

EggNotes

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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 & other stakeholders

EFA Office Hours

Our office will be closed multiple dates in December and January. Please see events for more details

Egg Price Update

Effective November 12, 2017

Canada Grade	Size	Price Per Dozen	
A	Extra Large	2.150	↑
A	Large	2.150	↑
A	Medium	1.920	↑
A	Small	1.550	↑
A	Nest Run	2.025	↑
A	Pee Wee	0.270	-
B		0.750	-
C		0.150	-

Note: 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.

EggNotes is the official newsletter of
 Egg Farmers of Alberta.

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

Next Issue: January 12, 2018

Note: EggNotes can be accessed on the EFA website (both full issue PDF and blog posts) or EFA's producer website



EFA Board Update

At their Board meeting on November 7, Egg Farmers of Canada provided an outlook for 2018, as well as an update about ongoing international trade negotiations.

In 2017, the average growth of egg sales has been over 5%, and continuing this strong growth is anticipated for 2018, although perhaps on a somewhat smaller scale. EFC also mentioned an improved relationship with Farm Products Council of Canada as a highlight, and looks forward to working with a new Chair and FPCC members next year. The egg industry's transition away from conventional housing is expected to be under close scrutiny over the next few years. A few key areas of focus in 2018 will be building public trust and social responsibility.

Trade negotiations were characterized by EFC as being one of the more challenging issues at this time, with both TPP-11 and NAFTA discussions in play at this time, as well as a TWO Ministerial meeting scheduled for December. For TPP-11, there has been serious effort put forward to reach agreement (minus the US), which is a concern to supply management because of the market access provisions agreed to in the original TPP Agreement. For NAFTA, Round 4 ended on a sour note, with no positive spin on the outcome of the talks, which indicates that negotiations will likely extend into 2018.



HEALTHY BIRDS

HEALTHY FARMS HEALTHY EGGS

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

EFA Board of Director's Nomination

At EFA's upcoming Annual General Meeting, two seats on the EFA Board of Directors will need to be filled. Byron Toews has completed his first term, which was to fill the seat left vacant when Ben Waldner resigned in 2015. Byron is available for re-election. Peter Waldner was appointed by the Board in April to replace Meb Gilani, when EFA's regulations were amended to prohibit processors from serving on the Board. As per the regulation, this position must now be declared vacant and must be filled by means of an election.

Producers will receive a nomination package in December, which will include a nomination form. The nomination form must be signed by two different registered producers and must have signed consent by the nominee. Nomination forms can be submitted via email, fax or by hand, and must be received by no later than 14 days prior (February 13, 2018) to the AGM. Nominations will no longer be permitted from the floor at the AGM.

Nielson Update

The Nielsen retail sales data is available up to November 11, 2017 and indicates that in the latest 4-week period, 3.17 million dozen eggs were sold in Alberta; a 0.9% decrease from the previous 4-week period (ending October 14th), and a 7.3% increase in sales compared to the same period in 2016.

Nielson retail sales in the last 52 weeks are up 4.4% over the previous 52 weeks in Alberta, to 40.27 million dozen eggs. Specialty eggs (excluding Omega-3 eggs) have seen the largest sales growth; an 11.9% increase over the previous 52 weeks, to 3.5 million dozen eggs (8.6% of the total eggs sold in Alberta).



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EFA Annual General Meeting

EFA is preparing for its 49th Annual General Meeting, which is being held in Red Deer on Tuesday, February 27, 2018. EFA looks forward to hosting a large crowd of registered egg farmers, value chain partners and industry stakeholders, as we kickoff EFA's 50th anniversary year!

Stay tuned for more information about EFA's AGM in the February issue of EggNotes.

EFA Regional Producer Meetings

EFA will be hosting a series of regional producer meetings in January provide updates and key information about a variety of important issues.

- January 16, 2018 – Calgary (Winston Golf Club – formerly the Elks Club)
- January 17, 2018 – Edmonton (Days Inn, Leduc - formerly Days Inn)
- January 24, 2018 – Lethbridge (Coast Lethbridge Hotel & Conference Centre)
- January 25, 2018 – Lethbridge (Coast Lethbridge Hotel & Conference Centre)

Producers are expected to register for their preferred meeting ahead of time, especially for the Lethbridge meetings, since space is limited each day. Producers can register online: <https://efa123.wufoo.eu/forms/2018-january-regional-meeting/>. Producers will also be receiving a hardcopy version of the registration form, which can be submitted to EFA by fax or email.

