



# THE ANIMAL CARE ASSESSMENT MODEL WORKSHOP

## ‘WHAT WE HEARD’ REPORT

The National Farm Animal Care Council

Rozanski Hall  
the University of Guelph  
Guelph, Ontario

August 11 and 12, 2011

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Funding for this project was provided through The Agri-Flexibility Project – Addressing Domestic and International Market Expectations Relative to Farm Animal Welfare – a project made possible through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada’s Agri-Flexibility program funding.

## Executive Summary

Since 2005, the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) has facilitated discussions on the concept of having a nationally coordinated approach to animal care assessment. The initial discussions were focused on sharing information about existing programs and exploring what common and accepted principles might be articulated within an Animal Care Assessment Model (ACAM). In 2008, the decision to proceed with the development of an ACAM was made. This resulted in the creation of a draft ACAM in 2009. The work continued in 2011 under the guidance of a multi-stakeholder Committee. **Refer to Appendix C - The ACAM Steering Committee.**

The ACAM operates at a high level and is about the *process* for program development and implementation. It's main goals are to:

- enhance the transparency, legitimacy and credibility of assessment programs developed according to the Model
- ensure consistency of communications along the value chain
- further develop Canada's own cooperative approach to farm animal care, an approach that can be communicated nationally and internationally, and that builds upon existing initiatives
- assist commodity groups in developing or revising an animal care program by providing an informed framework and useful resources

The Model is intended to provide a framework for the development of animal care assessment programs. Groups can follow the ACAM process to develop their animal care program and demonstrate adherence to their Code of Practice. The Codes of Practice represent our national understanding of farm animal care requirements and recommended best practices.

A Workshop on developing the ACAM was held on August 11 and 12, 2011, in Guelph, Ontario. Nearly 70 participants attended the Workshop, including farmers, industry association staff, assessors, animal advocates, processors, retailers, and government. The purpose was to update participants on the project and get feedback on the draft ACAM from a broad group of people with an interest in the topic.

The afternoon session on Day 1 featured speakers who brought a diversity of perspectives on themes that were complimentary to the Model. Topics included: an historic context of the ACAM project; an overview of scientific research on farm animal welfare assessment; the drivers along the supply chain for a nationally coordinated approach to program development; and the story of how one successful animal care assessment program was developed and implemented.

**Appendix B provides a summary of each presentation.**

The following day was dedicated to breakout sessions designed to allow for a broader group to provide feedback on the draft Model. Key themes emerged:

- Workshop participants agreed that there is a need to have a nationally coordinated approach to developing animal care assessments programs. There was also strong support for the goals of the ACAM, but there was active discussion on how specifically to achieve these goals.
- There was also strong consensus that animal care assessment programs should be based on the Codes of Practice and this generated frequent discussion on the importance of having Codes that contain measurable components, set progressive but achievable targets, and acknowledge regional differences within an industry. While the NFACC Code Development Process emphasizes this, the Workshop served nevertheless as a valuable reminder of the need to have all stakeholders at the Code table. A Code of Practice that reflects the needs of stakeholders facilitates the development of assessment programs that also reflect the needs of stakeholders.
- The Model outlines principles that we all agree to but does not, as yet, outline in detail how we will realize those principles in practical settings. For instance, how specifically can we ensure animal care assessment programs bring benefits to farmers?
- Sustainability of funding for NFACC: there would be more confidence in the ACAM overall if we have reasonable certainty of long-term funding for NFACC.

The next steps following this Workshop include the test piloting of the draft Model by Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC), which will begin developing an animal care assessment program based on the process set out by the draft ACAM. This exercise will provide a practical opportunity to work through issues raised in the Workshop, address outstanding questions, and inform further revisions to the ACAM. A second Workshop is planned for the fall of 2013, and the ACAM will be completed by December 2013.

## Appendix A

### Workshop Program

#### **Day 1 - August 11, 2011**

##### **Welcome Address**

Catherine Scovil, Associate Executive Director, Canadian Pork Council  
& Ed Pajor, Professor, University of Calgary

##### **The Animal Care Assessment Model: Working together towards a national strategy for animal care assessment**

Jackie Wepruk, General Manager, National Farm Animal Care Council

##### **The Value of a Coordinated Approach: A processor's perspective**

Mike Siemens, Leader, Animal Welfare and Husbandry, Cargill Animal Protein

##### **The Market Pull for a National Model: A national retailer's perspective**

David Smith, National VP of Retail Strategy and Sustainability, Sobeys, Inc.

