



## Information Update (May 2006)

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[Farm Foundation Report, 'The Future of Agriculture in North America'](#) – summary of animal welfare chapter

Released April 18, 2006. Full report is available in English, French & Spanish at:

<http://www.farmfoundation.org/projects/04-32Reportrelease.htm>

The report 'examines the animal agriculture industry in all three NAFTA countries—Canada, Mexico and the United States. It identifies issues that are common to all three countries and areas where there are different concerns and approaches.' Chapter 8 focuses on animal welfare, reviewing legislation, industry initiatives, international developments and approaches for addressing animal welfare.

2 drivers for change are identified: 1) Consumer/Public Attitudes 2) International Developments

3 central issues are identified:

1. Will the pressure for higher standards result in legislation, or will industry respond effectively to public concerns by developing and applying higher standards on a voluntary or collective basis.
2. Animal welfare standards will likely become an increasingly important issue in international trade, not only for governments but also for companies operating in global markets. A key issue for North American producers is whether to take a proactive or reactive approach to the development of standards.
3. How to modify existing production and handling systems so they respond to consumer concerns about animal welfare in a cost-effective way.

“Economic forces—specifically whether consumers will be willing to pay any additional costs and domestic producers will still be able to make a profit—are likely to be the major determinants of the success of initiatives to raise animal welfare standards in North America.”

Suggested options for strengthening the self-regulation process:

*Please direct questions or comments to Jackie Wepruk, NFACC Coordinator, @ (403) 783-4066 or [jraustin@telusplanet.net](mailto:jraustin@telusplanet.net)*

1. Improve the flow of information to the public – e.g., statements of principle, educational materials for the general public, schools, and colleges, discussions on current practices and their rationale. (*Coordinator's Note: Our 4 provincial farm animal care groups in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta do a lot of work in this area*)
2. Develop and apply standards and codes of practice – “Industry groups across North America could work together to provide a more coordinated and harmonized approach for the development of standards, certification programs and labeling, including helping the general public understand what various types of certification mean.”
3. Increase research and education – more publicly funded research, ensure all education programs in animal science and veterinary medicine include course materials on animal welfare (encompassing biological, ethical and socio-economic perspectives) and extension training programs for people in animal products industries.

“The livestock industry is taking steps to address some of the concerns expressed about current practices... **Pressures for additional legislation are likely to intensify in North America if the general public perceives that self-regulation is not addressing public concerns effectively.**”

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### [Alberta Farm Animal Care \(AFAC\) Association's Livestock Care Conference](#)

March 24, 2006

NFACC Chair, Gordon Coukell, was invited to provide an overview of the value that NFACC can bring to agriculture industry. Related media releases can be found at [www.afac.ab.ca](http://www.afac.ab.ca) (note references to NFACC). Below are some take home messages from the speakers:

*David Fraser, University of British Columbia*

- There has been a rapid pace of social change (re: animal welfare) over the last few years; ***expect it to continue and escalate***

*Jeff Rushen & Anne Marie de Passille, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada researchers*

- Improvements in animal welfare can increase production and reduce costs of production
- Take a positive approach and explore advantages to industry in improving animal welfare

*Claude Mason, Manitoba veterinarian*

- Acknowledge & address the strong emotional impact that euthanasia has on people
- Training, coping enhancements & standard operating procedures needed to support workers who must euthanize animals

*Martin Appelt, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)*

- Overview of CFIA's rationale for possible changes to the Health of Animals Regulations Transportation
- Input encouraged, more information at [www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca)

*Tim O'Byrne, Calico Beef Consulting*

- Overview of the Quality Livestock Training (QLT) program, more information at [www.afac.ab.ca](http://www.afac.ab.ca)

*Crystal Mackay, Executive Director Ontario Farm Animal Council (OFAC)*

- Industry must participate in the animal welfare debate – ***to not participate is to lose by default***. Formula: 1) Discussion 2) Invest in Solutions 3) Do the right thing 4) Tell your story
- It's OK to care, answers to animal welfare questions should be based on caring, then backed up with facts, economics, etc.

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### [Ontario Farm Animal Council \(OFAC\) Annual Meeting](#)

April 4, 2006

NFACC Chair, Gordon Coukell, was invited to provide an overview of the value that NFACC can bring to agriculture industry. Related media release can be found at <http://www.ofac.org>. Below are some take home messages from the speakers:

*Terry Whiting, Manitoba Agriculture and Food*

- Animal welfare is not about animals, but about human behaviour – ethical consideration of how people should behave toward animals
- Risk of extremism comes from frustration at a lack of progress
- Facts alone are insufficient to address moral issues – people must believe you
- Agriculture should consider both science and society in its approach to animal welfare

*Susan Jones, Ipsos Reid*

- OFAC commissioned survey – overall, people have positive impressions of farmers
- Care and treatment of animals on farm 2<sup>nd</sup> most important issue to the public behind food safety; however, most people believe farm animals are well care for

*Dennis Avery, The Hudson Institute*

- The world's food output must more than double by 2050
- Intensive agriculture allows for the conservation of wildlife habitat, the production of safe, nutritious food, and better animal welfare through reduced exposure to disease

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[Bill S-213, amendments to the Criminal Code \(cruelty to animals\) introduced](#)

This is a new version of Bill S-24, reintroduced as S-213 at the Senate level on April 26, 2006. 2<sup>nd</sup> reading and debate occurred on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Information on the Bill and its status can be found at: <http://parl11.parl.gc.ca/legisinfo/index.asp?Language=E&List=toc&query=4669&Session=14>

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[ABC news story on Humane Labelling in the U.S., April 27, 2006](#)

For the full story: 'Where Was Your Chicken Before It Hatched?'

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/Health/story?id=1896463&page=1>

**Excerpts from the article:**

The "Certified Humane" label, a certification created in May 2003 through Herndon, Va.-based Humane Farm Animal Care, is becoming a more-popular and sought-after sticker for producers and stores, alike. More than 50 companies have been granted the rights to use the label, according to Holly Bridges, director of outreach for Humane Farm Animal Care. Grocery stores are also seeing the commercial potential of carrying the label in their stores. A 23-store chain based in Larchmont, N.Y., D'Agostino Supermarkets, is asking all its suppliers to become certified humane.

The supermarket not only is trying to figure out how to compete in the tough New York grocery market with big competitors like Whole Foods and Trader Joe's winning over shoppers in the region, but owner Nick D'Agostino III says his customers are looking for this. "People are more concerned about where their food comes from," he said. "People are very, very concerned. There is no reason why animals shouldn't be treated in a reasonable manner."

One certified producer, Hedgeapple Farm of Buckeystown, raises black Angus beef cattle on 250 acres about 40 miles north of Washington. The free-ranging animals eat as much fresh grass, rather than grain or hay, as the seasons allow. They are protected from disease by vaccinations, not feed additives that could accumulate in their meat.

"It just makes good sense to treat your production animals right," said John Jorgensen, president of the family foundation that owns the farm.

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### [Google and Ohio State Switching to Cage-Free Eggs](#)

Google and Ohio State University have both recently made the decision to only use cage-free eggs in their cafeterias. *“Google officials say the decision is part of a wider effort to incorporate environmental and social values into food choices.”*

**Google article:** <http://www.mercurynews.com/ml/mercurynews/news/local/14552520.htm> (at the bottom of the article are responses, worth reading for a reader/public perspective)

**Ohio State article:** <http://www.columbusdispatch.com/business-story.php?story=dispatch/2006/05/09/20060509-C1-05.html>

Related story... Vancouver Humane Society pressuring Loblaw's to label eggs from caged hens. [http://www.chickenout.ca/news.php?sbget=sb\\_articles,1,38,,0,,,;main,1,1,,0,,&sbg=EN,2,,sb445a34fe3c6f9](http://www.chickenout.ca/news.php?sbget=sb_articles,1,38,,0,,,;main,1,1,,0,,&sbg=EN,2,,sb445a34fe3c6f9) - note that a video, attributed to a Guelph Ontario egg farm, is being used to substantiate their campaign.

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The funding for secretariat services, and other support by the Canadian Animal Health Coalition to the National Farm Animal Care Council, is provided through a Contribution Agreement for a project between AAFC and the Coalition.

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