

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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VICE CHAIR
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EFC ALTERNATE
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DIRECTOR
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DIRECTOR
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MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER
David Webb ext. 126

PRODUCER SERVICES MANAGER
Christina Robinson ext. 125

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
Jenna Griffin ext. 129

OFFICE MANAGER
Laurel Martin ext. 121

ADMIN ASSISTANT – CUSTOMER SERVICE
Erin Johnston ext. 101

MARKETING & EVENTS COORDINATOR
Catherine Kelly ext. 128

PRODUCER SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR
Agatha Smykot ext. 127

FIELD SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR/COORDINATOR
Dave Lastiwka ext. 132

FIELD SERVICES COORDINATOR
Murray Minchin ext. 131

BUSINESS SYSTEMS ANALYST
Ron Fowler ext. 105

Board of Directors Update

On March 1st, following the AGM, three farmers were elected to the EFA Board of Directors: Susan Schafers was re-elected while Byron Toews and Beatrice Visser were elected to their first term. Their farm and prior board experiences will be valuable for setting strategic direction for EFA. Long-serving Directors Levi Hofer and Ben Waldner retired. We thank them for their hard work and dedication to our industry!

With the elections came changes to the Board positions. Meb Gilani was elected to serve as Chair, Susan Schafers as Vice-Chair, Joe Kleinsasser as EFC Director and Beatrice Visser as EFC Alternate. John Hofer and Byron Toews will serve as Directors.

After the Red Deer meeting, it came to the Board's attention that rumors and questions have been circulating regarding Susan Gal's position as General Manager. The Board does not support or give credence to these rumors. The Board and Susan Gal have committed to maintain a strong, respectful working relationship, and to follow the governance model of the organization. Susan Gal is a valuable employee of EFA and continues to lead the staff with dedication and passion.

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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 **Monday,
May 23rd** for **Victoria Day**. We hope
this does not cause any
inconvenience.

Egg Price Update

Effective January 31, 2016:

Grade A

X Large	\$1.970
Large	\$1.970
Medium	\$1.740
Small	\$1.370
Nest Run	\$1.854
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.*

Board of Directors Update *continued from page 1*

The Conflict of Interest Policy that the Board abides by is a critical part of EFA's governance structure. Another term for "Board of Directors" is "Trustees". People elected on a board are serving on behalf of the members and are "trusted" to always do what is best for the organization, and for its membership as a whole. By law, they may never choose to do something that will benefit them personally – or someone in their family – at a cost to the members. Accordingly, it is crucial that any board have a clear policy that outlines how Directors will declare their involvement in issues to the board, and abstain from decisions that may be seen as a conflict. This is for their own protection, as well as the protection of the board, the organization, and the members.

The Board of Directors serves Alberta's registered egg farmers. If you have any questions or concerns, we want to hear from you – we are just a phone call away!

EFA Staffing Update

EFA would like to advise the province's egg farmers, as well as our industry partners, of some upcoming staff changes that will come into effect over the coming months. Agatha Smykot, Producer Services Administrator, will be going on maternity leave in early June. Erin Johnston, Admin Assistant – Customer Service, will be transitioning to fill Agatha's role. To cover Erin's role, EFA will be hiring a new staff member on a one-year contract. Dave Lastiwka, Field Services Administrator/Coordinator, will be moving into the field full-time. To fill Dave's administrative role, Catherine Kelly, Marketing & Events Coordinator, will be transitioning to the producer services team. These staff changes are designed to enable EFA to continue serving all registered egg farmers and the Alberta egg industry efficiently and effectively.

Specialty Pricing Update

As follow-up to the Specialty Pricing article in the February 2016 issue of *EggNotes*, the EFA Board has decided to delay the implementation of the pricing program for free-run brown eggs by one month, to allow time for the Grader Advisory Committee to meet with graders. The new implementation date is June 12, 2016. As part of the program, producers wishing to change their facilities to free-run brown must complete an Application for Change of Production, and file the application with the Board. If you require a copy of the application, it is available under the Forms section of the producer website, or you can contact the EFA office.