##### **How Can Animal Welfare Research Help? Bringing science into practice**

Jeff Rushen, Researcher, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

##### **Insights from an International Perspective**

Andy Butterworth, Senior Research Fellow, Bristol University and Animal Welfare Training Group member

##### **Success Stories: Maple Leaf Farms' Trident Stewardship Program**

Wendi Lallier, Day-Old Production Manager, Maple Leaf Farms Inc.

##### **Concluding Remarks**

Catherine Scovil, Associate Executive Director, Canadian Pork Council  
& Ed Pajor, Professor, University of Calgary

#### **DAY 2 - August 12, 2011**

##### **Review of key sections of the draft ACAM**

Caroline Ramsay, ACAM Coordinator, National Farm Animal Care Council

##### **Break-out sessions aimed at getting participants' feedback on the draft ACAM**

##### **Concluding Remarks**

Catherine Scovil, Associate Executive Director, Canadian Pork Council  
& Ed Pajor, Professor, University of Calgary

## Appendix B

### Presentation Abstracts

#### **Welcome Address**

Catherine Scovil, Associate Executive Director, Canadian Pork Council  
& Ed Pajor, Professor, University of Calgary

Participants were thanked for their interest in the Workshop and their commitment to providing feedback on the draft ACAM. For this type of project, it is essential to have early input from all groups with an interest in animal care assessment.

#### **The Animal Care Assessment Model: Working together towards a national strategy for animal care assessment**

Jackie Wepruk, General Manager, National Farm Animal Care Council

The National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) is the national lead for farm animal care in Canada. The Council brings together a diversity of stakeholders and uses a consensus-based model of decision making. NFACC's work areas include the Codes of Practice for the care and handling of farm animals; the Animal Care Assessment Model (ACAM); and facilitating communication and information sharing.

Codes of Practice are our national understanding of farm animal care requirements and recommended best practices. They are science-based, practical, and reflect societal expectations for responsible farm animal care. Codes serve as education tools; reference materials for regulations; and they are the foundation for animal care assessment programs.

The ACAM project is seven years in the making. The early years were focused on sharing insights about the emerging needs for assessment programs. In 2006, a Sub-committee was formed to examine whether there was a need for a Model, and, if so, whether NFACC had a role. The Committee advised that research was needed on key topics before going forward. Three reports were developed: (1) A Report on Consumer Market Research on Farm Animal Care; (2) Animal Care Assessment Programs - The benefits to animals, producers and other industries; and (3) Animal Care Assessment Models - Experiences of other countries. From this there was agreement that a coordinated approach was needed. NFACC's 2008 - 2013 business plan stated a new objective: "To create an Animal Care Assessment Framework Model". A draft ACAM was developed in 2009.

Our current ACAM Steering Committee was established in January 2011 and is charged with addressing any outstanding concerns with the draft ACAM and liaising with Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC) as it test pilots the draft ACAM by developing their animal care program based on the process set out by the Model. The ACAM is to be finalized by December 31, 2013.

## **The Value of a Coordinated Approach: A processor's perspective**

Mike Siemens, Leader, Animal Welfare and Husbandry, Cargill Animal Protein

An overview of the U.S. experience with animal care programs was provided. Past assessment programs have tended to focus on communicating to the consumer and the producer but have at times failed to communicate to the processor. Yet processors are a critical part of the production chain. Most value chains involve a producer selling to a *processor*, a *processor* who sells to a retailer; and retailers selling to end consumers. Processor support can elevate an animal care assessment program and can have a powerful influence on program uptake, particularly in cases where the processor calls on suppliers to participate in the program. But this is unlikely to happen unless processors are involved at an early stage to provide input.

Successful animal care programs will be affordable, transparent, and credible to all interest groups, and they will include measures that are objective, scientifically valid, repeatable, and reliable. The credibility of a program can be enhanced through independent review.

As an industry, one thing going against us is the number of programs out there - this has led to confusion and a duplication of efforts. The agriculture sector would benefit from a national system. Right or wrong, critics of animal agriculture are telling their story in a very public way. We must work together to develop and implement good programs, communicate our story, and do what we say we are doing.

