



Information Update (April 2006)

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[Brussels Conference on Animal Welfare – March 30, 2006](#)

On March 30, 2006 the European Union held an Animal Welfare Conference, hosted by the Austrian Presidency in Brussels. The conference was an opportunity for the Commission to present its recently published Animal Welfare Action Plan (summary in NFACC information update Feb/06).

350 delegates attended. Martin Appelt, CFIA Humane Transportation Specialist, was possibly the only Canadian in attendance. Dr. Appelt has kindly provided NFACC with his impressions and highlights of the conference. Below is a summary:

- 1) Recurring statement by speakers - criticism of industry advertising for impressing the wrong image of animal production in the public's mind – e.g., 'happy' animals outside in lush pastures versus the realities of confinement agriculture. Consumers are irritated when the advertised picture is so different from reality. If your production practices are good **show the reality and don't invent unrealistic pictures.**
- 2) Different players and their perspectives:
 - a. Some speakers unaware of on-farm realities. Aim is to further tighten regulations, e.g., transport
 - b. Concerns of EU industry similar to Canadian industry – cost, who pays, implications on the global market and having a level playing field
 - c. **European retailers are looking at procurement standards for the global market**, e.g., OIE guidelines. The EU's attention to animal welfare may prevent multi-national chains from developing their own stricter standards. **Note: the*

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2nd largest European grocery retailer has the same sales volume as the complete Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors component.

- 3) Economics of animal welfare – **the costs of improved animal welfare standards are over estimated.** Animal welfare is a small factor of the total production costs. North America produces lower cost eggs than the EU, even after corrections for differences in animal welfare standards.
- 4) Rudolf Schwarzboeck, COPA - European Producer Association - **CODEX of good practices highly recommended for EU** (*essentially a European Code of Practice for the care of handling of farmed animals*).
- 5) Changes to direct payment (Common Agriculture Policy) structure for producers
 - Subsidies used to be linked strictly to productivity
 - Whole of system payment package now being proposed – linking to food safety, environment, animal health and animal welfare standards
 - Producers will have to comply across the board to be eligible for payments – not based on strict efficiencies of production
- 6) No consensus on developing an EU animal welfare label – the question asked; is a label going to solve welfare problems?
- 7) Canada is in an advantageous position with the EU – our respective government animal health representatives (Joint Management Committee/Veterinary Agreement on Animal Health) are talking about procedures to recognize each other’s way of doing things. Re: animal welfare, information is being shared.

Contact Jackie, NFACC Coordinator, (jraustin@telusplanet.net) for Dr. Appelt’s full summary. For further information on the EU Animal Welfare Action Plan and Brussels conference: http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/animal/welfare/index_en.htm

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Catherine Scovil, Canadian Pork Council: ‘Building the Animal Care Assessment (ACA) Tool’

-Presentation to NFACC April 5, 2006

Why CPC developed its ACA tool:

- Basic approaches already in place no longer enough – not answering the question of what is actually happening on farm
- Changing global environment – UK, EU & US initiatives, audits at Canadian processing facilities, Canadian retailer/food service industries need information
- Consumer attitude surveys indicate animal welfare is a top issue (#3) next to food safety (#1) and environment (#2). 2004 Ipsos-Reid survey indicates consumers are taking action by avoiding products based on perceived animal care status

How ACA was developed:

- Initiated 2002, tested 2003/04, CPC Board approved July/04, launched July/05
- Established a working group – producers, researchers, government
 - Examine approaches in other jurisdictions
 - Assess methods for measuring animal welfare (e.g., animal/design based)
- Objective: to promote sound animal care practices and develop a mechanism to demonstrate practices are followed.
- Anticipated outcome: confidence throughout supply chain and with consumers

- Challenges: no HACCP approach for animal care, lack of agreement on animal welfare measures (no one-size-fits-all), practicalities of on-farm application, emotional element to animal care
- Result: Codes form the basis, use HACCP concepts from CQA, and blend of animal welfare measures (animal/design/outcome/process)
- Characteristics: clear minimum requirements, valid/reliable/repeatable, measurable tools, educational, validation tool, evaluates the pig and the process, cost effective/simple, avoid duplication (complement to CQA program), references the Codes
- Prior to launch reviewed by CMC, CVMA, CCGD, & CFHS – support for implementation received
- Materials – hard copy and on website
- Producers must be on CQA first, validators must also have CQA training

Current and future focus:

- Plan for continual improvement (committed to work on gestation stalls, environmental enrichment, castration and tail docking)
- Build enthusiasm amongst producers for ACA tool
- Promote benefits of program: meet customer expectations, tell our story, set minimum requirements, part of overall message of a quality pork industry
- Benchmarking - assess the benefits of the ACA tool – funding required

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Activities of the OIE's Animal Welfare Working Group (AWWG)

-Presentation by Dr. Dan Weary at NFACC meeting, April 5, 2006

Dr. Dan Weary presented the following information based on discussions with Dr. David Fraser who sits on the OIE's Animal Welfare Working Group (AWWG).

- Chapter 3.7 of the OIE's Terrestrial Animal Health Code deals with animal welfare (animal welfare guidelines for transportation by land and by sea, slaughter for food and killing for disease control purposes).
- Guidelines for aquaculture are being developed. A draft could be submitted to the Code Commission as early as 2006 for possible submission to the General Assembly in a subsequent meeting. (The General Assembly meets each year in May).
- Feedback to the OIE logically flows through a country's delegate (Brian Evans in Canada's case).
- In addition, animal welfare was recognized as a topic with important stakeholders - specifically NGO's and industry. Therefore, the AWWG asked each of these groups to organize themselves with a single representative and a reporting structure to channel feedback to the AWWG
- NGO's have created the International Coalition for Farm Animals (ICFA) with David Wilkins as their representative. ICFA membership includes HSUS, RSPCA, WSPA, Eurogroup for Animal Welfare, International Fund for Animal Welfare, National Council of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (South Africa), Japan Farm Animal Welfare Initiative, RSPCA (Australia) and Compassion in World Farming
- Industry has not reached this level of organization. Three industry representatives attended the last AWWG meeting in September 2005 (International Meat Secretariat, International Dairy Federation, International Federation of Agricultural Producers) and were encouraged to establish a communication system among their different groups.

- Regarding guidelines on production practices, no steps have been announced to date. At the earliest, the AWWG could discuss the possibility/feasibility of develop activity in this area at its up-coming meeting in July.

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The Meatrix II – an online film attacking modern agriculture –released. Focus on the dairy industry.

Ontario Farm Animal Care (OFAC) is working with Dairy Farmers of Canada on responses and will post a "for facts on Canadian dairy farming" links on the front pages of their websites, www.ofac.org and www.farmissues.com.

Meatrix II released March 28, 2006

“The Meatrix II: Revolting,” is an animated online flash film attacking modern agriculture. This new production, which focuses on dairy farming, is the sequel to the November 2003 Meatrix film that claimed to reveal “the truth about the lies we tell ourselves about how our food is produced.” The film is online at www.themeatrix2.com.

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PETA launches Chinese/English website “Avian Flu – It’s Your Fault”

The website (<http://www.avianflu.cn/index-en.asp>) aggressively targets Asian consumers, linking eating meat with global pandemics. “History shows that each and every global pandemic within the last 100 years arose because of animal agriculture.” The appeal is focused not so much on animal welfare, but on the audience’s anticipated self-interest in avoiding a human disease catastrophe.

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