Healthy Farms



Quota Update

The EFC Board of Directors approved a motion in November that seeks prior approval for a quota increase of 869,934 birds nationally, to be effective December 31, 2017 (week 1/18). Alberta's share of this allocation amounts to a total of 124,211 layers.

EFC has submitted the appropriate quota order amendments to Farm Products Council of Canada (FPCC) for prior approval. The quota increase will not take effect until EFA has received confirmation that the quota has been approved by FPCC and ratified by EFC. At that time, all producers will be notified in writing. Please note that EFA staff and Directors will not provide any information about the quota increase over the phone.

Levy Update

EFC's budget for 2018 is projecting a phased-in levy decrease of 6 cents per dozen over the course of the year. The need for the levy decrease is due to high Urner Barry prices, which have a positive impact on the Pooled Income Fund. The current PIF levy will remain at \$.3040/dozen until week 9, when it will be reduced by \$.02/dozen. Two additional \$.02/dozen reductions will take place in week 17 and again in week 33.

The EFA Board reviewed the 2018 Operational Plan, budget and levy requirements at the December meeting. They set the total provincial levy at \$.3813/dozen, to be effective December 31, 2017 (week 1/18), which equates to \$9.70/bird.

Office Closures

December 22nd at 12pm
December 25th and 26th
December 29th at 12pm
January 1st, 2018

Upcoming Events

December 13: Production Management Committee Meeting (EFA Office)
July 8-10: EFC Summer Meeting (Calgary)



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Over Base Quota Fee Update



The Over Base Quota Fee is set on an annual basis using the following criteria:

- The fee is set at the beginning of each year
- The annual user fee will be a minimum of \$0.00 and a maximum of \$3.00/bird
- The estimated year-end balance in the Over Base Fund is not to exceed \$500,000

Based on the above criteria, the Over Base Fee for 2018 will be set at \$0.39/bird. The 2018 Over Base Quota statements will be sent out with the levy statements by the end of 2017.

Bill 6

The technical working groups studying occupational health and safety have submitted their recommendations outlining how provincial legislation could apply to farms and ranches. You're encouraged to review the recommendations and provide feedback in writing by Jan. 15, 2018.

Please visit <https://www.alberta.ca/farm-and-ranch-consultations.aspx> for a summary of the recommendations.

Written comments can be sent to:
Farm and TWG recommendations feedback
Occupational Health and Safety branch
Alberta Labour
8 Floor Labour Building
10808-99 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 0G5

FarmandRanch@gov.ab.ca

EFA's Farm Safety Committee will also be meeting in December to review the recommendations and develop feedback.



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The Rondeel Story

Earlier this Fall, 3 EFA representatives had the opportunity to visit the Vencomatic campus in Eersel, Netherlands and met with Peter Vengerling, Director of Corporate Affairs. During our visit, Peter told us the story of how the unique Rondeel housing system was developed and now we'd like to share this inspiring and interesting story with you.



At the end of the 1990s, as a result of large public protests, discussion had begun in the Netherlands about how the egg industry was changing, and that to remain competitive, housing systems needed to be based on consumer demands rather than only the needs of the farmer. This shift in thinking was how the idea for a new type of housing system was hatched.



The Rondeel housing system was developed following a 2 year multi-stakeholder engagement process. Stakeholders from a wide array of areas including consumers, scientists, farmers, welfarists welfare activists and egg supply chain representatives submitted ideas, and from these ideas concept drawings were created. While there was a lot of mistrust between stakeholders at the start, they continued to work together and at the end, had developed two different egg housing concepts.

Vencomatic decided to move from concept to reality by building the Rondeel system. Vencomatic received funding to help market the eggs, and Peter stressed to us that innovation needs to be funded as it costs too much to survive while an idea picks up market share.

The Rondeel system has some very unique features including:

- Indoor "night quarters" where the birds can eat, drink, nest and rest.
- Walls that open each morning creating one environment for the birds with indoor and outdoor areas.
- An outdoor area with a roof system that can close when it is raining but open when it is sunny. The outdoor area also has a variety of artificial trees and tables to provide cover in the outdoor ranges, which has significantly improved the birds' use of the range area. The outdoor range also has curtains that let light in, and can be seen through, but act as wind screens. This design provides for improved biosecurity – during the AI outbreak in the Netherlands birds in the Rondeel system didn't need to be kept inside.
- A bird viewing area that puts visitors at the same height as the birds. People are encouraged to visit the farm whenever the birds are awake, and in any weather. This provides not just a transparent way of farming, but helps to connect society to the farm. There are even bike paths that go right to the barn and a playground is outside – making Rondeel an inviting destination for a family outing.

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Peter also passed on some of the lessons farmers using the Rondeel system have learned through the years.

- Lighting in the pullet and layer housing systems need to be similar or birds don't adapt well to the layer barn.
- In the wild, hens have to spend 80% of their time seeking food with their beaks. On our farms, food is provided for the hens, but they still need something to do with their beaks to prevent feather pecking. A system with lots of "interesting" areas to peck and explore helps keep the birds busy. Birds in the Rondeel system are not beak trimmed but are able to maintain good feather cover.
- In the beginning, the system used artificial grass in order to maintain grass longer for the hens. They found that cleaning was a real challenge with the artificial grass and have now moved to concrete, sand and woodchips to provide a good surface for the birds, to improve cleaning and to prevent the hens from digging deep holes.
- Choose a breed that suits your system. In the case of the Rondeel system, they need a very relaxed bird.



As the Rondeel system was being built, they knew they needed to differentiate their eggs at the grocery store in order to reap the premiums needed to make the system viable. They developed specialized packaging – round, biodegradable packaging with 7 eggs inside with both medium and large sizes. A booklet was also put on the top of the packaging telling the story of the system, and a QR code that directed consumers to a site where they could view a live webcam of birds in the Rondeel barn.



In the Netherlands, Rondeel eggs are actually considered free run eggs because the system doesn't meet the free range requirements for outdoor access. However Rondeel eggs have three animal welfare stars and this is the only non-organic system to hold that rating in the Netherlands.

When the first Rondeel barn opened, Vencomatic invited animal welfare groups to see the system. While they all said it was a step forward, they will still not openly promote it.

Currently there are 7 Rondeel systems in production in the Netherlands, and one brand new system that has been installed in China. The Rondeel is an example of renewed thinking in sustainable egg production and demonstrates what can happen when stakeholders work together to imagine a new future for the industry.

AgSafe Alberta

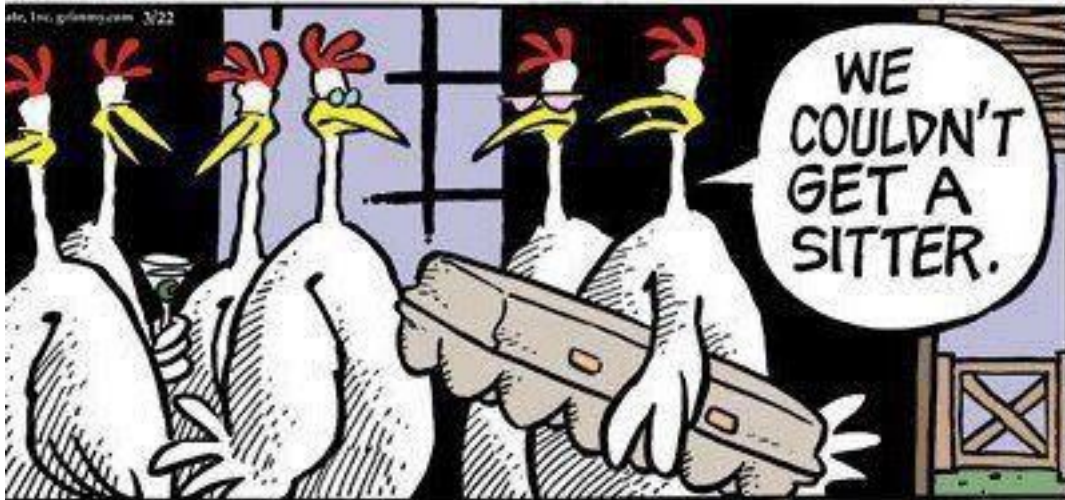
Hurry– limited time only opportunity! As you know, Donna Trottier has been working for the livestock and crop organizations over the past several months to develop farm safety training resources for producers through a \$500,000 grant from the Alberta Government. These “AgSafe Alberta” branded resources are now ready to take out to our farms across the Province through a pilot project.



Donna and her team of three farm safety Advisors are offering free farm safety consultations to any interested farms. If you are interested in a safety consultation on your farm, please contact Donna directly: 403-348-9321 or donna@agsafeab.ca. Consultations will take as little or as long as suits your schedule and operation. We highly encourage you to take advantage of this time limited opportunity if you have any paid workers.

For more information about the program and the three Safety Advisors, please visit www.agsafeab.ca

The AgSafe Alberta website also has online training modules, including a general farm safety orientation video and an introduction to farm safety management video.