Producer Website Update

Take a look at some of the new resources we've added to the producer website:

- A summary of the New Entrant Program Survey results and an update on the program review process is now available on the producer website's homepage.
- To make it easier to find animal care resources, a new page has been added under Animal Care called Best Practices. This is where to look for information on humane endings (euthanasia), bird based measures for animal care, and transportation.
- You can listen to the recent Avian Influenza Town Hall Call by accessing the file on the producer website's homepage, or on the new Avian Influenza page, under Emergency Preparedness.
- Farm and Food Care has assembled an ag-aware toolkit to support agricultural ambassadors in getting out good messages about farming, hosting a farm tour and more! See the main "Be an Egg Ambassador" page for the link!

Visit EFA's producer website:

www.albertaeggproducers.ca

Field Statistics Update

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

- 21 SC-SC Layer evaluations have been completed in 2016
 - Alberta's average score: 99.66%
 - 16 Alberta farmers have scored a perfect 100% rating
- 13 Animal Care Program evaluations have been completed in 2016
 - Alberta's average score: 99.29%
 - 12 facilities have received a rating of 100%
- 8 SC-SC Pullet evaluations have been completed in 2016
 - Alberta's average score: 99.34%
 - 4 Alberta pullet growers have scored a perfect 100% rating
 - 2 pullet growers are newly accredited, with a total of 72 farms accredited in the SC-SC Pullet program. The goal is to have 90 pullet growers accredited in the SC-SC program by December 2016. If you are not yet accredited, and would like to learn more about what you need to do to achieve this, please contact the EFA office.

EFA would like to thank farmers for their commitment and hard work each and every day, to ensure that safe, high-quality eggs are produced humanely.

10 Year Deadline to Activate Quota – April 2019

In 2009, EFA allotted over base quota for the first time because we reached our base quota threshold of 1,705,690 birds, which had been set by the provincial government. The April 19, 2009 over base allotment was calculated at a rate of 5.0697% of a producer's base quota. If producers did not have room to place the newly allotted quota in their own facility, EFA's policy provided the flexibility for producers to lease this quota out for a maximum of 10 years. This is a reminder that in three years, on April 18, 2019, all quota from the 2009 allotment must be activated in the production facilities of the producer to whom the quota is allotted, at the current hen housing specifications, or the quota will revert to the Board. If you would like to confirm the status of your 2009 quota allotment, please contact EFA's Producer Services Administrator.

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*:
June 3, 2016

Watch for your next issue:
June 17, 2016

Classified Ads



For Sale:

Philip @ Lone Pine Colony has 400 White Novogen layers and 400 Brown Novogen layers for sale. 19 week date is June 24, 2016.

Call 1-403-742-3454 ext 276

Salmonella Enteritidis Sampling and Response – Q&A

There has recently been an increase in the number of questions about Egg Farmers of Alberta's Salmonella Enteritidis (SE) sampling and response protocols. This article aims to address these questions.

EFA's current SE Sampling and response policies were developed in 2011 & 2012, following the development of Egg Farmers of Canada's national microbiological sampling protocols and the establishment of CEIRA insurance. The policies were developed in partnership with Alberta Agriculture, as SE is a provincially reportable disease in Alberta.

Why are all flocks tested at once?

The national protocols recommend that all egg layer and pullet barns on a farm are sampled and tested at the same time. This recommendation is followed in Alberta; EFA samples all pullet and layer flocks when we are on farm. This way, if one flock is found to be SE positive, information about the status of other flocks on farm that is available, to quickly help guide the disease response.

How often do flocks need to be sampled?

Flocks are sampled three times: once in the pullet barn between 3-15 weeks of age, and twice in the layer barn, with one test taking place early in lay (19-35 weeks) and a second test in mid-lay (36-60 weeks). This schedule for sampling flocks aligns with the national protocol's recommendations.

How are samples collected and processed?

The national protocols outline that a minimum of 60 sites are sampled within each facility. In Alberta, the sampling protocol is to collect 60 samples from standard sites. In a cage barn these sites include: facility floors and walls, fans, egg belts and cage bottoms. In loose housing systems the sample sites include: facility floors and walls, fans, egg belts or slats, feeders, water lines and nest boxes. The Alberta policy is to pool all samples, which helps keep the costs of processing samples down. In cases where a producer has tested positive for SE multiple years in a row, EFA may make a request that samples be tested separately to help identify the location of the SE.

