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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 excellent turnout at the Egg Farmers of Alberta (EFA) Regional Meetings, which were held on June 19th (Edmonton), June 20th (Calgary) and June 21st (Lethbridge). As always, this round of regional meetings was an excellent opportunity for the EFA Board and staff to follow-up with producers regarding issues raised at the AGM, to hear directly from producers and learn new information that will help us all be better egg farmers.

The EFA Board of Directors would also like to thank the wonderful panel of guest speakers – Alexander Courchesne, from Quantis, Dr. Brad Turner, from DSM and Rob Lucas, from CFIA – for presenting a wide variety of important and timely information.

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 PRODUCER WEBSITE: www.albertaeggproducers.ca
 OFFICE HOURS: Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

PURPOSE OF THE EFA

EFA 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.

EFA OFFICE HOURS

Our office will be **closed on Monday, August 6th** for the Civic Holiday, **closed on Monday, September 3rd** for Labour Day and **closed on Monday, October 8th** for Thanksgiving. We hope this will not cause any inconvenience.

EGG PRICE UPDATE

Effective: from **July 22nd, 2012**

Grade A

X Large	\$2.050	↑
Large	\$2.050	↑
Medium	\$1.830	↑
Small	\$1.450	↑
Nest Run	\$1.931	↑
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

Research Update

EFA would like to thank all producers who completed a survey back in January. Our layer waste utilization project is now complete and we are working toward some of the recommendations from the data analyses. Here are some of information highlights:

- The majority of facilities collect manure with belts (56%) and an additional 20% reported using belt and drying systems.

The use of belt and drying systems, in conjunction with sheltered manure storage, minimizes the loss of nutrients to the atmosphere. Dried and properly stored manure can then be used more effectively on cropland, as part of the farm's overall nutrient management plan. It should be noted that if you have a belt drying system but do not have a heat-exchanger in the winter, you are likely not drying your manure during this time.

- Slightly less than 20% of layer manure is stored with other livestock manure, while 35% is stored separately. Another 20% of producers store manure in the field, while 12% send the manure directly to on-farm composting.

Survey results appear to indicate that sometimes field storage is considered composting by producers. It is important to note that composting requires very specific conditions, including the correct carbon to nitrogen ratio, correct temperatures and oxygen supply. Poultry manure is high in nitrogen and must be mixed with a bulking agent such as straw or wood shavings, to obtain the correct ratio. Composting is a management technique that enables the preservation of nutrients and storage of manure, but only when composting is conducted correctly with the use of bulking agents, sufficient aeration and moisture management. EFA is considering the creation of a composting guide for producers, as well as conducting further analysis to determine the costs and benefits of true composting for egg producers, to ensure that informed decisions can be made regarding time and energy spent composting manure properly.

- 26% of producers reported using phytase; this may be underestimated, since animal byproducts used in feed are a natural source of phytase.

Phytase is a valuable feed additive for producers. Not only does it help to decrease Phosphorous excretion, but it also helps save costs as a result of a decreased need for supplemental Phosphorous.

A minimum of 9 months of manure storage is required. Funding is available under Growing Forward for manure storage upgrades, specialized composting equipment and improved field application.

UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR

August 28

WEMA Meeting (Calgary)

August 29

Research Committee Meeting
(Calgary)

September 9-13

IEC Conference (London, UK)

September 14

Grader Advisory Meeting
(Calgary)

September 18

Provincial GMs Meeting (Ottawa)

September 19-20

EFC Meetings (Ottawa)

September 25

EFA Board Meeting (Calgary)

September 25-27

Poultry Industry Serviceman's
Workshop (Banff)

September 26

EFA Strategic Planning Session
(Canmore)

September 30

CIBC Run for the Cure (Calgary)

Managing a Drop in Egg Production

- by Dr. Darko Mitevski, Poultry Health Services Ltd.

When egg producers see increased mortality in a pullet or layer flock, especially if it lasts for several days, the next action step is clear; a sample of the mortality is submitted to the diagnostic lab. However, when a drop in egg production is the concern (with little to no mortality), farmers are faced with the question of what to do next. The first thing to do is check for FLAWs: feed, light, air conditions and water.

Feed: Check the availability of the feed and whether feed consumption is normal. Check when new feed was delivered and if the drop in egg production can be connected to that timeframe. Visually inspect the feed, both in the barn and bins, for any problems (ie: mold, unusual color or particles).

Light: If birds in lay do not get any light for a 24 hour period, due to a power outage or malfunctioning equipment, this will immediately affect egg production.

Air: Very high or very low barn temperatures can affect feed consumption and egg production.