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Healthy Birds



Farm Program Reminders

There are a number of requirements coming into effect through EFA's Animal Care and On Farm food safety policies at the end of 2018 that we would like you to keep in mind as you prepare for the year ahead and beyond.

- As of January 1, 2019 egg farmers must purchase pullets from pullet growers that are accredited in the SC-SC Pullet program. In 2018 EFA will be working with those pullet growers not yet accredited, providing coaching and support to help them achieve accreditation by the deadline.
- As of January 1, 2020, pullets and layers must be housed in facilities dedicated to the regulated egg industry. EFA has received action plans from each farm impacted by this policy and will be monitoring progress each year. As of January 1, 2018 any producers who are SE positive and have production facilities not dedicated to the regulated egg industry must switch to dedicated facilities before repopulating their barn.
- For farms with conventional cages older than 2003, grandfathering will be phased out as of January 1, 2020. As of this date each hen must be provided with a minimum of 67in² of space for white birds and 75in² for brown birds.
- Farms with furnished or loose housing systems installed before April 1, 2017 must meet April 1, 2017 Code requirements as of January 1, 2019 and final code requirements by the deadlines set out in the code (January 1, 2020 for loose housing and January 1, 2022 for furnished housing)

For more detail on these requirements the full policies can be viewed online on the Producer website.



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Vaccination Project



As part of a disease risk management project funded by Alberta Agriculture and EFA's research budget, 4 producers that had a history of repeat positives (positive in at least 2 of the previous 3 years) with Salmonella Typhimurium (ST) or Salmonella Heidelberg (SH) had their flocks vaccinated with an injected ST/SH/Salmonella Enteritidis vaccine. Those flocks have now had follow up layer Salmonella testing and we would like to report on those results.

	Layer 1 Test	Layer 2 Test
Producer 1, History of Typhimurium		
Participating Flock 1	Negative	Negative
Producer 2, History of Heidelberg		
Participating Flock 1 Placed November, 2016	Infantis	Infantis
Participating Flock 2 Placed April, 2017	Infantis	Heidelberg* <i>*This test was pooled with a Layer 1 test for a newly placed, unvaccinated flock</i>
Producer 3, History of Heidelberg		
Participating Flock 1 Placed July, 2016	Heidelberg* <i>*This test was pooled with a Layer 2 test from a previously placed, unvaccinated flock</i>	Negative
Participating Flock 2 Placed December, 2016	Negative	Negative
Producer 4, History of Heidelberg		
Participating Flock 1 Placed November, 2016	Negative	Negative
Participating Flock 2	Negative	Negative

One of the producers commented that when they heard from Alberta Agriculture they were positive for ST, they took extra precautions before placing their next flock. They disinfected twice, and fogged the barn. For this producer, the vaccination was seen as being one more thing that helped get rid of ST in the barn. The producer commented that doing the injection at the same time as their other killed injections was easy using a double-barrelled gun.

Vaccination is an important measure in the control of Salmonella but, as evidenced from the data above, works best if continuously applied. There are several commercial Salmonella Enteritidis vaccines, however if other Salmonella strains are of concern autogenous products is a solution.



Q&A wuth Dr. Elise A. Myers, Technical Services Manager, Merck

Q1: What is the link between IBV, vaccinations, and E.Coli infections?

Escherichia coli (E. coli) are generally considered to be opportunistic bacteria. This means that in order to infect and cause disease in birds, there generally has to be some other disease or factor that “opens the door” creating conditions that are favorable for the E. coli bacteria. There is an incredibly long list of factors that have been shown to increase the chicken’s susceptibility to E. coli, including:

- The host’s immune status (ability for immune system to respond to challenge);
- The presence of mycotoxins in feed; and
- Infections with some viruses.

This means that when we are troubleshooting an E. coli issue, we need to look at reducing the number of potential risk factors that may increase the birds’ susceptibility to E. coli. With the elimination of each additional risk factor, we get closer and closer to “closing the door” on E. coli.

To read the full response, please visit the EFA website or the EFA producer website.

Q2: How has this problem typically presented itself?

Most often this problem is observed when birds are stressed and coming into peak egg production. We often, but not always, notice a drop in production closely associated with subsequent elevated mortality. Mortality generally is diagnosed as “Colibacillosis” or E. coli infection. On closer examination of diagnostic tests, it becomes evident that these events are associated with repeated bronchitis challenge.

Q3: Why does it show up most often in loose housing?