It is up to each province to decide which lab will process the samples gathered. EFA sends samples to the Agri-Food Laboratories Branch in Edmonton. EFA pays for the cost of the sampling kits and Alberta Agriculture covers the costs for processing the samples.

What happens when there is an SE positive result?

When there is an SE positive result in a flock in Alberta, EFA works closely with Alberta Agriculture and EFC to coordinate the response.

Upcoming Events

April 13 & 14

Quebec AGM (Quebec City)

April 18

EFC Egg Board Consultations
(Ottawa)

April 19 & 20

EFC Board Governance & Strategic
Planning (Ottawa)

May 3

EFA Board Meeting (Calgary)

June 8

EFA Regional Meeting (Grande
Prairie)

June 9

EFA Regional Meeting (Edmonton)

June 16

EFA Regional Meeting (Lethbridge)

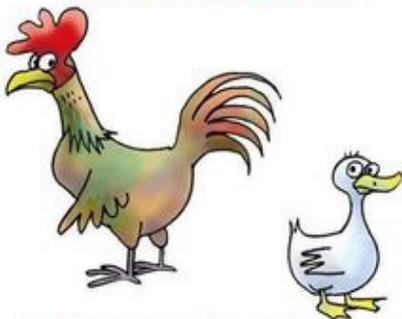
June 17

EFA Regional Meeting (Calgary)

“Yolk” of the Month

Guaranteed to crack you up!

*A duck was about to cross the
road when a chicken
looked at him and said....*



**"DONT DO IT MAN.... YOU WILL
NEVER HEAR THE END OF IT!"**

Salmonella Enteritidis Sampling and Response – Q&A *continued from page 4*

Positive pullet flocks are depopulated, while positive layer flocks are either depopulated or the eggs are diverted to the breaker, dependent on a decision from EFC. In Alberta, the SE positive barns are quarantined by Alberta Agriculture and a disease investigation is initiated. During a disease investigation, a veterinarian from Alberta Agriculture will go on farm and complete extensive sampling and information gathering to determine if a source of the SE can be found. Sampling by Alberta Agriculture may be conducted in pullet and layer barns, in pests found on farm (ie: mice), and in other poultry or livestock barns around the farm. This enhanced sampling can help producers identify specific areas that are SE positive to assist in cleaning and disinfecting as well as preventing re-infection. The veterinarian will also complete a risk assessment by looking at biosecurity protocols on farm, inputs such as feed and cleaning and disinfection practices. Disease investigations and support from Alberta Agriculture veterinarians serve a number of purposes, including attempting to find the source of the infection, providing biosecurity recommendations and confirming that bird disposal sites are appropriate to help limit the spread of infection and re-infection, and providing guidance on effective cleaning and disinfection.

The quarantine on an SE positive barn remains in effect until a barn is cleaned, disinfected and receives a negative SE result from post cleaning and disinfecting sampling. Once the quarantine is removed birds can be moved back into the barn. Sampling in the flock directly after an SE positive is increased, as outlined in the national protocol. Pullet flocks are sampled one additional time for a total of two tests, and layer flocks are sampled two additional times for a total of 4 tests per cycle.

Does Alberta find more SE positive cases because our sampling program is more frequent or stringent than other provinces?

As detailed above, EFA's sampling protocols align with the national protocols set by EFC. EFA does not sample more frequently or stringently than other provinces. Historically we tend to see more SE positive cases in Alberta. There are a number of possible reasons for the rate of salmonella positive results, including Alberta's high number of multi-commodity farms and multi-age laying barns. Also, once an SE infection is present on farm, it can spread to the environment and the pest population, creating an increased risk of re-infection.

If you have more questions about EFA's SE programs, you are welcome to read the complete policies, which can be found on the producer website under Information Center, EFA's Policies. The two policies related to SE are OPP 7.3 – SE Sampling Protocol for Layer Barns and Pullet Barns, and OPP 7.4 – SE Post-Positive Protocol for the Alberta Egg Industry.

