Each Code of Practice is devoted to a particular species of farm animal, and collectively, the Codes cover most types of livestock and poultry raised on farms across Canada, setting both requirements and recommended practices for the responsible and ethical care and handling of farm animals.

Requirements refer to either a regulatory requirement, or an industry imposed expectation outlining acceptable and unacceptable practices and are fundamental obligations relating to the care of animals.

Requirements represent a consensus position that these measures, at minimum, are to be implemented by all persons responsible for farm animal care. When included as part of an assessment program, those who fail to implement Requirements may be compelled by industry associations to undertake corrective measures, or risk a loss of market options. Requirements also may be enforceable under federal and provincial regulation.

Recommended Practices may complement a Code’s Requirements, promote producer education and can encourage adoption of practices for continuous improvement in animal welfare outcomes.

Recommended Practices are those which are generally expected to enhance animal welfare outcomes, but failure to implement them does not imply that acceptable standards of animal care are not met.

The development process for the Codes is collaborative, transparent, consensus based and has been designed to ensure that each Code is scientifically informed, practical, and reflects society’s expectations for responsible farm animal care.

One of the biggest challenges in developing standards is that everyone has different views about what is important for good animal welfare.

The Code development process bridges these differences by creating an environment for diverse perspectives to come together and build consensus. The process is designed to gather our collective knowledge and drive sustainable directions forward on farmed animal care.

In the development of the Codes of Practice, NFACC involves a broad range of stakeholder groups; farmers, animal welfare organizations, the veterinary community, animal welfare researchers, government, processors, food companies, and others concerned about farm animal care and welfare.

The Codes can be described as a change management tool; providing a step-wise approach to sustainable animal welfare improvements.