



Advancing Animal Welfare and Public Trust Through Codes of Practice

PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS REPORT
APRIL 2025-MARCH 2026



Sustainable Canadian
Agricultural Partnership

Canada

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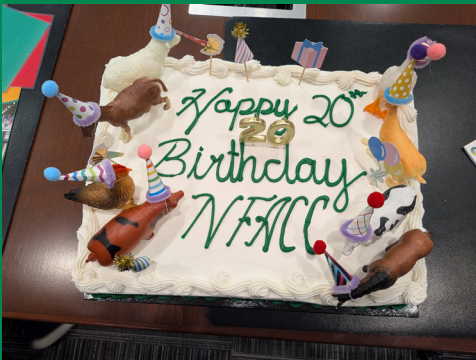
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The Codes of Practice are more than documents; they reflect who we are as an industry and the trust Canadians place in us. That trust is earned, not given, and it's something we must continue to build, together.



Hans Kristensen
NFACC Chair



Celebrating 20 years of NFACC!

A Word from the Chair

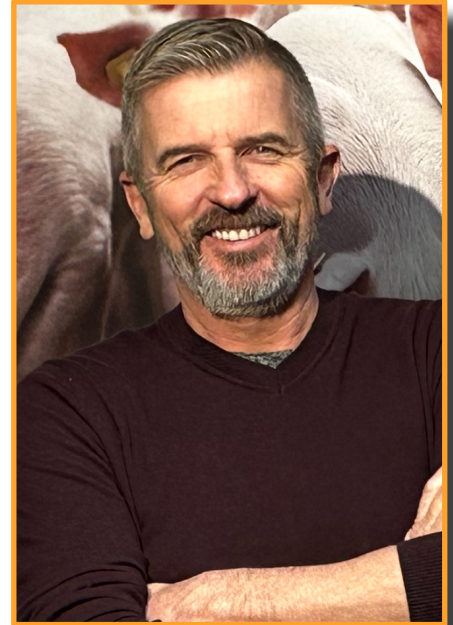
In our last report, we had the opportunity to celebrate a meaningful milestone: NFACC's 20th anniversary. It was a moment to recognize the many people whose dedication and hard work built the foundation for the collaborative, consensus-based approach that continues to guide us today in advancing farm animal welfare in Canada.

That foundation remains strong. To date, fourteen Codes of Practice have been developed through NFACC, each grounded in a rigorous process that brings together scientific evidence, stakeholder expertise, and public input. It's something we can all take pride in.

At the same time, our work continues to evolve. In 2023, we reached an important turning point with the release of our first "second generation" Code, the dairy cattle Code of Practice. This marked the beginning of a new chapter focused on renewal and continuous improvement, ensuring our Codes remain relevant, practical, and credible.

Today, that momentum is very much underway. NFACC is currently supporting the update of five Codes of Practice at once: equine, beef cattle, sheep, poultry, and pigs. This work is not always easy. It requires thoughtful discussion, respect for different perspectives, and a shared commitment to finding common ground. I want to recognize the leadership and dedication of the Code Managers, their teams, and the Code Committee Chairs who help guide these conversations. Their efforts, supported by NFACC's principles of collaboration and consensus decision-making, are what make this process work.

Since our last Achievements Report, which marked the completion of the pullets and laying hens Code Amendment, each of these five Codes has made meaningful progress. In particular, I want to congratulate the equine and beef cattle Code Committees on reaching the public comment period.



Hans Kristensen, NFACC Chair

This is a significant milestone. Opening the door for broader public input strengthens our work and ensures the Codes reflect not only expert knowledge but also the values and expectations of Canadians.

I encourage you to take a look at the survey results highlighted on page 3. Hearing directly from our members about the value they see in NFACC and where we can do better is essential. While we are proud of what has been accomplished over the past 20 years, we know there is always more to do.

For me, this work is not just professional, it's personal. As a producer, I live these values every day, and I know firsthand the responsibility we carry and the pride we take in caring for our animals. The Codes of Practice are more than documents; they reflect who we are as an industry and the trust Canadians place in us. That trust is earned, not given, and it's something we must continue to build, together.

Thank you for the role each of you plays in that effort. I'm proud to be part of this community, and I'm optimistic about where we're headed next.

H. Kristensen

The Value of NFACC - Survey Results

In November 2025, NFACC surveyed its members to gain a better understanding of **the value of NFACC from their perspective**. The survey asked a number of questions, including what members saw as benefits, what the organization did well, and where we could improve.

"The fact that decisions made at NFACC can have the ability to impact (nearly) every farmed animal in Canada is significant. NFACC is making an outsized contribution to animal welfare..."

Members **shared three core themes** when asked about other benefits to NFACC membership:

01. Influence and leadership
A meaningful voice in farm animal welfare standards development through a credible, consistent, and nationally recognized process.



02. Trust and reputation
Demonstrating leadership in responsible farm animal care by being linked with NFACC – building confidence with partners, stakeholders, and the public.



03. Connection and collaboration
Unique opportunities, including twice-yearly NFACC meetings, to engage with a diverse network committed to advancing farm animal welfare across Canada.



Members also highlighted the **impact that NFACC has on advancing animal welfare** and felt it was **important that they had a say** in the development of standards of care for animals.

"NFACC brings people together that might normally never meet or collaborate to advance animal welfare and sustainability."

Answers regarding what NFACC as an organization did well and where it could improve covered a considerable range of topics. Members believed that **NFACC's strength lay in its ability to bring diverse groups together** and its **credible, process-based Codes**. They also stated that NFACC would **benefit from making the public more aware of its achievements** and suggested improvements to the Code process in the form of **additional supportive measures to help groups find consensus**.

"Sharing experiences allows us to learn from one another, develop strategies for progress, and avoid common pitfalls."



Consensus decision-making is also a key value NFACC has over other methods of policymaking in Canada. A focus on consensus brings people together for deeper conversations, exploring shared interests, seeking creative solutions, and achieving outcomes that are better than any single decision maker may have created.



Photo credit: Canadian Sheep Federation

Equine Code of Practice

Code Updates Underway

Equine



CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF EQUINES:

REVIEW OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON PRIORITY ISSUES

Equine Code of Practice Scientific Committee
October 2025

- Kathleen MacMillan, MSc, DVM, DABVP (Eq) (Chair)
Associate Professor
Department of Health Management
University of Prince Edward Island
Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
- Katrina Merkle, PhD
Professor, Department of Animal Biosciences
University of Guelph
International Society for Applied Ethology
International Society for Equitation Science
- Carisa Williams, PhD
Associate Professor, Department of Animal Sciences
University of Florida
International Society for Applied Ethology
International Society for Equitation Science
- Robert J. (Bob) Coleman, PhD, PAS
Associate Professor
Department of Animal and Food Sciences
University of Kentucky
American Society of Animal Science
- W. Michael Scott, DVM, MVS, DACVCS & DACVSMR
Assistant Professor
Department of Veterinary Medicine
University of Calgary
Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
- Bettina Bobens, DVM BSA DABVP (Ex officio)
Equine Code Development Committee Chair
Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
- Conly Dubois, PhD
Scientific Research Writer



PUBLISHED 2026



Photo credit: Rob Lovatt, Keywest Photo image by design inc

The process of updating the equine Code of Practice began in early 2024, with initial activities including the distribution of an equine [Top-of-Mind public survey](#) and the formation of both the equine Code Committee and equine Scientific Committee. After online introductions, both committees would meet for the first time in person in August of the same year to familiarize themselves with the Code process as well as decide on the priority welfare issues that would determine the content of the Scientific Report. The [four priority welfare issues](#) were decided upon by the Code Committee and the Scientific Committee during that first meeting.

Since that date, the Code Committee has met another three times at venue locations across Canada, allowing for robust, subcommittee-led discussions regarding proposed amendments, additions, and deletions to the existing Code content. Discussions also acknowledged that noteworthy changes have taken place within the industry over the past decade. Each time, the Code Committee members also received a thorough update on the ongoing research activities of the Scientific Committee, helping to keep the Code Committee up to date with the findings of the scientific literature.

The draft equine Code Public Comment Period was launched on **January 12th**, 2026 and ran until **March 12th** of the same year. In addition, the Scientific Committee's peer-reviewed [report on priority welfare issues](#) was published alongside the draft Code.

The Code Committee now enters its final stretch of deliberations, where members will begin a careful, systematic review of all submitted comments. They are looking forward to resuming conversations in April of 2026 for the first of two post-PCP sessions to address all received feedback.

Beef



CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF BEEF CATTLE:

REVIEW OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON PRIORITY ISSUES

Beef Cattle Code of Practice Scientific Committee
October 2025

- Karen Schwartzkopf-Genswein, PhD (Chair)
Principal Research Scientist
Lethbridge Research Centre
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Canadian Society of Animal Science
- Claire Winders, DVM, DVMSc
Adjunct Professor
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
University of Calgary
Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
- Karin Ouel, DVM, PhD, ECBIM
Professor
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
University of Calgary
Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
- Diego Mesa, DVM, PhD
Assistant Professor
Western College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Saskatchewan
Canadian Society of Animal Science
- Derek Haley, PhD
Associate Professor
Ontario Veterinary College
University of Guelph
International Society for Applied Ethology
- Ed Papp, PhD
Professor and Anderson-Chisholm Chair in Animal Care and Welfare
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
University of Calgary
International Society for Applied Ethology
- Matt Bowman (Ex officio)
Beef Cattle Code Development Committee Chair
Canadian Cattle Association
- ACER Consulting
Scientific Research Writer



PUBLISHED 2026



Photo credit: FarmPhotos.ca Library

The beef cattle Code and Scientific Committees met for the first time in June of 2024, attending a busy two-day meeting that included roundtable discussions, presentations, and small-group breakout sessions. Other highlights of the meeting included an overview of the beef cattle industry today along with the main strategies to ensure uptake and awareness of the current beef cattle Code of Practice. Building on a review of the principles of consensus, participants developed a shared purpose statement that will serve to guide their work together and agreed upon their [priority welfare issues](#).

In the months that followed, the beef cattle Code Committee continued to meet both in person and online. At each in-person meeting, the Chair of the Scientific Committee presented chapters of the Scientific Report to the Code Committee, and the research served as the keystone for the committee's discussions on how to approach those topics in the updated Code. These robust and productive discussions focused, in part, on some of the main themes that were identified through the [Top-of-Mind survey](#), notably ensuring cattle receive sufficient feed and water, protection from the elements, and proper care and handling in preparation for loading and transport. These themes would continue to play an important role in discussions, as the group made substantial progress in updating the animal husbandry, health, and transport chapters of the Code of Practice, to name a few.

The beef cattle Public Comment Period was launched on April 13th, 2026, and will run until June 12th. The Code Committee greatly appreciated the public's patience and looks forward to receiving input on their work thus far!

Click on the graphic above to view this peer-reviewed, science report developed by the Equine Code Scientific Committee!

Beef Cattle Code of Practice

Click on the graphic above to view this peer-reviewed, science report developed by the Beef Cattle Code Scientific Committee!

Code Updates Underway

Sheep

December 11th and 12th, 2026, marked the first in-person meeting of the sheep Code Committee and Scientific Committee, wherein the group engaged in discussions and tasks that helped them build relationships and allowed them to share their perspectives on various topics, including visions of success for this Code update. To help encourage teamwork and discussion and to interject some fun into what can be an arduous process, the group participated in a competitive Lego sheep building contest (a fierce competition with prizes on the line!). Even after some healthy competition, or perhaps because of it, the Code Committee and Scientific Committee were able to agree upon [four priority welfare issues](#), which would serve as the guiding topics for the scientific report. These comments received during the [Top-of-Mind survey](#) also played a role in the priority welfare issues decisions.

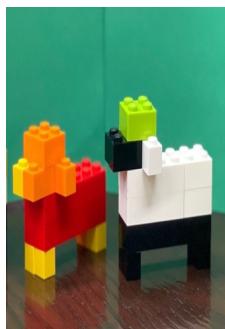


Photo credit: N. Meade

Following the in-person meeting, subcommittees were formed and began looking at Code content in the summer of 2025. As each group drafted their proposed revisions to the Code, they participated in robust discussions and thoughtful examination of complex issues, working together in preparation for their next in-person meetings, including a three-day meeting with evening sessions. In December 2025, the final chapter of the Scientific Committee report was presented to the Code Committee, with a peer review of the full report expected to be completed by May 2026. The committee is now commencing detailed document review and refinement activities as they prepare for the Public Comment Period.

Poultry



Photo credit: FarmPhotos.ca Library

The journey towards the chickens, turkeys and breeders Code update began on October 4th, 2024 with its official announcement alongside the Top of Mind survey. The Code Committee and Scientific Committee met in March of 2025 where a strong foundation for positive collaboration was built through the use of a spirited and engaging problem-solving challenge – reminiscent of an escape room. After participants worked together toward a common goal on a smaller scale, they utilized the results of the [Top-of-Mind survey](#) as the starting point for the discussions that resulted in the selection of their seven [priority welfare issues](#).

After this meeting, subcommittees worked hard reviewing their sections, engaging in lively discussions, and tackling complex issues from multiple perspectives. The aim throughout was to identify practical solutions that would strengthen bird welfare. At their next meeting in mid-November of 2025, the subcommittees for the Personnel Knowledge and Skills section and the Flock Health section presented their initial recommendations for the full Code Committee to review, along with a presentation from the Scientific Committee Chair on the Stocking Density chapter.

As the Code Committee heads into the new year, subcommittee work continues with an eye on their next in-person meeting in April 2026. During this time period, the Scientific Committee Chair will present priority welfare issue chapters as they are completed.



Photo credit: FarmPhotos.ca Library

Did You Know?

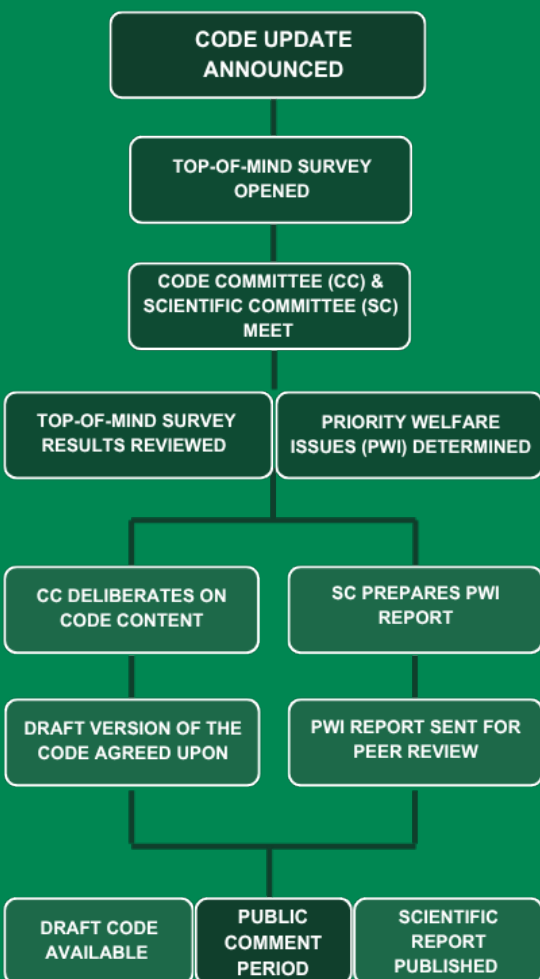
Code Committees typically include **15 to 18 members** and **every single committee member is part of the consensus decision-making process**. This supports the **credibility** and **robustness** of Canada's Codes of Practice.

NFACC's consensus decision-making process ensures that **every voice is heard and everyone is responsible for progress**. When someone can't live with a proposal, **they must help shape a workable path forward—offering solutions that consider not only their own interests, but the interests of others as well**. That shared responsibility is what makes consensus challenging, and also what creates space for innovative, "outside-the-box" thinking. It's how **diversity leads to better decisions**.

Better Outcomes, Smarter Decisions
Improved Care



Stages of a Code Update Leading up to the Public Comment Period



Did You Know?

The full Scientific Committee Report is made available to the Code Committee to ensure that the report answers the questions originally posed regarding the identified Priority Welfare Issues. The report is then externally peer reviewed.

Code Updates Underway

Pigs

In late October of 2025, the pig Code Committee and Scientific Committee gathered in Ottawa for their long-awaited first meeting. Over the course of two days, they reviewed key tenets of the NFACC Code process, discussed the results of the [Top-of-Mind survey](#), and were provided with a brief overview of the pig industry in Canada. After careful deliberation, the [five priority welfare issues](#) were chosen.



Photo credit: FarmPhotos.ca Library

Following the in-person meeting, the full Code Committee met monthly to work through assigned sections of the Code. Concurrently, the Scientific Committee finished the enrichment priority welfare issue chapter and moved on to the housing chapter. Both committees continued their work into the spring in preparation for their in-person meeting in March. The Code Committee also formed several subject matter expert groups to help tackle sections within the Code, with their input and expertise brought back to the full Code Committee on a monthly basis. The committees now work towards their next in-person meeting, which will be held in May.

NFACC Conversations Podcast Updates



NFACC is pleased to announce the release of two new NFACC Conversations podcast episodes!

Episode 3, entitled *“What’s involved in a Code update?”*, features an in-depth interview with Equine Code Committee Chair, Dr. Bettina Bobsien, and equine Code Scientific Committee Chair, Dr. Kathleen MacMillan. Bettina and Kathleen tell the story of the equine Code update from their perspectives as core participants in the process. Listeners will get a “behind the scenes” peek that highlights the challenges and successes along the way, along with helping stakeholders understand the role they play in a Code’s Public Comment Period.

Episode 4, *“What’s the Value of a Code of Practice,”* features three core participants in the beef cattle Code’s update - Matt Bowman, an Ontario beef farmer, past Chair of the Beef Cattle Research Council, and acting Chair of the beef cattle Code Committee; Dr. Mike Jelenski, founding partner of Veterinary Agri-Health Services, a beef cattle veterinary practice in Alberta, and Canadian Veterinary Medical Association representative on the Code Committee; and Dr. Karen Genswein, a research scientist with AAFC in Lethbridge and Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. Karen is the Chair of the beef cattle Code Scientific Committee and participates in Code Committee discussions as a committee member. This episode takes a closer look at the current beef cattle Code update (available for public comment until June 12, 2026), as well as unpacks the impact and value of Canada’s Codes of Practice for farmers.

Both episodes were hosted and produced by ACER Consulting and are available on [NFACC’s website](#) or through [Podbean](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), and [Spotify](#).



New Members of NFACC in 2025-2026

NFACC is pleased to welcome Slipacoff's Premium Meats as new associate members!



Recognizing NFACC's Associate Members



CACTUS CLUB CAFE



Earls



Gay Lea



Loblaw Companies Limited



MSVS management systems verification services



Saputo



TripleO's

Walmart



Value of NFACC to Associate Members



NFACC excels at bringing together a strong cohort of relevant stakeholders to have (difficult) discussions and advance minimum expectations for animal care via credible, process-based Code development and maintenance.



Photo credit: FarmPhotos.ca Library



[NFACC has] clear and transparent management of financial and human resources. [It] does much with little staff.



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Is your organization curious about being an NFACC member? Click on the graphic above for a one-page Introduction to NFACC!



Looking to learn more about NFACC? Visit our YouTube channel to view our informative short videos!



Click here to subscribe to our NFACC newsletter!

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Understanding the Public Comment Period

A crucial part of the Code Development Process is the [Public Comment Period](#); a sixty-day opportunity for anyone and everyone to review the work that has been done thus far by a Code Committee and offer their comments on the draft content.

Two of the most important questions asked about the Public Comment Period are: Is my viewpoint heard? and Do I have an influence?

The answer is an emphatic **“Yes”!**

Comments are encouraged from anyone who wishes to add their voice to the discussion and have their viewpoints considered in the Code development process. This supports a robust process and helps Codes achieve an effective balance that reflects multi-stakeholder interests and priorities for advancing farm animal welfare.

Once the comment period has closed, Code Managers collate all the feedback from the Public Comment Period and organize it for Code Committee members. Committee members then use this feedback to inform further deliberations until consensus on a final version of the Code is achieved. A summary of feedback received is released in What We Heard reports published to the Code’s website.

A collection of frequently asked questions regarding the Public Comment Period can be found [here](#), and includes:

- What is the role of the Public Comment Period?
- Who can participate in the Public Comment Periods for Codes of Practice?
- How is my privacy protected when I participate in the Public Comment Period?

Everyone involved in the NFACC process comes with the simple goal of helping Canada continually improve. **What are your viewpoints that can support that goal?**



Prefer a more visual explanation? Click above to watch a short video on NFACC’s Public Comment Period!