Since there are so many risk factors involved with the development of E. coli infections in poultry, it is not surprising that birds in alternative systems tend to experience more challenges than we were accustomed to in conventional systems. One of the major challenges that we see with loose housing, particularly in dry climates, is dust. As birds navigate the system and exhibit normal behaviours such as dust bathing, there is a large amount of dust that is created in the poultry house. 90% of dust in poultry barns has been reported to be in the respirable range (meaning it can be breathed in) so the possibility of bacteria, along with other biologically active compounds (endotoxins, spores etc.) reaching the respiratory tract of these birds is high (1).

In addition to the great deal of dust present in these systems, achieving good, uniform coverage with respiratory vaccines (Infectious Bronchitis and Newcastle Disease) can be particularly challenging. Birds in these systems occupy different spaces of the house at different times of day, and are not always uniformly distrib-

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uted throughout the house. For this reason, spray vaccinating these types of birds requires careful consideration of bird behavior and the development of a farm-specific spray vaccination plan.

To read the full response, please visit the EFA website or the EFA producer website.

Q4: What should a producer do as first steps if they suspect this might be an issue on their farm?

If a producer suspects that their flocks may be experiencing repeat E. coli infections, the very first thing that they need to do is to rule out the basic management-related sources of E. coli. Consider cleaning and disinfection practices, water sanitation, and dust levels in the barn. Low relative humidity can be particularly problematic when trying to manage dust levels, so steps should be taken to address any excessive dust. Next, producers should involve their veterinarian to evaluate how they are doing “now” with their current vaccine program and vaccination practices, and to identify where there may be room for improvement. Most often this will involve serology (bloodwork) to measure the type of responses to commonly encountered diseases that your flock may have encountered. A local veterinarian can be a powerful tool when tackling this type of issue because they will have knowledge of current disease challenges in the area and can help build a personalized vaccination program to address any issue identified on serology or farm visits. Following any changes to vaccine handling, application, or changes to the vaccination program, additional testing will be required to continue to measure your success.

To read the full response, please visit the EFA website or the EFA producer website.

Q5: What are the most critical factors for success producers should consider when building their vaccination plan?

It is important to distinguish between a vaccination program and a vaccination plan. When we say vaccination program, this is something that will be determined by a veterinarian who understands the farm and local disease challenge. A vaccination program involves the selection of products to be used, target ages for use of each product and application methods. The vaccination plan should be created using the vaccination program as a backbone, and should focus on things like vaccine handling and application, in other words “how you’re going to get it done”.

A vaccination plan has two main goals: 1) keep the vaccine alive and 2) deliver it to all of the birds. In order to keep your vaccine alive, your vaccination plan should take into consideration vaccine-specific factors like the sensitivity of vaccine to temperature, as mentioned above. Other vaccine specific factors include things like pH, with viruses like infectious bronchitis virus surviving better at a pH of 6.0 than pH of 8.0 (2). For this

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reason, many producers now use refrigerated distilled water, which tends to be slightly more acidic than most dechlorinated municipal water coupled with a vaccine stabilizer for spray vaccination.

To read the full response, please visit the EFA website or the EFA producer website.

Q6: If IBV vaccinations cause so many problems, wouldn't it be better/easier to just not vaccinate?

We need to remember that the problem with rolling or prolonged vaccine reactions with the products that we have registered in Canada have less to do with the products themselves and much to do with how these products are handled and applied. All vaccines are tested for safety and would not gain approval for their registered use if they were known to cause disease. When handled and applied appropriately, vaccines do exactly what they were intended to do- prevent the severe disease that can result from infection with field viruses. Problems arise most often when vaccines are mishandled and applied without considering the potential for the development of rolling reactions or when birds that are not suitable for vaccination (ex. sick birds) are vaccinated.

Although some regions have less field virus challenge than others, the decision to vaccinate and the development of a vaccination program should be one made with your veterinarian based on the known risk of a particular disease in your region. In most cases, the consequences of potential secondary infections following poorly applied vaccine are minimal compared to the potential costs of a field bronchitis challenge.

Q7: Who can I go to if I have further questions about this issue?

For further information, please contact your local veterinarian!

Special thanks to Leanne Cooley of LH Gray & Sons Ltd and Greg Brown of Archer's Poultry Farm

References:

1- Poultry Science, Volume 91, Issue 3, 1 March 2012, Pages 604–615

2- Diseases of Poultry 12th Ed, 2008

certain standard of welfare. This type of measure is also seen as being more transparent.



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