



EggNotes



Board of Director

Chair Beatrice Visser

780-674-6297

Vice Chair: John Hofer

403-641-2030

EFC Director: Joe Kleinsasser

403-653-4480

Director: Conrad Vanessen

403-635-7998

EFC Alternate: Peter Waldner

403-795-8621

Director: Bernadette Vandeborn

780-349-6311

EFA Staff

General Manager: Susan Gal

ext: 124

Marketing & Comm. Manager: David Webb

ext: 126

Marketing Specialist: Angie Lang

ext: 103

Farm Programs Coordinator: Carley Frerichs

ext: 125

Manager, Programs & Research: Jenna Griffin

Ext: 129

Office Manager: Laurel Martin

ext: 121

Logistics Coordinator: Brandy Addai

ext: 101

Farm Services Administrator: Erin Johnston

ext: 127

Business Manager: Kari Buijs

ext: 132

Fields Services Coordinator: Dave Lastiwka

ext: 128

Fields Services Coordinator: Murray Minchin

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

Christmas hours take effect:
1/2 day Dec. 24, closed Dec. 25-27, 1/2 day
Dec. 31, closed Jan. 1

Egg Price Update

Effective September 8, 2019

Canada Grade	Size	Price Per Dozen	
A	Extra Large	2.360	↑
A	Large	2.360	↑
A	Medium	2.130	↑
A	Small	1.750	↑
A	Nest Run	2.225	↑
A	Pee Wee	0.280	-
B		0.770	-
C		0.160	-

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 10, 2020

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



#101, 90 Freeport Blvd. NE, Calgary, Alberta, T3J 5J9
P: 403-250-1197 Toll Free: 1-877-302-2344 F: 403-291-9216
Website: eggs.ab.ca Producer Website: albertaeggproducers.ca
Email: info@eggs.ab.ca Office hours: M-F: 7:30am - 4:00pm

Board Update

Your Egg Farmers of Alberta Board of Directors would like to thank our fellow egg farmers from across the province, as well as the EFA staff, for another wonderful and successful year! We have seen many changes over the past year, including elections at both the federal and provincial level. One constant, however, has been increasing egg sales, as consumers continue to enjoy eggs as a fresh, natural, nutritious, affordable, versatile, local food.

Some changes, like the launch of the Conversion to Enriched Transition and Producer Price (CETPP) program, benefit the layer industry as we continue the transition away from conventional hen housing. Other changes, like the invasion and occupation of local production facilities, threatens to put our livelihood at risk. As always, we face challenges head on and seek out new opportunities – stay tuned for the publication of EFA's Annual Report early next year, for a more thorough review of 2019.

Finally, the EFA Board of Directors would like to wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, as we head into the holiday season. Please stay safe, keep warm, and Get Cracking! See you all in 2020!



HEALTHY BIRDS

HEALTHY FARMS HEALTHY EGGS

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Participate in a research survey and you could win a \$1,000 amazon gift card!

This summer, masters student Ian Turner, supervised by Dr. Nathan Pelletier and Dr. Tina Widowski, visited some Alberta egg producers to conduct an interview on environmental and animal welfare impacts of different housing systems. Mr. Turner had an overwhelmingly positive response across Canada and is interested in further investigation. He has reached out to EFA to put out a call for producers to complete an online survey. In return for your participation, producers will be entered in a draw for a chance to win a **\$1,000 amazon gift card**.

The survey takes between 30 minutes to an hour to complete. Prior to starting the survey gathering utility bills and production records can accelerate the survey time. Please note that all information provided will be kept strictly confidential and is for research purposes only. To be eligible for the draw, producers must complete the survey by December 21, 2019.

If you are interested in participating in this research, please visit https://ubc.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6PhCuGgcaNZw8PH to complete the online survey or visit our producer website at Information Center (EFA Research) for an electronic copy which can be printed, scanned, and submitted to ian.turner@ubc.ca

EFA would like to thank all producers willing to set aside time to participate in this research.

