaluate progress, and define the direction moving forward. As a result of that session, a new set of research priorities were published in July. The top five focus areas of EFA's research program moving forward are:

- 1) Reduction of Salmonella in the Alberta Egg Supply Chain
- 2) Feather Cover
- 3) Beak Treatment
- 4) Reducing Ammonia Emissions
- 5) Pullet Housing

For a more detailed discussion on how these focus areas will drive EFA's research program, please visit the research section of the information centre on the producer website:

<http://albertaeggproducers.ca/information-center/research-program/>

While these priorities help focus efforts, EFA will continue to fund research projects of merit outside of these priorities provided they are a good fit with the Board's overall strategic direction.

Farm Safety

Through communications directly to industry organizations and via the media, the Government of Alberta has made it clear that they will bring in new farm safety regulations, likely this fall. Currently, Alberta is the only Province where farming is exempt from Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Regulations. Egg Farmers of Alberta supports the concept of removing agriculture's exemption from the OH&S Act in order to facilitate mandatory fatality and serious incident investigation and reporting. That being said, we believe the development of OH&S technical rules for agriculture and farm safety codes of practice must be done collaboratively with recognition of the unique and diverse nature of family farms in Alberta. We continue to work to ensure that implementation of OH&S requirements occurs in a reasonable timeframe. As a first step, we have worked with safety consultants to develop a list of key egg farm safety hazards and possible controls. In the coming months, we will be working on a plan to help producers use these to prepare for the inevitable requirement under the OH&S Act and Regulations to have assessed their farm site for existing and potential hazards and to have prepared a report of the results of a hazard assessment and the methods used to control or eliminate the hazards identified.

Healthy Communities

EFA recently published *Eggcellent Alberta*, which features fresh egg recipes from several of Alberta's finest chefs! We'll be handing out our recipe book at community events EFA attends. An electronic copy is also available on our website. Fresh, nutritious, locally produced eggs, courtesy of Alberta egg farmers, are the key ingredient for these delicious recipes!

Healthy Birds

When you are checking your birds, if you notice that some hens have started sitting on their hocks take note! Hens should stand up tall, if not it can be the first sign that your hen has a leg problem - possibly a calcium deficiency. Talk to your veterinarian or nutritionist to address this in the early stages.

Healthy Eggs

Do you know why you place eggs point down in their trays? When you place the eggs this way, the air cell will rise to the top. Egg trays are designed to protect the vulnerable wide end of the egg with the air spot, during transport, thereby reducing cracks. Also, storing eggs this way helps keep eggs fresher, longer. The air cell gradually enlarges as the egg loses moisture during storage. Keeping the air pocket at the top helps to keep the yolk centered within the egg, away from the air cell and prevents the air pocket from rupturing, which reduces the risk of the egg spoiling.

Healthy Farms

In 2015, the EFA Board set a goal of having 10 producers who previously scored less than 60 on PEEP improve their score to above 60. Our Field Services Coordinators, Murray and Dave, have been hard at work doing annual assessments with 40 completed to date! We are happy to report that we already know of 7 producers who have improved their score to be above 60. A big congratulations to everyone who has taken steps to improve the environmental performance of their operation!



EFA Online!

The EFA consumer website has been completely redesigned to have a stronger egg theme, shine a spotlight on our farmers, and provide consumers with much more of the information they are seeking!

Get Cracking to: www.eggs.ab.ca



Like us on Facebook!

facebook.com/EggFarmersAlberta



Follow us on Twitter!

twitter.com/EFA_AB_eggs

Egg Ambassador Contest

Every registered Alberta egg farmer should have received details about our Egg Ambassador Contest, along with an entry form. EFA encourages all farmers to share how they've been an ambassador for Alberta's egg industry in their community throughout 2015. We want to summarize our collective efforts in the areas of public relations, government relations and social responsibility – every contribution helps our industry! We invite you to share as many details as possible, to help us paint a more complete picture of what our farmers have been up to this year. There are prizes to be won and the deadline for entries is October 31, 2015.

For more information, contact David Webb at the EFA office (x 126).

Stampede Egg Ambassador

by Michael Froese

Calgary Stampede. Cowboy hats. The wild, wild west! The Stampede is world renowned, a destination event, and a place where people from all over the planet are able to experience agriculture (albeit so very briefly) in a modern and Calgary flavoured setting. At the Stampede agricultural buildings, people see, hear and talk about jumping horses, show cows, and roosting hens. And I, for one, was there to discuss chickens, organic production, and the difference between brown and white eggs. Why? It was because I went to Stampede as an EFA Egg Ambassador. And what a time I had! I found that Stampeders wanted to talk to an egg farmer; they wanted to hear the truth from someone who lives and breathes in the egg world. As such, I spent hours on end answering questions about the difference between free run and free range production, dispelling myths about the age of eggs in the grocery store, and telling stories about my life on the farm. It was fun. It gave me an insight into the mind of the average Stampeders – I learned so much about the people who love and eat eggs daily. I found that the average person trusts what I told them about our Alberta farming ways and believes it when I say that we care about our hens and the food that we make. I also came to understand that the people who eat our eggs mostly want to know this: a) that egg farmers are ethical; b) that hens are well-treated; and c) that eggs are safe and nutritious. People believe in us and love the hens that we care for and the food that we produce. So even though Stampede is now over, my job is not. I'm going to keep talking to people about farmers, hens, and egg salad. I'm an Egg Ambassador.

Call for CAP Volunteers

EFA is a proud member and supporter of the Classroom Agriculture Program, which has been helping to teach grade 4 students about agriculture since 1985! For over 20 years, volunteers across Alberta have taught students about the importance of agriculture in their daily lives. CAP is a fantastic opportunity to talk to kids about egg farming and help explain where their food comes from – and would be a great way for would-be Egg Ambassadors to get their feet wet!

If you are interested in volunteering, or at least learning more about the program, please visit www.classroomagriculture.com or contact David Webb at the EFA office. We would be happy to discuss ideas for topics to talk to the students about, and CAP also provides training for all volunteers. With the new school year just around the corner, CAP needs volunteers!