Water: If water is not available to all or some birds in the barn, egg production can almost stop in a very short period of time.

After checking for these FLAWs, it becomes more difficult to determine the cause of a drop in egg production. Producers need to focus on feed and viral infection, and the key is to be systematic. Ensure you are prepared and have appropriate samples, even before problems occur.

Taking regular feed samples (at least 1 kg from every batch of feed delivered) is always a good idea. Please talk with your nutritionist and feed suppliers about details concerning storage and testing.

Veterinarians advise producers to collect blood samples two-three weeks after the last vaccination, before the birds go into production. Blood samples should be sent to a serology lab, or the serum separated from the blood and frozen. Labs will provide syringes, needles and tubes, as well as detailed instructions for taking samples and separating serum.

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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 21st, 2012

Next issue of *EggNotes*:
October 4th, 2012

“YOKES” OF THE MONTH



Guaranteed to crack you up!

Q: Why are chickens so neat?

A: Because they always have a comb!

Q: Why are chickens such good employees?

A: Because they work around the cluck!

Managing a Drop in Egg Production, Continued from Page 3

When a significant drop in egg production occurs, producers should immediately notify the diagnostic lab and their nutritionist. This is the best way to rule out viral infection and to isolate a virus. Most viruses, such as Infection Bronchitis, are present in the beak and trachea of infected birds for only a short period of time (2-3 days). It is critical to get appropriate samples as soon as possible, but submitting 10 live sick birds is not always feasible. Another option is to take swabs from the birds.

Finally, three to four weeks after the onset of the problem, producers can take another set of blood samples. Comparing the test results of those samples with the results of the first set of samples (after all vaccinations) can provide the answer regarding the presence of a virus. Since peak antibody levels can be expected two to three weeks after vaccination, the first sample results become a baseline for your flock and any increase in antibody levels seen after that time indicates the presence of a viral disease challenge. Gaining knowledge of a disease challenge allows producers to modify and monitor their vaccination program, to achieve lasting protection for future flocks.

A drop in egg production is a common problem in laying hens. Taking the right samples at the right time is the key to determining the cause. Blood and feed samples collected before you have a problem is critical to solving problems when they occur and ensuring ongoing success.

Field Statistics Update

Here's an update on how our farmers have done with their Start Clean – Stay Clean (SC-SC) and Animal Care Program (ACP) evaluations in 2012:

- 57 SC-SC layer evaluations have been completed in 2012
 - ✓ Alberta's average score: 98.6%
 - ✓ 15 Alberta farmers have scored a perfect 100% rating
 - ✓ All Alberta egg farmers are accredited in the program
- 101 ACP evaluations have been completed in 2012
 - ✓ Alberta's average score: 97.9%
 - ✓ 54 Alberta farmers have scored a perfect 100% rating
- 42 SC-SC pullet evaluations have been completed in 2012
 - ✓ Alberta's average score: 98.0%
 - ✓ 21 Alberta farmers have scored a perfect 100% rating
 - ✓ 3 Alberta farmers are newly accredited in the program

EFA would like to thank all our farmers for their commitment and hard work every day, ensuring that safe, quality eggs are produced humanely!

EGG FARMING BEST PRACTICE

To prevent pests, such as rodents, flies and beetles, from entering your barn, you need to check your doors regularly to ensure that they are tight fitting and properly sealed. If you can see light coming through an opening, that is enough space for pests and their diseases to enter your facility. Drafty door problems can be solved by adjusting the door in the frame or installing either weather-stripping or a door-sweep, which can be found at your local hardware store.

BIO-SECURITY TIP

Provide direct access from outside to the RA (ie: the egg storage room), to limit a driver's movements.

LIFE CYCLE ANALYSIS PROJECT

EFA would like to thank all producers who participated in the Life Cycle Analysis Project survey administered by Quantis. The following registration numbers have been drawn as lucky prize winners. Your prize should arrive via mail in the coming weeks.

Congratulations to the following:

B010	G274	H037	J101
K385	N004	P296	P320
R244	R263	S006	S458
S656	W252		

Producer Services Update

Salmonella Enteritidis (SE) Test Kits Updated

With the launch of the enhanced SE Testing program in Alberta, the provincial Food Safety Lab now has to process significantly more samples each month. To help reduce costs and make the kits easier to process, the SE Test kits have been updated. Instead of having 4 plastic vials to place the Salmonella swabs in, one sterile whirl-pak bag is now included for all the samples to be placed in. When samples arrive at the lab, they have always been pooled into the same container, before testing is completed. This new kit will make it easier for EFA field coordinators and the lab staff to handle and process the samples.

In light of this change, samples will now be collected on-farm in a slightly different manner. Previously, the field coordinator would go all around the barn and collect samples from the fans, then change gloves and collect samples from all of the cage bottoms. After review by the Production Management Committee and Alberta Agriculture experts on Salmonella testing, it has been determined that a more effective way to collect samples is to only circle the barn once, collecting swabs from the fans, floors, egg belts and cage bottoms in one area, then moving to the next area of the barn to do the same at multiple locations. Gloves will be changed when going from one flock to another, but not within the same lay facility. This will help reduce the disruption to the birds, since the sampler will only have to go around the barn once.

If you have any questions about Salmonella testing, please speak with one of EFA's field coordinators or call Christina Robinson at the office.

Medium Egg Project Update

In cooperation with EFA, the Poultry Research Centre (PRC) team has identified 15 farms to work with for the second phase of the medium egg study, which includes farm visits. The farms selected are representative of the variation of management styles and medium egg production in the Alberta industry. The PRC has visited about half the farms and will be contacting the remaining farms soon. One flock from each farm will be followed from chick placement to depopulation. Each of the participating farms have been guaranteed that their information will only be shared by pooling all of the farm information together. Farm identification will be held confidentially. Placements happen throughout the year and the PRC will need all the data from all the farms, before the study can be completed.

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EFA PRODUCER WEBSITE

EFA continues to develop and add to the EFA producer website. EFA's goal is to provide our producers with an easy to navigate site that is full of useful information that you can refer to when you need answers. The following resources are now available:

- Learn more about the CIBC Run for the Cure and how to donate to the EFA team (*on the homepage*)
- EFA's June Regional Meeting presentation is now available (*under 'Information Center'*)
- The presentation by Rob Lucas, from CFIA, is now available (*under 'Best Production Practices – On Farm Feed Mills'*)
- Emerging Layer Health Issues is a new resource that has been added (*under 'Best Production Practices – Poultry Health'*)
- Manure Management Record Worksheets are now available (*under 'Best Production Practices – Environment'*) → please see page 8 of this issue of *EggNotes* for more details about Manure Record Keeping

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

www.albertaeggproducers.ca

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

Producer Services Update, Continued from Page 5

From each of the farms to be studied in phase 2, feed samples from each dietary phase will be collected for nutritional analysis. This will allow the study to determine whether dietary analyzed nutrient values reflect formulated values. During farm visits (5 per farm), the team will weigh birds and eggs, and record relevant management and production data that research has indicated affect egg size. Visits will be coordinated with producers to ensure samples and measurements are collected at critical times (ie: during the pullet phase, at placement, phase changes, peak production and late in lay). Temperature and humidity in egg coolers will be monitored. Once the data from all the farms is collected, a basic economic analysis will be completed, to identify solutions to reduce medium egg production.

By sharing farm practices and data, these farms will be contributing to the development of strategies to replace the production of medium sized eggs with large eggs, to improve profitability. Together, we can work to improve Alberta's egg industry.

Productivity Improvement Initiative Opportunities

Opportunities are currently available through Alberta Agriculture's Productivity Improvement program for assessments and coaching in 3 Streams to Productivity: Automation, Lean and Lean & Green.

What? Assessment of your production facility to identify opportunities for introducing automation, streamlining processes, reducing waste, increasing sustainability, etc...

Who? For Alberta agri-processors or producers.

When? Throughout 2012, but there are limited funds available!

Where? The assessment(s) takes place in your facility or on your farm.

How Much? No charge for the assessment for approved participants. Then you apply to the Workforce Development grant, to access reimbursement on 80% of the costs on phase 2.

Why? Potentially improved productivity, greater efficiency, reduced waste, higher profits and increased sustainability.

Interested? Please visit the Productivity Improvement website: **agriculture.alberta.ca/productivity**, or contact Nichola Stevens from Alberta Agriculture, at 403-948-8511.

EFA REGIONAL MEETING RECAP

The EFA Regional Meetings were held June 19-21, with a loaded agenda. The EFA Board of Directors reported back to producers about a variety of topics that had been raised at February's AGM, including: reporting to producers, quota lease fees and pricing.

Alexander Courchesne, from Quantis, discussed the Life Cycle Analysis project and explained why learning about the carbon footprint of a dozen eggs is important.

Dr. Brad Turner, from DSM, gave an informative presentation on Optimum Egg Quality, including the causes and methods of preventing a variety of egg defects. Every producer received a resource book titled Optimum Egg Quality – A Practical Approach.

Rob Lucas, from CFIA, helped producers better understand the regulations for on-farm feed mills, by discussing the requirements for producers who mix their own feed and CFIA's inspection process.

Christina Robinson, EFA's Producer Services Manager, gave a demonstration of how Lean management practices can be used on-farm to improve overall efficiency and productivity.

EFA would like to thank all the producers and the various industry representatives who attended our regional meetings!

The Risks of Topping-Up Flocks

Imagine this common scenario: Your birds are halfway through their cycle and, due to the recent heat, you've lost a few hundred birds from heat related stresses. The obvious economic decision is to restore your quota level by topping-up your flock, in order to maximize your production. At the same time, you know a neighbor who has extra birds. Should you top-up your flock? What are the risks associated with topping-up? What can you do to reduce the risks? Here are some factors to consider.

Disease Issues: Birds you are adding to your flock may look healthy, but if they have been challenged with any infectious disease during their pullet phase, some of them may be disease carriers. If given the right conditions, they can become active shedders of the disease organisms, capable of infecting birds in the home flock. Also, differences in vaccination programs and methods may result in different profiles in immunity to diseases and can be a source of infection to the home flock, or make them more susceptible to infections from the home flock. For example, on a farm here in Alberta, ILT was spread to an entire flock from a small number of birds that were added to top-up a flock.

Production Issues: Having birds of different ages in the same lay facility also make it more difficult to manage your flock. Many aspects of your management program, such as feed formulations and lighting, are specific to a flock's age. For example, the recommended energy, protein and calcium level may be fine for the home flock, but could cause production and egg shell problems in the newly introduced birds. The lighting program of the home flock may not synchronize with that of the new birds, which alone can throw them off their production curve.

OFFS Issues: Top-up birds from flocks contaminated by Salmonella, especially *S. Enteritidis* and *S. Typhimurium*, may jeopardize the home flock by bringing the Salmonella with them.

The Start Clean – Stay Clean (SC-SC) program requires that all birds in the lay facility be depopulated at the same time, at cycle-end. If the top-up birds are much younger than the home flock birds, then the younger birds will be depopulated before completing their full lay cycle. With the added birds not being allowed to complete their full production cycle, the loss of potential value takes away much of the financial benefits that were likely hoped to be gained by topping-up. Producers also lose the opportunity to derive reliable and accurate age-related production information.

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THE RISKS OF TOPPING-UP FLOCKS, Continued from Page 7

Welfare Issues: There is a well established social order in the poultry house and, having been raised together from baby chicks, each bird in the home flock knows its place in this order. By mixing in new birds, a new stress be created for the birds; at best, this can cause a disruption in production but, at worst, this can cause increased feather pecking and potentially even more serious welfare issues, such as cannibalism.

If a producer has no other choice but to top-up, please ensure that everything possible is being done to reduce the risks, by sourcing birds that are as close as possible to the age, weight, production and uniformity of the home flock. It is important to know the history of the source flock and farm of the new birds, especially its vaccination program, Salmonella status and lighting program, in order to have as close a fit with the home flock as possible. Select birds that appear to be normal, healthy and uniform.

Healthy birds produce safe, high quality eggs. The benefit of adding a few extra birds in mid-lay is not worth the risk of impacting your flock's health and your livelihood. The recommended best practice is to maintain your flocks with one age of birds and from one source, while avoiding the urge to top-up your flock.

Manure Record Keeping

The Agricultural Operation Act (AOPA) sets out manure management standards for all agricultural operations in Alberta. Under AOPA, a person who applies 500 tonnes or more of manure, composting materials or compost in a year to land under the person's control, must keep manure or compost and land application records for a minimum of 5 years. These records must include:

- The volume or weight of manure, composting materials or compost produced.
- The name and address of a person to whom control of 500 tonnes or more of manure, composting materials or compost per year is transferred, the date of the transfer and the volume or weight transferred.
- The name and address of the person from whom manure, composting materials or compost is received, the date it was received and the volume or weight received.
- The legal description of the land to which manure, composting materials or compost is applied.
- The area of the land to which manure, composting materials or compost is applied.
- The date when manure, composting materials or compost is applied.
- The volume or weight of manure, composting materials or compost applied.
- The application rates of manure, composting materials or compost nutrients and fertilizer by field and year.
- The dates of application, incorporation and the methods used for each field.
- The soil test results by field for the nutrients specified in the Standards and Administration Regulation.

Moving forward, there may be additional efforts made to ensure compliance with the regulation, including:

- The National Resources Conservation Board (NRCB), when responding to complaints that are related to nutrient management, may ask for a copy of the records.
- Producers applying for an expansion of an existing facility may be asked to submit manure records from their pre-existing operation, during the permitting process.
- The availability of ARD CFO Specialists and/or Nutrient Management Specialists, for assistance understanding and meeting the requirements.

Worksheets provided by Alberta Agriculture are now available on EFA's producer website, for producers to download and print.

ALBERTA EGG MARKET UPDATE

The Nielson preliminary retail sales data is available up to June 30th, 2012 and indicates that in the latest 4-week period, 2.51 million dozen eggs were sold in Alberta; a 1% increase from the previous 4-week period (ending June 2nd) and a 0.5% increase in sales compared to the same period in 2011.

Nielson retail sales in the last 52 weeks are up 2.3% over the previous 52 weeks in Alberta. Specialty eggs (excluding Omega-3 eggs) have seen the largest sales growth in the last 52 weeks in Alberta; a 14.3% increase over the previous 52 weeks, to 1.3 million dozen eggs (3.8% of the total eggs sold in Alberta).

EFA ONLINE!

Remember to tell everyone you meet about the EFA 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

Calgary Stampede

EFA would like to thank everyone who came out to our booth at the 100th Calgary Stampede this July. Total attendance was estimated to be over 1.4 million people. EFA distributed more than 150,000 egg-related resources and over 26,000 promotional items! Yee-haw and *Get Cracking!*

Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation CIBC Run for the Cure

Egg Farmers of Canada is proud to be the Official Nutritional Partner of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation CIBC Run for the Cure, for the 2nd straight year. On behalf of Canada's more than 1,000 regulated egg farmers, we will be sharing the message that eggs are a great source of healthy energy for participants and supporters alike.

Egg Farmers of Alberta invites you, your family and friends to *Get Cracking!* and join us at the Run for the Cure site in Calgary on Sunday, September 30th, 2012. With your support, EFA hopes to achieve our fundraising goal, to help ensure that the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation will continue funding breast cancer research, education and health promotion initiatives across the country, making a difference from coast to coast. To learn more about the Foundation's work, visit www.cbcbf.org.

Even if you can't join us, you can still support the EFA team! Please visit www.eggs.ab.ca/run-for-the-cure and follow the links to check out EFA's official team page and make a donation to this worthwhile cause! We encourage all producers to donate \$20.00 – if you are not able to access the website, please contact David Webb at the EFA office, extension 126.

Upcoming Events

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

- **Calgary Wellness Festival**
@ Murdoch Park in Calgary, AB August 11
- **Airdrie Fest**
@ Main Street in Airdrie, AB September 8
- **CIBC Run for the Cure**
@ South Centre Mall in Calgary, AB September 30

EFA 2012 Highlights

- Total # of events attended: 17
- Total # of events sponsored: 101
- Total # of promotional items distributed: 87,707
- Total # of resources distributed: 80,355

EGG HEALTH FACTS

Eggs have always been an excellent choice for a healthy diet. Eggs are one of the few foods considered to be a complete protein because they provide all 9 essential amino acids that the body cannot make naturally!

CLASSIFIED ADS

#1) For Sale:

300 Lohmann White Pullets
19 weeks on August 19th
Contact:
Ted at Neudorf Colony
403-946-4751
House: ext. 137
Barn: ext. 321

#2) For Rent:

Pullet Barn
Room for 26,000 birds at 52 square inches per bird
Available from November 1st, 2012 to May 31st, 2013
Contact:
Dan at Homeland Colony
780-837-8944, ext. 712

#3) For Sale:

2007 Vencomatic Automatic Nests, double-sided
Contact:
Ryan Russell, for more details
403-608-8259

#4) For Sale:

Scissor Lift Platform
Deck size: 20" x 32"
Capacity: 660 lbs
Contact:
Peggy at EFA, for more details
403-250-1197

Feature Recipe: CRANBERRY PECAN PIE



Makes: 8 servings • Preparation: 15 minutes • Cooking: 55 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup (250 mL) corn syrup
- 2/3 cup (150 mL) sugar
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) butter or margarine, melted
- 1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla extract
- 1 cup (250 mL) pecan halves
- 1 cup (250 mL) fresh or frozen cranberries, cut in half
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) orange rind, grated
- 1 9" (23 cm) unbaked pastry shell, whipped cream (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

- 1) Preheat oven to 350° F (180° C).
- 2) In a medium bowl, stir together eggs, corn syrup, sugar, melted butter and vanilla, until well blended.
- 3) Stir in pecans, cranberries and orange rind, then pour into pastry shell.
- 4) Bake for 50-55 minutes or until knife inserted halfway between the center and edge comes out clean (if edge of pie browns too quickly, protect with foil).
- 5) Cool on a wire rack.
- 6) Serve with whipped cream, as desired.

Scissor Lift Platform:

