



## NFACC Information Update: July 2020

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### PRESENTATIONS MADE AVAILABLE FROM NFACC'S JUNE BOARD MEETING

NFACC held its first ever virtual board meeting in June. Two presentations from that meeting received accolades with the urging that they be shared more broadly. Opportunely, both were recorded, albeit not professionally. While the recording/editing is not polished, the presentations each make important contributions to the conversation on improving the lives of farm animals. Please watch both for maximum benefit.

Marina (Nina) von Keyserlingk's engaging one hour presentation (including Q & A), [Working Toward Socially Sustainable Agriculture – what works and what doesn't](#), outlines:

- research on the unintended effect of legislation meant to address on-farm incursions and other clandestine activities,
- the impact of education and engagement with the public,
- a path forward for developing a vision for agriculture.

Andria Jones-Bitton's poignant 45 minute presentation (including Q & A), [Campaigns against agriculture: A risk factor for poor farmer mental health and poor animal welfare?](#) illustrates how words matter. Even if one's sole interest is in improving the lives of animals, compassion for people is fundamental to that goal.

The conversation continues. The National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare (NFAHW) Council will be hosting a virtual panel session in November that will include both Nina and Andria, along with additional panel member perspectives. Watch for more details on *The realities of One Welfare and the Impacts on Animal Welfare* at <https://www.ahwcouncil.ca/forum-2020>.

### UPDATE ON CODES OF PRACTICE UNDER REVISION/DEVELOPMENT

As of July 1, 2020, NFACC's Codes Project (CAP-AAPN-001 – *Advancing Animal Welfare and Public Trust Through Codes of Practice*) was transferred to the NFAHW Council (from the Canadian Animal Health Coalition). The project's name, work plan, and team have not changed, but it now bears the project number CAP-AAPN-050.

In spite of the challenges of not being able to meeting in person, Code committee work continues and everyone is adapting to the necessity of virtual meetings. The pandemic has caused some delays in public comment periods. Timelines have been updated on each Code's webpage ([Dairy Cattle](#), [Farmed Salmonid](#), [Goats](#), and [Transportation](#)). Additional details on each Code are provided below.

#### Dairy Cattle Code

The Code Committee had a series of online meetings over 2 consecutive days in June. The first sessions were devoted to housing, and each member had an opportunity to speak to their stakeholder's overall hopes for the updated housing chapter.

The main areas of focus were stall design, animal comfort, and various options for offering cows and calves freedom of movement – all of which were among the topics most frequently raised by stakeholders who participated in the [top-of-mind survey](#). In later sessions, they circled back to housing to summarize areas of common ground and gaps in knowledge to fill in advance of future discussions.

Great progress was made reviewing the draft chapters on husbandry and euthanasia, and at this point those draft chapters are largely complete. Work on the husbandry chapter allowed the committee to address many of the points raised through the top-of-mind survey, notably the importance of calm, quiet handling as well as the overall need for attentive training and supervision of staff. For euthanasia, the committee aims to incorporate user friendly tools to support euthanasia decisions and offer additional guidance on correct technique for euthanasia.

Perhaps owing to how well the group got to know each other through past face-to-face meetings (and of course group dinners!), the committee continues to have very positive, productive exchanges despite the current realities of meeting remotely.

The peer review of the report on [priority welfare issues](#) is complete, and the research writer is working with the Scientific Committee to address the input.

Details of past dairy cattle CDC meetings are available [here](#).

### **Farmed Salmonid Code**

The Code Committee had a series of online meetings over 3 consecutive days in June. One main focus was to discuss draft sections on water quality and stocking density – topics that were among the most frequently cited in a survey designed to gather [top-of-mind input](#) from all stakeholders. The committee then turned its attention to revising sections on site selection, enclosure design, lighting, and emergency planning. Draft content on sea lice was also revised (e.g. preventing infection, monitoring lice levels, proper use of treatments and physical control methods). Lastly, the committee reviewed content describing special considerations for broodfish (e.g. handling, egg collection, health management).

More details about the June meeting are available [here](#).

The peer review of the report on [priority welfare issues](#) is complete, and the research writer is working with the Scientific Committee to address the input.

In August, the Code Committee will have at least 4 online sessions to walk through the entire draft Code so that it's ready for the 60-day public comment period, which is slated for November – December 2020.

### **Goat Code**

Following a Covid -19 related postponement, the goat Code Development Committee [CDC] has resumed regular on-line meetings to present, review, and discuss prospective content for inclusion in the forthcoming revised Goat Code of Practice.

From July through September, sub-committees will meet to further refine respective Code sections for presentation and review by the entire CDC. Weekly meetings will provide the CDC with an opportunity to review all prepared content. Following each meeting, recommended edits and/or proposed insertions/additions will be reviewed by the respective sub-committees and Code manager. All chapter sections will be reviewed by the CDC at least twice before the end of September.

After an initial NFACC orientation session to familiarize committee members with a designated on-line meeting platform, weekly meetings began with a review update of the Euthanasia and Handling sections. Those are to be followed by a review of the Pre-Transport and Feed & Water sections. Weekly updates and reviews will continue

through the summer. Throughout September, the committee will put its final touches on the Code and submit a draft version to NFACC for preparation toward the Public Comment Period [December 2020 - January 2021].

With the recent completion of the peer review process, the Scientific Committee [SC] has been meeting to discuss and address recommended edits/clarifications/supplements to the draft version of the Scientific Committee report. Once all review recommendations have been addressed, the chair of the Scientific Committee (also a full member of the Code Development Committee) will provide a presentation of the report to the CDC. In turn, the CDC will review the summary findings for content and neutrality; namely, that all [Priority Welfare Issues](#) have been addressed as anticipated and that the SC has refrained from offering the CDC any explicit recommendations regarding Code content. Once available, the CDC will be able to rely on the Scientific Report to help inform all chapters in the Code.

Details of past goat CDC meetings are available [here](#).

## Transportation Code

The goal, after finalizing the 23-member Transportation Code Development Committee (CDC), was to hold a face-to-face meeting in the spring of 2020. As that was not possible, the CDC met over a series of 5 online meeting sessions in late June which, in effect, replaced what would have normally been a day-and-a-half in-person meeting. While not ideal for a first meeting for such a large group, the revised format was successful in that the meeting's primary goals were achieved.

To address varying degrees of background and Code development experience amongst CDC members, the first 4 sessions focussed on bringing everyone up to a similar level of knowledge of both the generalities and specifics of the Transportation Code development project. The final session was used to draw on the experience and expertise of CDC members to land on a starting point for the Code structure (i.e., table of contents) and to agree on sub-committee topics and rosters. As a reminder, the CDC is responsible for developing content that is common to all types of animals that are covered by the Transportation Code of Practice.

Five sub-committees have been established to review and provide input on various subject-related topics that impact the transportation of all animals covered by the Code. The sub-committees will be responsible for content that falls in the following categories:

- A. Personnel & Equipment
- B. Loading and Unloading
- C. Pre-Transport Planning
- D. Ventilation
- E. (Understanding Implications of) Fitness for Transport

Each sub-committee has between 5 and 8 members, and 3 of the sub-committees have been targeted to commence work as soon as possible. The start-up of the other 2 sub-committees will be staggered in an effort to manage the workload for the CDC members and the Code team. Sub-committees that are working on topics that will need species-specific Working Group (WG) input have been prioritized to start work immediately, so that WG expertise can be utilized to add animal-specific content as early in the process as possible.

Two online meetings for the entire CDC will be scheduled in the fall, and after that we are looking at early in 2021 as the first opportunity for the group to meet in-person. The CDC will continue to meet every 3 months or so over the course 2021. As with other Codes developed using the NFACC process, sub-committees will convene via online meetings between CDC meetings to draft topic-specific content.

While some WGs continue to draft content for their sections (e.g., Poultry; Hatchery; Mink/Fox/Rabbit) via online meetings, the bulk of the remaining WGs are currently in "pause" mode. It is expected that the those *paused* WGs will start to meet (online and in-person) starting in the spring of 2021.

The 60-day Public Comment Period (PCP) is targeted to start in June, 2022, after which we expect that the CDC will

meet twice to review comments and make amendments to the Code draft. At that time, the CDC may elect to ask species-specific WGs to review and discuss specific comments that are animal-specific in nature.

Previous progress updates on the transportation Code are available [here](#).

***For information on the steps of the Code development process and progress of the Codes being updated follow this [link](#).***

***Funding for this project has been provided through the AgriAssurance Program under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a federal–provincial–territorial initiative.***

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **International Society for Applied Ethology 2020 Global Virtual Meeting**  
August 6-7, Online Conference  
<https://www.applied-ethology.org/>
- **National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Council Forum**  
November 24 - 25, Ottawa, ON  
<https://www.ahwcouncil.ca/forum-2020>

If you have an animal welfare event that you would like us to feature, please email Liz ([liz@nfacc.ca](mailto:liz@nfacc.ca)).