



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Updated Mink Code of Practice in the Works

(Toronto) 22 Nov 2010 - The Canada Mink Breeders Association (CMBA) is pleased to announce the upcoming revision of the Code of Practice for the care and handling of mink. The Codes of Practice are national guidelines for the care and handling of the different species of farm animals. The Code of Practice for mink will be updated through the National Farm Animal Care Council's (NFACC) Code of Practice development process and is expected to be released in 2012.

“The revision of the Code of Practice provides the opportunity to update practices that will benefit both the mink and mink farmers,” says Gary Hazlewood, Executive Director of CMBA. “Advances in management and science have contributed to a knowledge base that will enhance the well being of mink. This can only lead to a Code that will be embraced by producers and provide a clear understanding of the standards for those not familiar with the sector.”

Codes of Practice represent a national understanding of animal care requirements and recommended best practices for farm animals. They promote sound management and welfare practices through recommendations and requirements for housing, management, transportation, processing and other animal husbandry practices. Codes are prepared with the input and support of scientific experts and by consensus of diverse groups involved or interested in farm animal care and welfare. Farm animal care assessment programs are based on the Codes and some Canadian provinces reference the Codes within their animal protection legislation.

The NFACC Code of Practice development process guides the Code Development Committee through the Code revision process. A key feature of the process is the inclusion of a Scientists' Committee that reviews the research relative to priority welfare issues for the species. The resulting report will provide the Code Development Committee with science-based information.

“Everyone, including the animals, benefit from having science-based Codes of Practice,” says Edouard Asnong, Chair of NFACC. “Over time, the body of science in any given area will develop and further inform us as to an animal's care and handling needs. The Codes are updated to take into account this evolution of our knowledge and understanding.” The existing mink Code was developed in 1988.

Shelagh MacDonald, Program Director for the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (CFHS) says, “The CFHS recognizes the importance of Codes of Practice for animal industries. The collaborative approach with scientific input outlined in the new NFACC Code development process is a leap forward and the CFHS is pleased to have a representative to participate in this process to move animal welfare forward.” Don Mitton from the Canadian Association for Humane Trapping will represent CFHS on the mink Codes Development Committee.

Nadine Meade has been contracted as a Code Development Secretary and will facilitate the work of the mink Code Development Committee. Nadine has a Master of Animal Science degree. Her work experience includes facilitating interactive discussions with diverse groups; including strategic planning and consensus building sessions, and working with Boards and industry groups to develop solutions to industry issues. Kirk Rankin will chair the mink Code Development Committee. He is a third generation mink farmer operating near St. Marys, Ontario. Kirk Chairs the CMBA Ecology and Code Committees and is a Past President of Ontario Fur Breeders Association.

For more information on the Codes of Practice and NFACC's Code development process visit www.nfacc.ca.

About NFACC

NFACC is a collaborative partnership of diverse stakeholders created in 2005 to share information and work together on farm animal care and welfare. It is the national lead for farm animal care issues in Canada.

NFACC would like to acknowledge the Canadian Animal Health Coalition (CAHC) for their role in securing funding for this project.

About CMBA

Canada Mink Breeders Association was constituted in 1952 as a non-profit organization with a mandate to assist, protect and advance the industry in Canada and to advance and promote the end product in both national and international fields.

Code of Practice updates initiated from 2010 to 2013 are part of the project: Addressing Domestic and International Market Expectations Relative to Farm Animal Welfare. Funding for this project is being made available through AAFC's AgriFlexibility fund, a program delivered in Canada's Economic Action Plan (EAP). The EAP focuses on strengthening the economy and securing Canada's economic future. For more information on the AgriFlexibility fund and Canada's Economic Action Plan, please visit www.agr.gc.ca/agriflexibility and www.actionplan.gc.ca.

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