## **The Market Pull for a National Model: A national retailer's perspective**

David Smith, National VP of Retail Strategy and Sustainability, Sobeys, Inc.

The retail and foodservice sector is increasingly accountable for the products it sells. Consumers have ever increasing and sophisticated access to product information. For example, *barcoo* is a program that links consumers in stores with independent consumer information accessible to consumers who scan barcodes using their mobile phone.

As retailers, we tend not to have expertise in animal welfare; therefore, we need to know that there is a nationally coordinated, rigorous process in place for the development of assessment programs. Indicators of the need for collaboration in the supply chain include the more than 1000 different ethical and labour standards available globally; that no single environmental standard exists (but multiple competing programs are attempting to fill that void); the many pioneer companies that have built up large in-house teams and overhead; and the sentiment of 'audit fatigue' among suppliers facing multiple annual audits.

Consumers want to 'do the right thing' but they will not sacrifice quality (performance, price, convenience). Consumers also want to 'know the story' but are not always enabled (as when product information is unavailable). But we can't tell the story of how the food was produced until we have the foundation - the Animal Care Assessment Model (ACAM) and the assessment programs developed from it help build that foundation. Concepts such as the ACAM are desirable to buyers because they define the process once and that process is then activated across multiple commodities.

As part of the ACAM project, a Retail and Foodservice Advisory Committee has been formed with a dual purpose of ensuring the ACAM meets the needs of buyers and, in turn, allowing retailers to become more informed about the production side of animal agriculture.

At this time, retailers generally consider animal welfare to be a 'backburner' issue. However, our participation in this Workshop and on the Retail and Foodservice Advisory Committee signals our commitment to the issues and an agreement among retailers that it is strategic to handle them proactively and encourage progress in animal welfare.

## **How Can Animal Welfare Research Help? Bringing science into practice**

Jeff Rushen, Researcher, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

To assess animal welfare, we need a definition that has broad, global consensus and which is amenable to scientific investigation and input, such as that of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). While consensus definitions exist, different stakeholders emphasize different aspects of animal welfare. Producers tend to emphasize animal health more while consumers focus more on pain and the behaviour of the animals.

Input-based standards describe the housing and management in a production system. Outcome-based standards describe the actual welfare state of the animal. Input- and outcome-based standards each offer advantages and disadvantages; therefore, assessment programs should include both. Input-based standards are generally easier to verify and can prevent welfare problems from occurring by identifying risk factors. However, they do not necessarily tell us about the actual welfare of the animal, and it can be difficult to prescribe inputs that can be applied to different types of production systems. Outcome-based standards measure the actual state of the animal (albeit at one point in time) and can be used in various production systems, but they can be difficult to measure and will generally not prevent poor welfare from occurring. The more recent use of outcome-based standards in assessment programs highlights the need for standardized welfare outcome indicators that can be scored reliably by well-trained assessors.

The 2009 Dairy Code is a good example of how we can bring science into practice in that it includes relevant research in dairy cattle welfare. But if we have Codes in place, it's important that we assure the public of their use. The development of assessment programs is made easier if a Code clearly states what is acceptable or not. Science can measure the impact on animal welfare but cannot decide what is acceptable. The Dairy Code defined what is acceptable by bringing a community of stakeholders together, including dairy farmers, animal welfare groups, government, scientists, food retailers, and food processors.

Successful assessment programs will not only assess the overall farm but will provide information to the farmer and offer them important benefits, such as improved market access and reduced losses from welfare problems.

## **Insights from an International Perspective**

Andy Butterworth, Senior Research Fellow, Bristol University and Animal Welfare Training Group member

Consumers in many European countries have to navigate markets where multiple labeling programs exist even for the same product. Animal care assessment programs are needed for many reasons, such as a tool for industry to assure the use of its Code; niche labeling programs; and perhaps toward an international standard.

The Welfare Quality® project is an integrated European research initiative that sets protocols for assessing farm animal welfare. So far, animal based measures have been created for pigs, cattle, and poultry. In developing protocols for Welfare Quality® we began with four principles: housing; feed and water; health; and behaviour. From these core principles, 12 criteria were developed. For example, the principle of good housing includes criteria such as thermal comfort and comfort around bedding.

