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Board of Directors Update

Your Egg Farmers of Alberta (EFA) Board was thrilled to have a tour of the EPIC plant in Lethbridge, on April 18th. There was a fantastic turnout of producers from southern and central Alberta, including the EPI Board and UEF Board. Bruce Forbes, CEO of EPIC, gave an insightful presentation, followed by an informative tour of the plant.

The grand opening of the EPIC plant is scheduled for June 25th. EPIC is proud and honoured to welcome Verlyn Olson, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, along with several other Alberta MLAs to the grand opening, as well as representatives from Egg Farmers of Canada (EFC).

The EFA Board encourages all producers to attend the upcoming Regional Meetings in Edmonton (June 11), Calgary (June 12) and Lethbridge (June 13)!

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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

The EFA office will be **closed on Monday, July 1st, for Canada Day and Monday, August 5th, for the Civic Holiday**. We hope this will not cause any inconvenience.

EGG PRICE UPDATE

Effective: from **October 14th, 2012**

Grade A

X Large	\$2.130	↑
Large	\$2.130	↑
Medium	\$1.910	↑
Small	\$1.530	↑
Nest Run	\$2.007	↑
Pee Wee	\$0.270	---

Grade B \$0.750 ---

Grade C \$0.150 ---

From the minimum paying price, processors can only deduct charge 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.

EFA Regulatory Review 2013-2014 - Update

At the January Regional Meetings, EFA spoke to producers about the Regulatory Review process that is currently underway. As mentioned previously, EFA is mandated to review its regulation every 5 years. The items being discussed for review include:

- Board member eligibility
- Removal of Directors
- Fees for licensing
- Quota leasing pool
- Over base quota policy
- Converting over base quota issued to New Entrants to base quota
- Name change to Egg Farmers of Alberta
- Contagious Disease Report

The EFA Board has had the opportunity to take a closer look at each of these items and will be presenting their summary for input from producers at the June Regional Meetings. As always, producers are encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas about these items, or to suggest new items for the Board to consider.

Field Statistics Update

This is how our farmers have done with their Start Clean – Stay Clean (SC-SC) and Animal Care Program (ACP) evaluations, so far in 2013.

- 51 SC-SC layer evaluations have been completed in 2013
 - ✓ Alberta's average score: 98.4%
 - ✓ 33 Alberta farmers scored a perfect 100% rating
- 51 ACP evaluations have been completed in 2013
 - ✓ Alberta's average score: 99.2%
 - ✓ 40 Alberta farmers have scored a perfect 100% rating
- 46 SC-SC pullet evaluations have been completed in 2013
 - ✓ Alberta's average score: 96.6%
 - ✓ 18 Alberta farmers have scored a perfect 100% rating

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

EFA PRODUCER WEBSITE

EFA's producer website is a great place to visit for information about your industry, including best production practices, emergency preparedness, hen housing and more!

You can also submit your reports for flock counts, marketings and pullet sales, directly through the website! From the home page, click on 'Forms' (at the top of the menu), then select the report you would like to submit.

The following resources are now available on the producer website:

- "Overcrowding in Nest Boxes"
- "Aggressive Feather Pecking and Plumage Damage"
- "Keel Bone Deformities"

Resources prepared for EFA by Dr. Clover Bench and her team at the University of Alberta (*under 'Animal Care'*)

Visit EFA's producer website at:
www.albertaeggproducers.ca

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

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

Producer Services Update

Start Clean – Stay Clean (SC-SC) Program Cycle

Each year, every layer and pullet producer in Alberta receives a SC-SC evaluation from an EFC Field Inspector. Part 1 and Part 2 of the SC-SC program are evaluated every year. Producers must achieve a minimum score of 90% on Parts 1 and 2, in order to qualify to receive full compensation through CEIRA (for SE) and EFC's Risk Management Fund (for Avian Influenza).

Note: the deadline for achieving a score of 90% in the SC-SC Pullet program, to qualify to receive full compensation under CEIRA, is October 1st, 2013. The current required minimum score is 80%.

Part 3 of the SC-SC program is the audit. This audit must be completed in order to receive accreditation in the SC-SC program. Accreditation is a mandatory requirement for layer producers in Alberta. In order to qualify for a Part 3 audit, producers must:

- Achieve a score of at least 90% on the Part 1 and 2 evaluations
- Receive full points for critical control points in the program
 - Layer Program – related to Refrigerated Storage (questions 1a and 1b on the evaluation form)
 - Pullet Program – no critical control points
- Have 100% of records in place
- Observe 7 days downtime between flock disposal and placement
- Complete a wet clean during flock change

Part 3 audits are completed once every 4 years. On the year that an audit is successfully completed, EFC will send you a certificate showing that you have achieved accreditation in the program. For the next three years, the Field Inspector will not complete a Part 3 audit, but you will receive a gold seal to add to your certificate, once your Part 1 and 2 evaluations have been successfully completed. However, if the Field Inspector identifies an issue when completing their annual Part 1 and 2 evaluations, your accreditation can be suspended at any time. Suspensions occur when scores fall below 90%, 7 days downtime are not observed, wet cleaning is not completed or another major program infraction is observed. Producers will then need to work to address their corrective actions, in order to regain their accreditation.

EGG FARMING BEST PRACTICE

Please remember to have your annual water test completed. A sample can be sent or delivered to a local health lab or an independent lab for testing. It is best to test your water in the spring. Please remember to keep your sample cool, but do not let it freeze, since a frozen sample will give improper information. If you need assistance with finding a lab, contact your local ARD office. Annual water tests are an important tool for ensuring your pullets and layers are getting good quality water to drink, keeping them healthy during their growth and lay cycles. Keep a copy of the water test results with your Start Clean – Stay Clean (SC-SC) records.

BIO-SECURITY TIP

Provide a vehicle disinfection station outside of the Controlled Access Zone (CAZ).

BARN FIRES AND COLLAPSES

If a barn is on fire or collapses, safety is the first priority. Evacuate the barn immediately, ensure all workers are safe and contact your county fire department. It is very important that no one re-enters the barn until it has been inspected by someone qualified and you have been told it is safe to re-enter, even if there are birds still in the barn.

EFA is currently developing a resource to help producers learn how to prevent barn fires and collapses... stay tuned to *EggNotes*!

Overcrowding in Nest Boxes

- *by Teryn Gilmet and Dr. Clover Bench, University of Alberta*

Nesting is a behavioral need in poultry and, as social animals, it is common for hens to share nest boxes. However, overcrowding of the nest box may reduce animal welfare and increase financial costs of housing laying hens. Specifically, overcrowding can lead to infected scratch lesions, heat stress, lethargy and/or suffocation. In addition, increased prevalence of dirty, cracked or broken eggs can result from too many hens in one nest box. It is important to note that overcrowding of nest boxes can occur in every alternative housing system. As hen housing systems move away from conventional cages, management practices must include strategies to decrease nest box overcrowding.

Under natural conditions, hens isolate themselves during nesting. It is not entirely known what creates social nesting, but there are four possible explanations: 1) the preference for the same nest box characteristics, 2) social facilitation – a hen carrying out nesting behavior which motivates other hens to join her, 3) an anti-predator response, 4) the preference for end nest boxes. The combination of long rows with similar-looking nest boxes in a large flock is common. Nest boxes in corners and at the end of nest box rows are preferred by laying hens and are the most common locations where overcrowding occurs. This is likely due to the innate desire for isolation during laying, or can be due to the difference in appearance from all other nest boxes.

Varying the appearance of the nest boxes has been suggested as a method to reduce nest box overcrowding. It is believed that when hens are able to distinguish between nest boxes, overcrowding is decreased. In addition, some producers provide for wider aisles at the end of long rows of nest boxes by removing the outer nest boxes. This changes the pattern of hen movement through a free-run system, directing them towards middle nest boxes.

Nest boxes must be attractive to the hen and have distinguishing characteristics in order to develop preferential sites. As hens prefer outer or corner nest boxes, the aim is to increase the attractiveness of nest boxes positioned in the middle of each row. This can help disperse nest box occupancy and decrease overcrowding of selected nest boxes. Some possibilities of increasing attractiveness, while still creating distinguishing characteristics include:

Continued on Page 5...

UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR

June 11

EFA Regional Meeting
Edmonton

June 12

EFA Regional Meeting
Calgary

June 13

EFA Regional Meeting
Lethbridge

June 14

Grader Advisory Com. Meeting
Calgary

June 17-18

CPEPC Meeting
Banff

June 17-18

ALMA Future Fare
Red Deer

June 19-20

EFA Board Meeting
Calgary

June 25

EPIC Grand Opening
Lethbridge

June 26

Western Meeting
Calgary

July 8-10

EFC Producer National Conference
Halifax, NS

July 29-30

EFA Board Meeting
Calgary

Overcrowding in Nest Boxes, Continued from Page 4

Nest Color

The color yellow is preferred by laying hens, followed by the color red. Therefore, it is recommended to have yellow nest boxes in the middle of the row and leave the corner or end nest boxes in a natural color. In some cases, green and blue nest boxes have also been preferred by a small number of hens.

Seclusion

Hens prefer single nest boxes to group nest boxes, demonstrating a desire for isolation. This could be due to the fear of predators or nest predation in hens. Good management practices which encourage a calm and quiet environment, a set routine and good handling, may help decrease overcrowding of nest boxes.

Nesting Material

Hens prefer nesting material that is easily manipulated. Placing straw in the middle of nest boxes and peat, wood shavings and/or artificial turf in the outer nest boxes may help to increase and differentiate the nest box attractiveness.

Nest Type

It has been found that hens are affected both positively and negatively by the presence and/or transparency of flaps at the entrance of nest boxes, though the exact reason and effect are unknown. Hens prefer the ability to watch the outer environment while in a nest box. However, it has also been found that non-transparent flaps may result in a more settled behavior. Therefore, in order to disperse nesting hens, producers may utilize transparent or non-transparent flaps throughout the nest box.

Conclusion

Nest boxes contribute to optimal hen welfare by satisfying the behavioral need of hens to nest. However, overcrowding of nest boxes can decrease the welfare and production output of hens. Management of nest box preferences should include strategies to prevent overcrowding.

International research in this area of layer welfare is ongoing, to better understand how management in cage-free systems impacts hen welfare and how welfare can be increased each type of housing system.

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*:
July 26th, 2013

Next issue of *EggNotes*:
August 9th, 2013

“YOKES” OF THE MONTH



Guaranteed to crack you up!

Q: What do you call a city with 20 million eggs?

A: New York City!

Q: Why can't you tease egg whites?

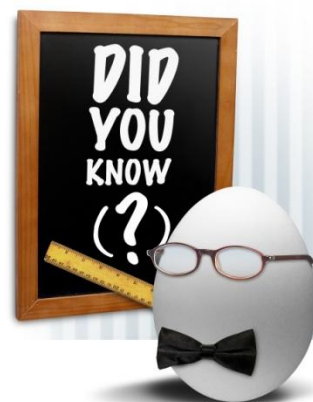
A: Because they can't take a yolk!

Research Update

One of EFA's current research priorities is to identify strategies that can be implemented on farm to decrease the occurrence of Salmonella Enteritidis (SE). Positive SE tests have occurred in Alberta even within flocks that were in compliance with the SC-SC program because even excellent biosecurity and disinfection programs do not guarantee protection. Combinations of approaches including vaccines, biosecurity and sanitation of feed ingredients are all part of a successful, multi-faceted approach to maintaining bird health and food safety.

With funding from both EFA and the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency (ALMA), Dr. Doug Korver and team are looking to identify and evaluate candidate prebiotics that are optimal for use with the Alberta layer diet. Prebiotics are non-digestible feed ingredients that promote the growth of beneficial bacteria in the gut of the bird. The inclusion of prebiotics in the diet gives a competitive advantage to the bacterial species capable of using them for growth over those species that cannot. The prebiotics tend to favor the growth of good bacteria such as Lactobacilli, which in turn can out-compete bacteria such as Salmonella and Campylobacter. The resultant good gut health can also result in improved feed efficiency, making the inclusion of prebiotics economically realistic.

The research proposal has been designed to screen candidate prebiotic products. Phase 1 will provide information on the potential efficacy of a large number of products. Based on the outcome of Phase 1, the most promising candidates will be further evaluated under Alberta egg production conditions. The researchers will use changes in native microbial populations in the treated birds as indicators of the expected capacity to reduce pathogens under field conditions. At this point, they will be able to make reasonable recommendations regarding products that are likely to be successful in reducing transmission of food-borne pathogens to eggs in Alberta.



GROWING FORWARD 2

Growing Forward 2 recently launched the Food Safety Systems Producer program, which has been introduced to help producers invest in equipment and tracking systems, to improve on-farm food safety practices, enhancing producers' business competitiveness and food safety performance.

Under this program, successful applicants are eligible for reimbursement of 70% of eligible activities intended to enhance On-Farm Food Safety (OFFS).

Eligible items include equipment or systems related to maintaining food safety standards, as identified by our industry's OFFS program (SC-SC). Maximum payment under the program is \$5,000 (there is a \$1,000 minimum).

Producers considering making any improvements to their operation are encouraged to contact Growing Forward, to learn more about possible funding opportunities.

GF2 Website:

www.growingforward.alberta.ca

Phone:

310-FARM

Environmental Education Program (EEP)

At the AGM in February, EFA communicated that the development of an Environmental Education Program (EEP) for egg farmers in Alberta is underway.

As an egg farmer, you probably already know that interest in environmental protection and sustainable development is growing each year. You might hear about environmental issues from customers, the public, regulators, or others and be asked what you do as an egg farmer to help ensure the sustainability of our food production. As an organization, EFA is also increasingly challenged to demonstrate the commitment that egg farmers have to the environment.

The EEP is intended to help egg farmers better identify their impacts on the environment and promote the increased use of best practices within the industry. This will help to ensure that resources are being managed in a sustainable fashion and that the egg industry continues to be recognized as a source of safe, high-quality food produced in an environmentally responsible manner.

Most egg farmers are already good stewards. However, the EEP will provide you with information about impacts of activities on your operation that you may not have been aware of, while giving you goals and targets for gradual improvement. The EEP assessment is an entirely voluntary process that helps you identify and address environmental risks and opportunities in your operation. Completing an EEP and actively working at improving your score should help you improve your carbon footprint and contribute to the sustainability of the egg industry in Alberta. The Producer Manual is a summary of the "what" and "why" behind the assessment and is intended to explain the risk ratings. The Manual may serve as a management tool for producers and should help to guide you through decision making in important environmental aspects of your operation. Since the AGM, the Assessment forms and Producer Manual have been completed and reviewed by EFA's Production Management Committee and staff from the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP). In June, EFA staff and EFP representatives will be visiting a couple farms to do a dry run of the program, which will allow EFA to incorporate feedback from technical experts and producers.

EFA looks forward to launching this program for producers in 2014 and we hope that through education and gradual improvements, we will be able to demonstrate producer commitment to environmental management to consumers, retailers and vested stakeholders. If you have any questions about the program development, please contact Jenna Griffin (Ext. 129).

ALBERTA EGG MARKET UPDATE

The Nielson preliminary retail sales data is available up to May 4th, 2013 and indicates that in the latest 4-week period, 2.5 million dozen eggs were sold in Alberta; a 4.2% decrease from the previous 4-week period (ending April 6th) and a 1.4% decrease in sales compared to the same period in 2012.