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

Now it's even easier to subscribe to *EggNotes*! Check out the Publications page on the EFA website to sign-up for a subscription, read the current issue, and even read past issues:

www.eggs.ab.ca/about/publications

EFC Staffing Update

Egg Farmers of Canada (EFC) has hired a new Field Inspector for Alberta. Mona Ivan, who was previously completing the third party animal care audits, is now EFC's Northern Field Inspector. Kristina Oxtoby, who has been an EFC Field Inspector in Alberta since 2013, is moving from the Northern to the Southern area. EFC Field Inspectors are responsible for completing SC-SC and Animal Care Program evaluations on farms. This year, one-third of animal care audits will be completed by a third party inspector. EFA will keep you informed of who the new third party inspector assigned to Alberta is.

Bumble Foot in Laying Hens

Emmanuel Opoku Yeboah, MSc., and Clover Bench, PhD

Bumble foot is a painful condition characterized by skin lesions found on the foot pads of layers. Wounds left untreated can lead to infection. Bumble foot is typically identified by swelling, a dark scab and/or limping in more advanced cases.



Bumble foot occurs when bacteria, such as *Staphylococcus*, cause infection in the skin of the foot, creating an eruption. The entry point for bacteria can be anything from a cut, scrape, or injury in combination with walking on wet or dirty bedding or wire flooring. Foot injuries can also result from cracked perches or repetitive heavy landings when jumping from heights.

Previous research by Tauson and Abrahamsson (2009) reported higher incidences of bumble foot in white leghorn hybrids. However, a variety of bumble foot causes have been investigated.

Stocking density is an important factor to consider. Reducing stocking density has been found to reduce toe hyperkeratosis in caged hens while improving locomotion and mobility.

According to the European Union Welfare Quality® Assessment Protocol for Layers (2009), wire floors can cause hard patches or other proliferations (thickening) of the epithelium. Siegwart (1991) found lesions often originate from pressure on the central foot pad as a result of poor perch design or wire flooring.

Different housing systems have advantages and disadvantages. Most scientific literature suggests avoiding wire floors such as those found in cage systems. However, a recent study by Heerkens et al. (2015) identified bumble foot risk factors associated with aviary, free-range, and hybrid housing systems. These results emphasize the importance of monitoring hens regularly for foot pad lesions regardless of housing type, and the need to address any concerns as soon as they are identified.

The most common behavioural indicator of bumble foot is lameness. By the time a hen is observed limping, however, infection has likely been active for some time. Examination of the footpad may reveal redness, swelling, a lump between the toes, or a black scab on the foot pad. Severe inflammation or skin damage can result in swollen balloon-shaped feet.

Continued on page 8

Healthy Communities

The Calgary Zoo's *Easter Eggstravaganza* is an exciting and memorable event for the whole family. EFA is proud to sponsor this annual event, which always helps mark the arrival of spring. This year's theme was environmental conservation and sustainability, which has definitely been a focal point for EFA over the past few years. EFA event staff engaged the public and answered their questions, while sharing information about the Canadian egg industry's first on-farm environmental program (Producer Environmental Egg Program) and handing out copies of EFA's 2015 Sustainability Report. A scavenger hunt based social media contest also added to this year's level of community engagement. One lucky family will get to experience a cooking demo and have a brunch prepared by celebrity chef Pierre Lamielle!

Healthy Eggs

Past outbreaks of Avian Influenza have been connected to open water sources. If you use an open water source for your water supply, be sure to take action to ensure that the water you give your flock is free from wild bird contamination. Where possible, prevent wild birds from accessing your open water source and ensure that your water is properly treated.

Healthy Birds

The Healthy Birds article can be found on page 8.

HEALTHY BIRDS

HEALTHY FARMS HEALTHY EGGS

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Healthy Farms

Agriculture Farm Safety Coalition

In February, representatives from the Government of Alberta and the Alberta Agriculture Farm and Ranch Safety Coalition met to discuss a path forward for working together on the Bill 6 consultation process. The meeting provided an opportunity for both parties to bring forward concerns, provide additional reference information and arrive at mutually beneficial options for consideration to positively progress the consultation process.

The second AgCoalition meeting was held in early March, reinforcing the strength that unifying our industry has in creating solutions to move forward with Bill 6 in a productive way. The structure of the Coalition was further refined. The Coalition Strategy Committee is tasked with defining clear outcomes, defined objectives, and strategic direction for coalition membership. Karen Kirkwood (Executive Director, Alberta Chicken) was the name put forward to represent the interest of the poultry sector at the strategy level.

The Strategy Committee will be supported by a Technical Working Group (TWG) and an Industry Leadership Advisory Committee (ILAC), made up of industry representatives from across the sector to facilitate communication and consensus on the various consultation topics to be considered. The feedback from these groups will directly support the Strategy Committee. The Technical Working Group will include dedicated policy and communications staff to enhance and carry out the coalition's efforts. Susan Schafers was put forward from EFA to sit on the ILAC and Jenna Griffin was put forward to serve on the TWG.

As a result of a request for nominations to sit at the government round tables, Susan Schafers' name was also put forward. We understand that the government has finalized its list of round table representatives, but has not yet released these names or the dates for the consultations.

There will also be producer meetings in Grande Prairie, Nisku, and Lethbridge where EFA will be able to invite up to three producers to participate in vetting recommendations put forward by the ILAC.

If you have questions about the Agriculture Farm Safety Coalition or how you can participate in the Bill 6 consultation process, please contact Jenna Griffin at 403-250-1197 ext. 129.

Healthy Birds

Feather pecking can be a problem in all housing systems. How you raise your pullets can have a significant impact on feather pecking. Pullets that are healthy, uniform and robust are less at risk. Get your pullets used to mild disturbances – try talking to your birds as you walk through your flock. Be sure to avoid multiple stressors at the same time; for example, changing diet at the same time as completing vaccinations. For more information on managing feather cover see EFA's Feather Loss Advice Guide, which can be found on the producer website under Animal Care, Best Practices, Bird Based Measures.

Western Poultry Conference

The second annual Western Poultry Conference was once again a success, with a sold-out crowd. Those who attended were engaged and thoroughly enjoyed the informative presentations and guest speakers. Proceedings from the conference are posted on the Western Poultry Conference website: <http://westernpoultryconference.ca/conference/western-poultry-conference-2016/>

Many thanks to the organizers and presenters of the event; tremendous efforts on your part!

Upcoming Marketing Events

Come visit the EFA booth at this EGGcellent event:

- AMAZing AG – Edmonton May 3-5, 2016

Symptoms of Bumble Foot Bumble Foot in Laying Hens *continued from page 6*

Measures should be taken to prevent the occurrence of bumble foot in layer flocks before it becomes a problem. Treatment is often time consuming and eradicating it completely can be difficult. Layer feet should be regularly inspected for any signs of infection at the earliest possible stage. A well balanced ration should be provided to hens for each phase of production. Provide proper perching which is splinter-free and set at an appropriate height. There is some scientific evidence that perches designed with flattened tops and bottoms reduce the incidence of bumble foot and enhance natural gripping around the perch by the toes and claws. Finally, ensure litter is always properly maintained.

Footpad condition contributes to the well-being of your laying hens. In particular, bumble foot can result in severe distortion and permanent damage to the foot. Therefore, it is recommended that producers regularly monitor their hens for signs of bumble foot and include assessments of foot pads as part of their regular management practices.

EFC Announces Industry Wide Transition from Conventional Cages

After consultation with provincial egg boards across Canada, a national transition plan to move the egg industry away from conventional cage housing was passed. The transition will take place over a period of 20 years. Under the plan, the industry expects to achieve a 50/50 mix of conventional and alternative housing after 8 years, and about 85% alternative production in 15 years.

Producers will still be able to choose from a variety of housing systems including furnished, free-run and aviary. Egg Farmers of Alberta has had a directive in place since December 31, 2014, prohibiting the installation of new conventional cages. EFA has been working with EFC and the other provincial egg boards to reach a consensus for a national hen housing policy, and applauds EFC for the formal announcement made recently.

The Retail Council of Canada grocery members also recently announced a decision to transition to cage-free eggs, by the end of 2025.

2016 Marketing Statistics

- Total # of events attended: 5
- Total # of school and health presentations: 34
- Total # of events sponsored: 29
- Total # of resources distributed: 17,954
- Total # of promotional items distributed: 13,087

Save the Date!

All producers were provided with a Farm Safety Producer Package at EFA's Regional Meetings in January, which included a checklist for Job Task Hazard Assessments (JTHAs) for their operation. EFA's goal is to have at least 50% of producers complete the checklist by June of this year. As a farm owner, operator, or manager, you are responsible for knowing and applying best farm safety management practices, and for ensuring the safety of everyone who lives on, visits, or works on your farm. The worksheet covers the nine most dangerous tasks specific to an egg operation. For each task, there are a list of hazards and prevention controls that could be put in place. The idea is to review the tasks and check off where you can help mitigate risk. If you need a new copy of the package or checklist, please contact Producer Services.

EFA will deliver a half-day workshop specific to egg farming, where producers who have completed their JTHA checklist can bring their list of hazards and controls, and leave with an understanding of how to educate workers on the controls in place, how to update the assessment, and how to do incident/hazard reporting.

The workshops are tentatively scheduled for July 12th (Balzac), 13th (Lethbridge), 19th (Edmonton) and 20th (Grand Prairie).

Depopulation Technologies

EFA continues to invest in research and technology to ensure producers have access to equipment to depopulate their flocks that is humane, efficient, and affordable.

Following the successful small scale trial of a mobile Low Atmospheric Pressure Stunning (LAPS) unit in Alberta, EFA has secured funding to conduct a pilot program that makes the service available for use for flock depopulation. The first step is to improve efficiencies by purchasing additional modules, constructing a loading conveyor, and improving the dumping mechanism. The equipment will be ready for producers to use for their depopulation beginning in early summer at a cost of \$0.05 per bird.

Gassing systems continue to be available for rent from Real Solutions. These systems meet the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) standards which require the use of a flow meter and regulator for CO₂ euthanasia of laying hens. Producers interested in improving gassing on their farm are encouraged to talk to Steve Laycock at Real Solutions. He can be contacted at 587-338-5055.

EFA has a CO₂ monitor that can be borrowed to help you validate your system and process. Since February, five producers have used the CO₂ monitor to improve their procedure and set-up.

While EFC's new Animal Care Program euthanasia elements will immediately require you to have a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in place, the EFA Board's long-term goal is that all egg farmers are verified to be using third party approved methods for euthanasia.

Please contact Jenna Griffin at 403-250-1197 ext. 129 if you have questions about MAC carts or LAPS.

Disease Risk Management Project

In early March, producers received a fax outlining an opportunity to look at improving flock health. The project involves having blood taken from 10 birds during pullet, layer 1, and layer 2 Salmonella testing. It also offers free vaccination, guns, and tubing for participating producers, to vaccinate their flocks against Salmonella Enteritidis, Salmonella Heidelberg, and Salmonella Typhimurium. The producer is responsible for providing the labor for the injectable vaccine. EFA currently has 20 flocks enrolled in the study, and there is still an opportunity to participate! If you have had issues with shell quality, drops in production, or have been positive over the past few years for SE, SH, or ST in your layer or pullet barns, this project would be an excellent fit for you. Please contact Jenna Griffin at 403-250-1197 ext. 129 for more information.

Preparing for the Cost of Production Survey

EFC is making preparations for the upcoming cost of production survey. Cost of production (COP) is calculated by examining the costs incurred to produce a dozen eggs and is the basis for the producer paying price for eggs. There will be an expanded scope for the upcoming COP study, which will include both conventional and furnished production. The survey will also include bi-annual feed costs and rate of lay adjustments that will enhance the COP's ability to capture changes in farmers' expenses between studies.

The fieldwork phase of the upcoming study will begin in early 2017. You may be contacted to participate in the study and we strongly encourage you to do so. Participation is essential to ensure farmer costs are captured and reflected accurately in the COP. By taking part in the process you help the Canadian egg industry operate with integrity and transparency.

New Organic Standards

The Canadian Organic Standards were updated in November of 2015. The updated standards will have an impact on both new and existing organic egg facilities. Organic producers will have one year from the time of publishing (to November 2016) to implement the new standards. Some material barn renovations will be allowed three years to be completed.

Some of the key differences with the updated standards are:

- Layer flocks shall be limited to 10,000 birds. More than one flock can be in the same building if flocks are separated and have separate (outdoor) runs.
- Multi-level aviary systems shall have no more than three levels or tiers above ground level.
- Outdoor areas shall:
 - be free of prohibited substances for 36 months prior to their use
 - be managed in a way that encourages use by the birds
- The laying flock shall have outdoor access for a minimum one-third of its laying life.
- Rearing facilities closely matched with the conditions that exist in the layer barn are recommended. Pullets, however, may be kept indoors until they are fully immunized.
- Exits or popholes that allow access to the range must allow passage for more than one bird at a time and be evenly distributed along the line of access to the outdoor range. The number and size of exits are also prescribed as follows:

Combined width of popholes	Minimum width of each pophole	Minimum Height	Minimum Number
2m (6.6ft)/1000 hens	50 cm (20")	35 cm (14")	2

- Poultry housed indoors shall be provided with natural light either with evenly distributed windows or light permeable fabric. The total window area shall be no less than 1% of the total ground floor area, unless it can be demonstrated that natural light levels are sufficient to read a document such as a newspaper anywhere in the barn.

If you are an organic producer, or are interested in organic production, EFA recommends that you review the full organic standards document, which can be accessed online on the Canadian Organic Grower's website www.cog.ca or by calling the EFA office.

Quota Leasing Pool Update

In 2016, quota leasing has transitioned from producer negotiated agreements to an EFA run quota leasing pool. In this first round of the leasing pool, producers applied to lease 227,930 layers of quota with start dates between April 10, 2016 and May 27, 2017. There were 208,791 layers of quota available to lease through the pool with 92,466 layers committed to grandfathered leases and 116,325 layers available for the general leasing pool. Quota in the general leasing pool was allocated on a pro-rata basis, calculated on the amount of quota producers applied for, to a maximum of 7% of the pool (14,615 birds). One producer hit the 7% cap, while all other applications for quota from the general leasing pool were satisfied at a rate of 91.3%.

Payments for leases through the quota leasing pool were due on March 18, 2016 and payment to those who contributed quota to the pool will be made April 15, 2016.

As with any new EFA program, we will be conducting a review to determine if any policy adjustments need to be made to ensure the program is working for producers as intended. Any adjustments to the leasing pool will be communicated to our producer group once they are finalized. We would like to thank our producers for their support as we undergo this change to make quota leasing more equitable and easier to administer for all Alberta egg farmers.

EFA Wins Sustainability Award

On November 18, 2015, Egg Farmers of Alberta was named the winner of Canadian Poultry's 2015 Sustainability Award! This achievement is an incredible honour for everyone at EFA, and was made possible thanks to the passion, hard work and commitment of the province's more than 160 registered egg farmers.

Canadian Poultry indicated that Egg Farmers of Alberta won the prestigious award as a result of being a true pioneer of sustainability in Canada's poultry industry. EFA was the first commodity organization to implement an on-farm environmental program (Producer Environmental Egg Program – 2014), and the first to publish a corporate sustainability report (Sustainability Report – 2015).

On behalf of the EFA Board of Directors and staff, as well as the entire Alberta egg industry, we would like to thank Canadian Poultry for recognizing our initiatives in the area of sustainability, and for honoring EFA with their 2015 Sustainability Award!

Alberta Egg Market Update

The Nielsen retail sales data is available up to March 5th, 2015 and indicates that in the latest 4-week period, 2.98 million dozen eggs were sold in Alberta; a 1.4% increase from the previous 4-week period (ending February 6th) and a 7.2% increase in sales compared to the same period in 2015.

Nielsen retail sales in the last 52 weeks are up 2.7% over the previous 52 weeks in Alberta, to 36.8 million dozen eggs. Specialty eggs (excluding omega-3 eggs) have seen the largest sales growth in the last 52 weeks in Alberta; a 13.9% increase over the previous 52 weeks, to 2.88 million dozen eggs (7.8% of the total eggs sold in Alberta).

GF2 Programs for Biosecurity and Livestock Welfare Open

It was recently announced that Growing Forward 2 (GF2) programs for producers are accepting applications in the areas of Animal Health Biosecurity and Livestock Welfare. These programs provide financial support for producers to adopt best practices in animal biosecurity and livestock welfare. Eligible expenses under the programs are cost shared 50% by the producer and 50% by the grant.

For both programs, a risk assessment must be submitted with the application – the assessment can provide many project ideas to consider for inclusion in the funding application. The risk assessments and application forms can be found on the GF2 website (www.growingforward.alberta.ca/Programs). For more information, call Alberta Agriculture at 310-FARM (3276). These programs close once funds are allocated.