



Advancing **Animal Welfare** and **Public Trust** Through **Codes of Practice**

PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS REPORT
APRIL 2022-MARCH 2023

 CANADIAN
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Achieving Advances in Farm Animal Welfare

The project, “Advancing Animal Welfare and Public Trust Through Codes of Practice” is ending. It’s now time to reflect upon what has been achieved and lessons learned. Three Codes of Practice have been updated or developed during this project:

- Canada’s first ever Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farmed Salmonids was released in 2021,
- The Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Goats was updated and released in 2022,
- The Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle was updated and released in 2023.

These Codes are now part of a family of fourteen Codes developed through NFACC’s collaborative, multi-stakeholder, and consensus-based process. This Achievements Report details what can be accomplished when people with varied views on animal welfare come together, committed to the common goal of achievable advances in farm animal welfare.

We also hit road bumps along the way, notably with updating the Transportation Code of Practice. While an update to the Transportation Code is not in NFACC’s future, this report outlines important lessons learned and achievements made in spite of the many challenges.

The Next Chapter

A measure of the trust that NFACC continues to engender is the next generation of Codes in the queue for updates. The Hatching Eggs, Breeders, Chickens and Turkeys Code, as well as the Beef Cattle, Equine, Pigs, and Sheep Codes are all slated for updates over the next five years. It’s important to remember that while NFACC’s operations are funded through membership dollars, Code of Practice updates require NFACC (through Animal Health Canada, of which NFACC is a division) to apply for project funding. A new funding application is in the works through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP) program.



Hans Kristensen, NFACC Chair

Final Thoughts

As NFACC’s Chair I may not have all the answers for solving the issues that threaten to polarize us with respect to farm animal welfare; however, I do know that we can find solutions if we keep talking to each other. There is always a solution to be found in open, honest, and respectful conversations.

NFACC as an organization supports these conversations, but it is us—those who would not otherwise engage with each other—who need to be open to new possibilities. Deliberations within Code committees and at the NFACC Board level can be hard and uncomfortable. Ultimately, good conversations support good farm animal welfare, public trust, and the sustainability of Canadian animal agriculture – goals that we all can support.

Please join me in celebrating our achievements in this regard and in looking forward to a new chapter of engagement in the service of our common goals.

H. Kristensen

“Deliberations within Code committees and at the NFACC Board level can be hard and uncomfortable. Ultimately, good conversations support good farm animal welfare, public trust, and the sustainability of Canadian animal agriculture – goals that we all can support.”

Hans Kristensen,
NFACC Chair

Dairy Cattle Code Finalized

The 18-member Code Committee recently reached consensus on the updated Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle. The committee was comprised of participants from all across Canada, and included dairy farmers, animal welfare and enforcement representatives, processors, researchers, veterinarians, and government representatives.



Dairy Code Committee celebrates reaching consensus

The Code was published on March 30, 2023 (and will come into effect April 1, 2024), and is now accessible [online](#) and in limited numbers in print.

The predecessor to this Code was released in 2009 and was seen as a positive advancement of dairy cattle welfare for its time. The now updated Code is further supported and informed by current research, including research summarized within the peer-reviewed [Scientific Committee Report](#) and a summary of current literature on [perinatal mortality](#).

A great deal of valuable public input—the most ever in the history of NFAAC—also contributed to the development of this Code. During the public comment period, we heard from 5,844 respondents with a total of 45,000+ comments. A report reviewing and summarizing the results of this

input from respondents, representing dairy producers, concerned citizens, animal welfare advocates, consumers, veterinarians and interested others, is available [here](#).

With an eye to future updates, priority areas for further research have been collated and are available [here](#). It is envisioned that researchers and funding bodies will note these areas for further knowledge development to help inform the next Code update.

Thanks to the Dairy Farmers of Canada, Code Committee members, and everyone involved who committed so much time and effort to building consensus and reaching this goal in the interest of advancing dairy cattle welfare.



“Canadian dairy farmers care about protecting the health and welfare of their farm animals. This updated Code of Practice will help them continue to enhance the care and handling of animals while boosting consumer confidence that our food system is meeting the highest standards.”

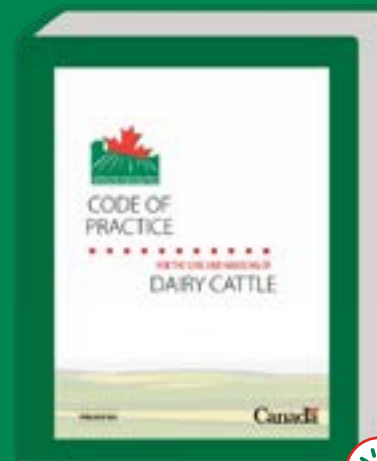
The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.



Scientific Committee Report



What We Heard and How We Addressed It



Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle





Jocelyn Jansen, Jeffrey Spooner, & Amy Vingerhoeds at Grey Bruce Farmers Week

“This Code reflects the industry’s progress on welfare since the 2003 Code and incorporates current research on goat welfare. The updated code will benefit goats raised in Canada by setting a standard of care for all goat farms across the country.”

Melissa Speirs,
Humane Canada
representative on the
goat Code Development
Committee.

Goat Code Finalized

Goats

The new Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Goats was finalized and published in late November 2022 and is now available [here](#). The 13-member Goat Code Committee was composed of goat producers from across Canada, government representatives, animal welfare advocates, scientific researchers, processors, and veterinarians brought together to collaborate on this national standard. Thank you to all participants for your contributions and for reaching consensus on this Code, a three-and-a-half year process that began in May 2019. The goat industry in Canada is wide-ranging, and includes producers of meat, dairy, and fibres, in addition to hobby farmers. Taking care to encompass the range of interests and perspectives of the various sectors was a true exercise in collaboration and consensus building.

The former Goat Code was released in 2003; goat farming has changed considerably since that time. To assist in capturing current goat welfare priorities, a top-of-mind survey was undertaken at the outset of the Code process. In addition, input from stakeholders was welcomed during the 60-day public comment period. Following the release of the Draft Code for public comment, 14 organizations and 321 individuals participated, sharing valuable insights and perspectives. It is notable that the Code Committee met for 31 online meetings in the months following the public comment period to carefully review and consider all comments and arrive at consensus. The organizations and individuals who shared their knowledge truly contributed to shaping the new Goat Code.

A detailed report summarizing this public, stakeholder, and industry input is available [here](#).

Since the Code’s release, the Goat Code Committee has been very busy with multiple outreach activities to champion the new Code. Thanks to all committee members for participating in these activities, which are an excellent means of promoting the Code and accelerating its uptake amongst those involved in the industry.



Dr. Jocelyn Jansen at the 10th International Sheep Veterinary Congress



NFACC Goat Code Committee and support personnel



Farmed Salmonids

Canada's first-ever Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farmed Salmonids (salmon, trout, and charr) was released in November 2021. Since that time, numerous extension activities have taken place, helping to increase Code awareness and commitment.

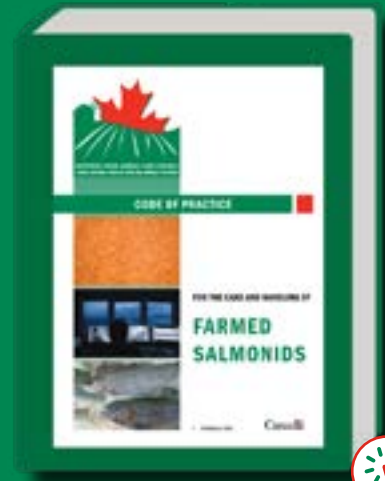
Scientific Committee Co-Chair Professor Rich Moccia (University of Guelph) and Code Committee member Arlen Taylor, (Owner, Cedar Crest Trout Farms & Springhills Fish) attended the recent Ontario Aquaculture Association Conference (March 21 – 22, 2023) and gave a warmly received presentation highlighting the key components of the new Code. Professor Moccia and Ms. Taylor were able to engage with nearly 175 members of the Aquaculture industry from across Canada, exchanging information on current findings and developments. Given the newness of this Code, the Conference provided the ideal opportunity to share insights and learnings and generally raise Code awareness. Professor Moccia has also lectured to numerous undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Guelph about the Code, and has worked with individual farmers to understand the Code's requirements and help them transition to compliance.

"It was very encouraging to see the positive response by farmers to the new Salmonid Code, and to hear about the changes already underway in the industry," noted Professor Moccia.

Ms. Taylor added, "Our Ontario sector has already responded to some of the most important requirements in the Code, notably making advances in the use of humane slaughter methods."

The recently launched [National Performance Commitments](#) for salmon farming in Canada has embraced the Code. As Canada is the fourth-largest producer of farmed salmon in the world, this is an important development, and one that is supported by all major salmon producers in Canada through the Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance. The organization expects to produce its first annual report in late 2023, and this will be an important measuring stick by which to gauge the industry's embracing and commitment to the Code.

The Code provides Canada's industry with a responsible pathway to guide and support mainstream aquaculture.



Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farmed Salmonids

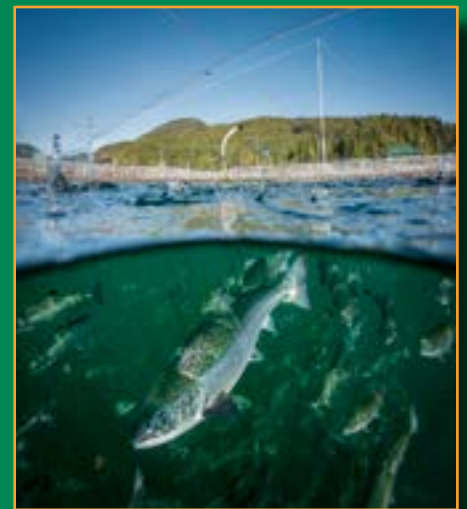
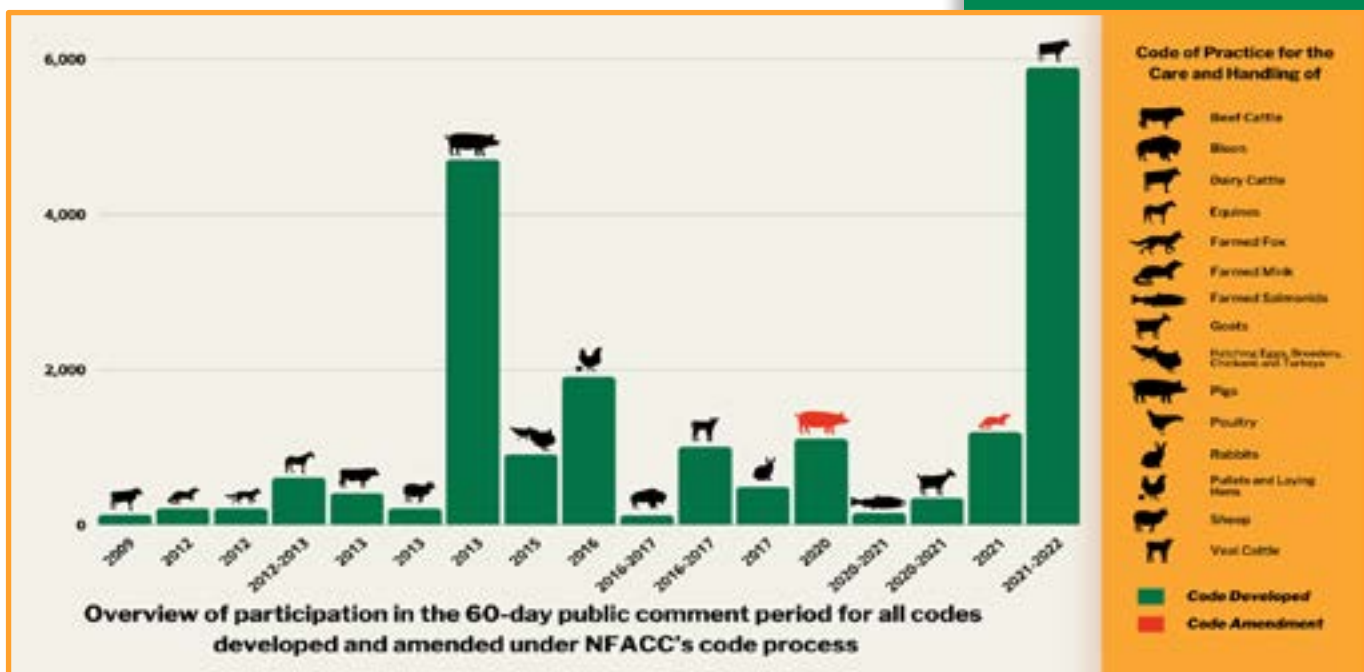


Photo credit: Mowi Canada West





Transport Code Update

DID YOU

NFACC's operations are funded through membership fees. Every primary and associate member of NFACC, except for governments and researchers, contributes to NFACC's annual budget.

KNOW?

HOW ARE CODES USED?



THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



DID YOU

NFACC operates using a consensus model for decision-making. This ensures that minority voices around NFACC are heard and are empowered. While a major criticism of NFACC is that it is "industry heavy" the reality is that our decision-making model has been an equalizer amongst all NFACC members.

KNOW?

The NFACC Board has now decided that no further action will be taken to update the Transport Code. This was a difficult decision, and one that was arrived at after much careful consideration, deliberation, and collaboration. More details are available [here](#).

While the destination wasn't what we envisioned when we started down this road in 2018, nevertheless, there were many positive aspects that emerged from the project, including:

- The alignment of the transportation sections of 11 on-farm Codes with the updated Health of Animals Regulations.
- The opportunity for stakeholders to participate and collaborate.
- The gathering of information through a top-of-mind survey and report, which assisted NFACC in gaining greater awareness of current evolving concerns of stakeholders and interested parties.
- Greater sharing of inter-industry information and enhanced communication.
- Affirmation of NFACC's role and the guardrails in place to support Code Development Process work.

WHAT DOES CONSENSUS MEAN AT NFACC?



AGREEMENT

Characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues.

Consensus does not necessarily imply complete agreement.



ALL PARTIES INVOLVED

Consensus is the result of a process that takes into account the interests and concerns of all parties.

Everyone has the opportunity to be heard.

Any latent issues must be explored to the satisfaction of all involved.



THE CONSENSUS MINDSET

Ideas proposed must consider and reflect all party's interests. Those involved must ask themselves: "Can I live with the proposal under discussion?"

If they cannot, they must suggest a solution that also considers the interests of others.

“The development process for the Codes is collaborative, transparent, consensus based and has been designed to ensure that each Code is scientifically informed, practical, and reflects society's expectations for responsible farm animal care.”

Happy Retirement to an NFACC Original — David Trus —

David Trus represented Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) on NFACC since its inception in 2005. He was an original supporter of the need for an organization like NFACC and was central to its establishment. David promoted the idea of NFACC within the federal government at a time when farm animal welfare had a much lower profile. He saw the future.

This level of dedication necessitated the development of a "Code of Practice

for Retirement" - an "outcome-based recovery plan to support David's transition to non-NFACC life..." and a fun way to recognize his dedication.

David, the NFACC community would like to wish you a very enjoyable retirement that includes all the guitar strumming, reading, hockey, and genealogy research that makes you happy. Be sure to adhere to all the requirements from your *Code of Practice for Retirement!*



NFACC Chair Hans Kristensen, David Trus, & NFACC Division Director Jackie Wepruk

David's Perspective

“The National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC - Made in Canada!) is now an essential organisation. Its creation wasn't easy, but came about thanks to the leadership and vision of many key people and organisations throughout Canada. Animal welfare is complex, nuanced, and does not lend itself to a black-and-white approach. Meanwhile, scientific perspectives and production methods will continue to progress. In the coming years, the active participation of stakeholders in a collaborative and science-informed process will be as critical as ever. Success also will depend on the ability to ensure the Codes of Practice are practical and make sense to those tasked with their implementation.”

NFACC has come a long way. It is fair to say that NFACC is now a model for the world! ”

Happy Retirement!

NFACC Highlights - 2022 -



NFACC Board Meeting



David's Code of Practice for Retirement From Government and NFACC

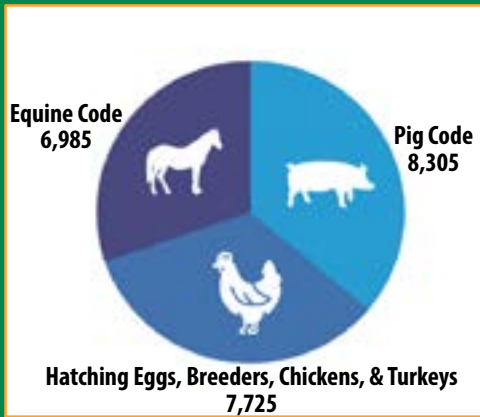


Amy Vingerhoeds, Goat Code Liaison, delivering a presentation at Grey Bruce Farmers Week, "Goat Day"

NFACC Website Traffic

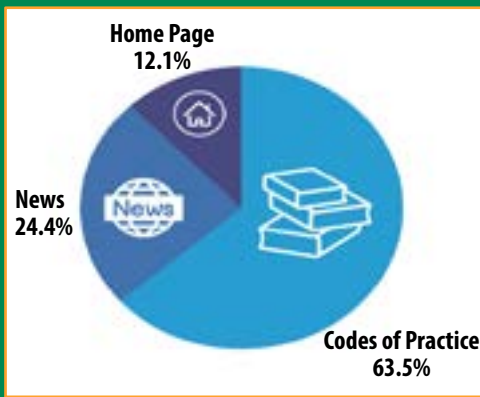
Top 3 NFACC Code Pages Visited

1. Pig Code of Practice
2. Poultry Code of Practice
3. Equine Code of Practice



Top NFACC Visited Pages

1. Codes of Practice (86,683 hits)
2. News (33,256 hits)
3. Home Page (16,473 hits)



Animal Welfare Research Needs

Animal welfare research is a key component of NFACC's Code Development Process (CDP). At the heart of the CDP is the guiding principle that the Codes "should be based on the best available science and other acceptable knowledge sources (peer-reviewed science, industry publications/experience, expert opinion, anecdotal evidence, etc.)" Science and other knowledge sources support or provide the rationale for requirements and recommended practices for each new Code update. NFACC endeavours to continually look ahead; the goal is to encourage as much research as possible prior to a Code's update. Thus, future animal welfare research needs are collated throughout a Code's development by both the Scientific Committee and the Code Committee.

For example, identified research needs in the case of goats included natural behaviours, lameness due to poor hoof care and nutritional diseases, and perinatal management to optimize kid health, amongst others. The full list is outlined in detail on the Goat Animal Welfare Research Needs [page](#).

NFACC anticipates that by highlighting areas of pressing concern, researchers and funding bodies will focus their attention on outstanding knowledge gaps and research needs. The ultimate goal is to benefit the species and lay the foundation for future Code updates.

Current research needs identified for all 14 Code species may be found [here](#).



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