Nielson retail sales in the last 52 weeks are up 2.2% 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 20.4% increase over the previous 52 weeks, to 1.8 million dozen eggs (5.5% 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

Alberta Minister of Agriculture Attends EFA Farm Tour

EFA held its first egg farm tour of 2013 on May 3rd, and is honoured to have had the privilege of welcoming several special guests onto one of our egg farms in the Camrose area. The kind folks at Rosalind Colony played host to the Honourable Verlyn Olson, MLA for Wetaskiwin-Camrose and Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, David Dorward, MLA for Edmonton-Gold Bar, Dave Burdek, Executive Director of Policy, Strategy and Intergovernmental Affairs Division, Freda Molenkamp-Oudman, General Manager of Marketing Council and Mike Pearson, Marketing Council, giving them the opportunity to step into the boots of a real modern egg farmer and take a tour of the Colony's egg farm.

The entire colony came out for the tour, greeting our guests with wonderful hospitality. Several EFA Directors and staff were on-hand to help answer questions, while Mike Stahl did an admirable job of leading the tour. A few reporters also joined the tour, with stories being printed in Western Producer and Alberta Farmer Express. Rosalind Colony graciously welcomed several guests for lunch following the tour. Thank you Rosalind Colony!

Upcoming Events

Come visit the EFA booth at these *EGG*cellent events:

- **Calgary Stampede**
Calgary (Stampede Park), July 5th – 14th
- **Premier's Breakfast**
Calgary (McDougall Centre), July 8th

EFA 2013 Highlights

- Total # of events attended: 19
- Total # of events sponsored: 71
- Total # of school presentations: 58
- Total # of resources distributed: 85,170
- Total # of promotional items distributed: 47,110

If you have any questions about EFA's marketing initiatives or want to let us know about something *EGG*citing happening in your area, please contact David Webb (Ext. 126) or Catherine Kelly (Ext. 128).

NATURAL RESOURCES
CONSERVATION BOARD (NRCB)
TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The NRCB has added a new document to Part 2: Technical Requirements section of the Agricultural Operation Practices Act (AOPA) application, which came into effect on April 15, 2013. Any producers planning on expanding their egg farming operation should familiarize themselves with the updated AOPA application process.

CLASSIFIED ADS



#1) For Sale:

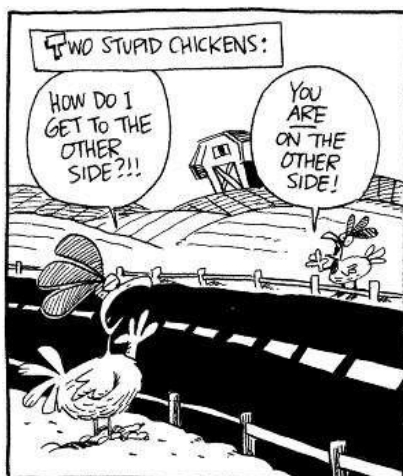
Lohmann LSL Lite pullets

19 weeks on July 30th

Contact:

Walter @ Riverbend Colony

403-534-2166 (77) (44) x207



Feature Recipe: APPLE AND SPICE BREAD PUDDING



INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tbsp (30 mL) butter or margarine
- 2 medium apples, cored and chopped
- Cooking spray
- 3 cups (750 mL) day-old white or whole wheat bread cubes
- ½ (125 mL) raisins
- 4 large eggs
- 2 cups (500 mL) milk
- ½ cup (75 mL) packed brown sugar
- 1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla extract
- ½ tsp (2 mL) ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp (1 mL) ground nutmeg

DIRECTIONS:

- 1) In a saucepan, melt butter over medium heat.
- 2) Stir in apples.
- 3) Cover and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until slightly softened (about 5 minutes).
- 4) Spray a shallow 1 ½ quart (1.5 L) baking dish with cooking spray.
- 5) Combine apples, bread cubes and raisins in baking dish.
- 6) In a medium bowl, beat together eggs, milk, brown sugar, vanilla, cinnamon and nutmeg, until sugar is dissolved.
- 7) Pour over apple mixture.
- 8) Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours.
- 9) Preheat oven to 350 F (180 C).
- 10) Bake pudding until knife inserted in center comes out clean (about 45 to 55 minutes).
- 11) Serve hot, warm or chilled.