EFA Producer Website Updates

The following updates have been made and resources added to the producer website:

- 3 videos added about EFC research projects
- video added from Poultry Industry Farm Security Workshop



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Director Development Program



Egg Farmers of Alberta implemented the Director Development Program (DDP) earlier this year, to engage the membership and stimulate Board succession planning. A Board-appointed registered producer may participate in EFA Board meetings as a non-voting Director, to gain exposure to how the EFA Board operates and to become more familiar with a number of topics that are critical to the egg industry.

Any farmer interested in applying must submit a letter of interest, explaining why they might like to be an EFA Director. Any potential applicants from a Hutterite Colony must also submit written authorization from their elders, as required. The letter must be submitted to the EFA board office, to the attention of the Board Manager, by March 1st, 2020.

The EFA board will review all submitted letters of intent at the first board meeting following the board's organizational meeting, and may choose to appoint a producer to the DDP for a period of 1 year. If you would like to learn more about the DDP, please contact any of the current EFA Directors or Susan Gal, EFA's General Manager.



EFA Board of Directors Nomination

At EFA's upcoming Annual General Meeting, two seats on the EFA Board of Directors will need to be filled. Joe Kleinsasser has completed three consecutive 3-year terms and must stand down. We would like to thank Joe for his tireless efforts and representing Alberta at the EFC table for the last 6 years (4 years as EFC Director and 2 years as EFC Alternate). John Hofer has completed two consecutive 3-year terms and depending on whether or not EFA's Plan Regulation is amended before February, may or may not be EFA's eligible to serve one more 3-year term.

Producers will receive a nomination package in December, which will include a nomination form. The nomination form must be signed by two different duly appointed registered producers (cannot be a Board Director) as well as signed consent by the nominee. Nomination forms can be submitted via email, fax or by hand by no later than 14 days prior (February 11, 2020) to the AGM. Nominations from the floor are not permitted at the AGM.



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Levy Update



EFC's budget for 2020 has the national levy at \$.3695/dozen which is unchanged from the current levy. EFC has also approved new trigger points for the Pooled Income Fund at \$35M to \$75M which allows the agency to better absorb swings in the fund balances mostly caused by changes in the Urner Barry prices.

The EFA Board reviewed the 2019 operational plan, budget and levy requirements at their December meeting. They set the total provincial levy at \$.4764/dozen to be effective December 29, 2019 (week 1/20), which equates to \$12.644/bird/year.

Quota Update

The EFC Board of Directors approved a motion in December that seeks prior approval of a quota increase of 105,965 birds nationally effective December 29, 2019 (week 01/20). Alberta's share of this allocation amounts to 14,622 birds.

EFC has submitted the appropriate quota order amendments to Farm Products Council of Canada (FPCC) for prior approval. The 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, producers will be notified in writing. Please note that EFA staff and Directors will not provide an information about the quota increase over the phone.

Nielsen Update

The Nielsen retail sales data is available up to November 9th, 2019, and indicates that in the latest 4-week period 3.2 million dozen eggs were sold in Alberta; a 2.3% decrease from the previous 4-week period (ending October 12th), and a 2.6% increase in sales compared to the same period in 2018.

Nielsen retail sales in the last 52 weeks are up 0.5% over the previous 52 weeks in Alberta, to 41.08 million dozen eggs. Specialty eggs (excluding Omega-3) have seen the largest sales growth; a 2.3% increase over the previous 52 weeks, to 4.6 million dozen eggs (11.3% of the total eggs sold in Alberta).

As a reminder, additional Nielsen trend data that is updated approximately every 4 weeks is available on the producer website.



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Research Updates



Egg Farmers of Canada has released three new research videos. The studies featured in all videos were funded through EFC's Research Grant Program.

1. Bone Regeneration Using Eggshells:

Led by Dr. Maxwell Hincke from the University of Ottawa, the study concluded that the durable and resistant qualities of eggshell particles could have suitable application in human bone scaffolding in the future.

2. Healthy Feather Cover in Laying Hens:

This research study led by researchers from the University of Guelph explored healthy feather cover in laying hens. The study identified factors that lead to feather damage in laying hens and looked to provide strategies to prevent or reduce feather damage on Canadian egg farms.

3. The Impact of Lighting during Incubation on Chick Development:

A collaborative research study from Dalhousie University and the University of Saskatchewan explored how lighting during incubation positively affects hatch, post-hatch and egg production performance of laying hens. The study also found that lighting plays an important role in hen welfare.

For ease of access, and with thanks to Egg Farmers of Canada, we have posted these videos to the EFA Producer Website for viewing at Information Centre -> Research.

Quota Exchange Reminder

EFA's Quota Exchange was launched earlier this year, with the first exchange scheduled for January 2020. As a reminder, the deadline for farmers to submit quota units for sale is January 9th, 2020.

For more information, please visit the producer website (quota -> quota exchange) or contact Erin Johnston at the EFA office.



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Healthy Farms

Flock Talk Summary

Egg Farmers of Alberta and Alberta Agriculture organized two flock talks on manure management. The first flock talk was hosted on October 29th in Lethbridge while the second flock talk was in Airdrie on November 6th. Overall there was a producer attendance of roughly 25 which provided an assortment of backgrounds and perspectives.

Attendees expressed a positive experience with the manure management flock talk. Of those who attended, 90% felt they would come to a future flock talk while 10% felt it would depend on the topic. Attending producers found value in the information provided on composting, manure storage, manure testing, and manure dryers.

Staff at Egg Farmers of Alberta are working to put together a “What was Heard” document for those producers who were unable to attend the flock talks. Once the document is ready for viewing it will be made available on the producer website in the upcoming months. Stay tuned!

Farm Security Legislation Update

Following through on the promise made on October 3rd, while speaking to the media from Jumbo Valley Colony, the Government of Alberta has introduced Bill 27, the Trespass Statutes (Protecting Law-Abiding Property Owners) Amendment Act, 2019. If Bill 27 is passed, the deterrents to trespassing would be substantially strengthened, including a five-fold increase to maximum fines for trespassing. Fines would be increased to up to \$10,000 for a first offense and up to \$25,000 for subsequent offenses, along with possible prison time of up to six months. When passed, the amendments introduced in Bill 27 would be retroactive to January 1st, 2018.

For farmers and ranchers, Bill 27 would also better protect against harassment and occupation, which are actions that pose the risk of introducing disease and/or threatening the welfare of animals. Once passed, Alberta would become the first province with offences and penalties related to the deliberate creation of a biosecurity hazard to farm animals. Farmers are reminded that it is still the legal duty of property owners to call law enforcement to deal with trespassers, since they can still be held criminally responsible for their actions. Remain calm, be respectful, and call 911!



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Farm Safety Legislation

From July 25 to August 30, 25 engagement sessions on farm workplace legislation were held across the province. On November 20th the Government announced the “Farm Freedom and Safety Act” (FFSA). OH&S rules now only apply to an operation if a waged, non-family worker is present on the farm or ranch, and then only to those individuals. The following is a guide, courtesy of AgSafe Alberta, to help you understand which rules apply to your farm:



Farm Type	Workers Compensation (WCB)	Employment Standards	Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)
Family Farm	No Change: Exempt from any requirement to have private insurance or WCB.	No Change: Exempt from any Employment Standards.	No Change: Exempt from any occupational health and safety requirements.
1-5 Non-Family Waged-Workers	Change: Exempt from requirements to have WCB coverage. Private insurance or WCB will be optional.	Change: Farms and ranches with 5 or fewer employees, not including family members, and employees who work less than 6 months consecutively will be exempt from all employment standards	Change: Will be required to follow the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act. Will be exempt from the Regulations or Code.
6+ Non-Family Waged Workers	Change: Farms and ranches with more than 5 waged, non-family employees will be required to have workplace insurance, but will be able to choose which workplace insurance option works best for their operation (WCB or private).	Change: Farms and ranches with more than 5 waged, non-family employees will still be required to meet employment standards, with some exemptions.	Change: Will be required to follow the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act. Will be exempt from the Regulations and Code.

Changes to the legislation come into effect on January 31, 2020. Additional information is available on the producer website at [Healthy Farms->Farm Safety](#).

Farm Safety Assessments

Over several years EFA has been working with Alberta egg farmers on completing Job Task Hazard Assessments (JTHAs). Recognizing that identifying and dealing with hazards is the first step in a workplace health and safety program, the Board set a goal to develop and implement a risk assessment checklist that supports producers in defending their farm safety practices. EFA's Farm Safety Committee worked to develop a simple and practical 7 question assessment which reviews the key elements of a safety plan. An associated Farm Safety Producer Manual was developed to help guide producers in implementing the recommendations.



Early in 2020, farmers will be provided with a copy of EFA's Farm Safety Producer manual and EFA Field Coordinators will begin to assess farmers relative to the Checklist. The farm safety assessment is intended to help support farmers in implementing more comprehensive farm safety procedures related to incident management, emergency response planning, working alone, workplace hazardous materials and information system, equipment and machinery, and contractors. Farmers who score 60% and above will be provided with a Farm Safety Certificate of Achievement. Completing a farm safety assessment aligns well with the Farm Freedom and Safety Act: It can help farmers ensure they are providing a safe work environment.

Upcoming Events

Christmas Hours

December 24 – Office Closed at 12 PM

December 25-27 – Office Closed

December 31 – Office Closed at 12 PM

January 1 – Office Closed

Regional Meetings

(closed for producers only)

January 14 - Calgary Regional Meeting

January 15 - Edmonton Regional Meeting

January 21-22 - Lethbridge Regional Meeting



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Healthy Birds



Enriched and Loose Hen Housing Certificates

Egg Farmers of Alberta is pleased to announce that the remaining enriched and loose hen housing certificates should be arriving in the mail. In addition to the certificate you will receive a measurement form. The measurement form shows details related to your facility (ex. cage height, perching requirements, etc.) that don't impact placement capacity but are requirements of the new Animal Care Program. This measurement form will need to be kept and presented in conjunction with your hen housing certificate for your Animal Care Program audit. If you have received a measurement form with a previous certificate and do not receive a new one with the revised certificate, please hang onto the measurement form you currently have.

If you have not received your certificate or notice discrepancies please contact Carley Frerichs (Farms Program Coordinator) at carley.frerichs@eggs.ab.ca or (403)-250-1197 x 125.

We would like to thank all our producers for their continued patience in the measurement process.

Expert Article From Poultry Veterinarian Teryn Girard

Egg Farmers of Alberta has reached out to local expert and poultry Veterinarian, Teryn Girard for her expertise on foot health. The following article outlines what Dr. Girard had to say regarding foot health:

Overview

Foot health is an issue for all laying hens, whether they are raised on the floor or in cages. The impact of foot health affects birds year-round but becomes more problematic in winter months due to higher humidity and ammonia levels. Damage to the feet of laying hens is painful to the bird and pain can cause a decrease in feed intake and egg production. Additionally, foot pad disease can result in bacterial infections, leg problems and resulting mortality in the birds.

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The foot pad is the soft area on the underside of bird's foot. It should be free of darkened skin, abrasions, cuts, and wounds. Foot health should be monitored through a flock's life and changes should be made accordingly, to maintain the best foot health for your flock. Producer's SC-SC® calendar provides guidelines and a template for measuring foot health.



Possible causes of Foot Health Problems

Two of the most common foot problems in chickens are footpad dermatitis and bumblefoot. Foot pad dermatitis is inflammation of the foot pad whereas bumblefoot is when the footpad has an open or puncture wound with bacteria in it.

Whether you have foot pad dermatitis or bumblefoot, once there, it decreases foot health in your barn. You will want to analyze your barn settings to see what contributed:

Housing System	Contributor to Foot Health Problems
Free Run Free Range Aviary	Wet litter Rough Perches Splinters Diet
Conventional or Enriched cages	Wire Floors Rough perches Diet

Wet Litter and Foot Pad Health

Foot pad problems in birds that are raised outside of cages is typically due to wet litter. A single wet layer on top of the bedding material will cause the foot pad to soften and become more prone to damage.

Rough Perches and Foot Pad Health

Any piece of rough material in a chicken's environment can cause a wound that allows

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bacteria into the footpad (example: splinter from a perch).

Nutrition and Foot Pad Health

Nutrition is considered an important factor of food health in chickens. Biotin, riboflavin, methionine, and cystine help to keep the skin on chicken feet tough. Additionally, some barns may find increased salt levels causes decreased foot health, due to the birds drinking more water and creating wet litter.



Possible solutions to Foot Health Problems

Some housing management variables that can reduce foot health problems are:

Litter and Foraging Material

Litter should be loose and not caked together. As litter becomes damp or caked, it should be removed or more bedding should be added on top of this litter, to protect the foot pad from becoming too soft.

Perch Design

When choosing perches or enrichment for your layers, please ensure the perches are smooth and will not cause a splinter in a foot pad. Additionally, some studies have found that oval perches or perches with a soft surface may reduce foot pad welfare problems

Drinker Design

Drinker system design plays an important role in litter moisture and thus, the development of foot health problems. Waterline height and water pressure should be managed to prevent wet litter.

Ventilation

Since foot health problems typically occur in damp environments, ventilation should be used to help keep the litter and environment dry. Therefore, foot pad problems are more likely to occur in the winter, as ventilation becomes more difficult in the cold weather. However, poorly managed air flow will allow litter to become wet and eventually, caked.

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Gut health

Gut challenges such as coccidiosis, mycotoxins, or high salt can cause birds to have diarrhea. Monitor feed and water intake for any unexpected increases or decreases which may warn you that extra litter management will be needed.



Take Home Message:

Poor foot health in laying hens is a significant welfare and economic concern that is applicable to all types of laying hen housing systems. Environmental management and organization greatly affect the presence of foot pad problems in laying hens. In order to achieve optimal laying hen welfare and production, producers should assess foot pad health each week.

How common are foot pad problems in your housing system? How can your barn better manage foot health? International research in this area of layer welfare is on-going to better understand how welfare can be increased in all laying hen housing systems.

Egg Farmers of Alberta would like to graciously acknowledge and thank Dr. Girard for providing this article.

A Biosecurity Assessment Update

Egg Farmers of Alberta field staff have wrapped up the biosecurity assessments for 2019. Congratulations to all producers on the completion of this assessment!

Some highlights included:

- 93% of farms have concrete pads/blocks outside their primary entrance
- 98% of farmers have biosecurity signage posted at all barn entrances
- 98% of farmers have alternative access points to the barn locked
- 94% of farm personnel present at the time of the visit were able to demonstrate the appropriate transition to restricted area
- 92% of farms have dedicated area for storage of dirty clothes and boots on the unrestricted side of transition zone

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For the full biosecurity summary of results visit our producer website at Farm Programs (Biosecurity Assessment).

Additionally, Alberta egg farmers have been working proactively with over 15 farms installing Danish entries. Eggcellent work!



In 2020, Egg Farmers of Alberta will be launching its additions to the biosecurity assessment which will include questions on signage at farm and barn entrances, defining restricted and unrestricted areas, controlled movement of equipment, personnel, and visitors, as well as procedures for changing boots and outerwear. These additions are being incorporated through a mutual agreement between the four feather boards to encourage producers to be continuously thinking about ways to improve their biosecurity.



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Healthy Communities



EFC Young Farmer Program - 2020

Egg Farmers of Canada is recruiting egg farmers from across the country to participate in their Young Farmer Program in 2020. For the past several years, this program has been fostering future industry leaders, by providing opportunities to bring young egg farmers together to build knowledge in more technical aspects of the industry and network with fellow young farmers and other key stakeholders.

Key program content areas include:

- Champion training
- Industry structure
- Strategic planning
- Government relations
- Trade
- Cost of production
- Forecasting & market analysis
- Quota
- Levies
- Industrial Products Program
- Marketing & nutrition
- National on-farm programs

2020 Young Farmer Program Dates:

- March 6-8 – Workshop and Canadian Young Farmers' Forum (Charlottetown, PEI)
- March 23-25 – EFC AGM (Ottawa, ON)
- July 4-7 – Workshop and Producer Conference (Charlottetown, PEI)
- Fall (TBD) – Learning modules delivered via webinar

To learn more about EFC's Young Farmer Program, directly from some of the 2019 delegates – including Carline Schuring, from Barrhead, Alberta – read this blog post on EFC's website: <https://www.eggfarmers.ca/2019/03/2019s-young-farmer-program/>

EFC's Young Farmer Program is for any egg farmer between the age of 18 and 40. If you are interested in learning more about the program or putting your name forward as a potential Alberta delegate, please contact the EFA office.



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