Assessment programs have historically tended to assess welfare by examining the provisions of housing and resources (resource-based measures) rather than looking at the farm animals themselves (animal-based measures). Researchers have been suggesting for some time that animal-based measures could provide valid indicators of animal welfare since welfare is a characteristic of the individual animal not just of the system in which animals are farmed. Both resource- and animal-based measures should be included in a program as an animal can be in 'good condition' in a 'bad environment' and the converse is also possible.

To implement effective use of animal-based assessment measures, the following four steps could be adopted. As a first step, identify the assessment measures that will be used in the program. It is valuable to have measures applicable not only to the farm but also at slaughter (where a number of animals can be scored at one place). Secondly, analyze the risk factors - one way to accomplish this is to have questionnaires that effectively identify farms at risk for certain issues. Thirdly, inform producers, purchasers and advisors of the program and assessment results. It is particularly important to examine different ways of reporting back to the farmer with the results of their assessment. The feedback to the farmer should identify where improvements can be made and should show how the measure or result is relevant to animal welfare. As a fourth step, create a mechanism within the program to support management decisions intended to create improvements in welfare. Some programs allow auditors to provide decision support; other programs have separate advisors for this step.

## **Success Stories: Maple Leaf Farms' Trident Stewardship Program**

Wendi Lallier, Day-Old Production Manager, Maple Leaf Farms Inc.

Maple Leaf Farms was the first duck company to implement a comprehensive audit program covering all stages of production. Our duck well-being guidelines serve as the basis for our training and auditing program. The guidelines are reviewed and approved by an independent group and cover animal well-being, biosecurity and environmental stewardship.

Certification in our Trident Stewardship Program is achieved once employees are trained in their job area, pass a duck well-being test, and take an oath to uphold the company's duck well-being core beliefs. Unannounced audits are performed separately by both an internal team as well as an independent, third party. In addition, we are pleased to have recently incorporated animal-based standards into our program (e.g., formalized assessment of feather condition).

The initial audit team training program was a two-day training course and workshop administered by a third-party. Most Production Managers and Field Technicians also participated in the training. All training today is hands-on farm auditing with experienced team members. Members of the audit team are encouraged to adopt a mindset that audits are: a positive activity; are focused on attaining the highest possible standards of performance; and an opportunity to promote continuous improvement.

A key feature of our program is our Advisory Committee comprised of researchers and veterinarians. The Committee serves multiple functions, including updating Maple Leaf Farms of relevant research, and to help revise the guidelines as required. In addition, the Committee advises us on legislation in other countries and how that may impact future U.S. legislation, and they keep us aware of the views of welfare associations. Lastly, the Advisory Committee makes formal recommendations on key points and approaches to improving duck well-being.

Maintaining a successful program involves having a team spirit. For example, we host an annual awards dinner to celebrate the achievements of those certified. As you build an assessment program, you need to be open to the need for continuous improvement. This requires having involvement from people who want the program to succeed. Our company is stronger because of our assessment program.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Catherine Scovil, Associate Executive Director, Canadian Pork Council  
& Ed Pajor, Professor, University of Calgary

The speakers were thanked for their contributions. Despite the diversity of speakers, common themes emerged, including the value of transparency, being open to criticism, and finding a credible, collaborative system for developing assessment programs.

We need to defend the science on animal welfare but also understand societal concerns. As you prepare for the Workshop breakout sessions, consider that people value different aspects of farm animal welfare, so when we come to the table we are looking at different things. As long as we recognize this as we go into the process, we'll have success. This holds true for any work in the field of animal agriculture.

## Appendix C

### The ACAM Steering Committee

Representative	Organization
Anne Marie de Passillé Ph.D.	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Ed Pajor Ph.D	University of Calgary
Tina Widowski Ph.D	University of Guelph
Geoff Urton	BC SPCA/Canadian Federation of Humane Societies
David Smith	Sobeys Inc.
Jorge Correa Ph.D	Canadian Meat Council
Jennifer Gardner	Chicken Farmers of Canada
Ryder Lee	Canadian Cattlemen's Association
Catherine Scovil	Canadian Pork Council
Bruno Letendre	Dairy Farmers of Canada
Pauline Duivenvoorden DVM	Dairy Farmers of Canada
Jennifer Woods	J. Woods Livestock Services
Penny Lawlis	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs