



NFACC Information Update: March 2021

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UPDATE ON CODES OF PRACTICE UNDER REVISION/DEVELOPMENT

Farmed Salmonid Code

The draft farmed salmonids Code was open for public comment from November 2, 2020 – January 7, 2021. Nearly 125 individuals participated from across Canada with a majority from BC (40%) and Ontario (33%) and a further 7% from the Atlantic provinces. We also heard from people in the U.S. and the U.K. Most respondents identified themselves as animal welfare advocates (43%), consumers (19%), or seafood farmers and other industry representatives (15%). In addition, about 20 groups submitted input on behalf of either their company, association (industry or animal welfare), or ministry.

The Code Committee is now considering the feedback and has so far had three subcommittee meetings and one meeting of the full committee. The subcommittee meetings have focused on the Feed Management chapter especially feed withdrawal, feeding strategies, and other sections that garnered the most input during the comment period. Revisions to the Rearing Unit chapter have focused mainly on lighting, stocking density, and overall design. Several additional meetings will be scheduled very soon for this spring.

Previous progress reports are available [here](#).

Dairy Cattle Code

Since the last update, the Code Committee reviewed the findings from six virtual focus groups that were conducted with dairy producers from across Canada in November and December of 2020. Fifty producers participated and the focus groups were designed to get deeper insights on stocking density; exercise and access to pasture and alternatives; calving areas; and calf housing. Overall, this activity was viewed positively by the Code Committee, and focus group participants greatly appreciated being engaged in these conversations and having a voice in how the industry can improve.

Between early December and late February, the entire Code Committee met nine times and an additional three subcommittee meetings took place. These meetings were focused on addressing outstanding issues within the five consolidated chapters of the draft updated Code of Practice. They also delved further into the Housing and Cattle Health chapters.

Despite good progress on many challenging topics, more time is needed to work through several health and housing topics before the full draft Code of Practice will be ready for public comment. The comment period will now take place in early fall of 2021 (rather than the spring of 2021). The committee will thus take a short and well-deserved break but is also determined not to lose its momentum! A series of meetings will be scheduled soon for spring/early summer.

Additional details, including about the focus groups, are available [here](#).

Goat Code

A draft version of the goat Code of Practice was submitted to NFACC in late fall, 2020. Once translated and formatted both the Code and the [Goat Scientific Committee Report](#) were released to the public for feedback on December 18th, 2020. The public comment period concluded on February 22, 2021.

311 Individual English submissions, 10 individual French submissions, and 14 group submissions were received. According to the self-identifications provided, 41% of respondents were animal welfare advocates, 24% were goat farmers, and 23% were members of the general public. Most respondents indicated a British Columbia (61%) or Ontario (18%) place of residence.

The Code Development Committee very much appreciates the contributions of all! The CDC is now planning to reconvene in March to begin the process of carefully reviewing and considering all submissions.

Previous progress reports are available [here](#).

Transportation Code

Progress on the Livestock & Poultry Transportation Code of Practice continues, with lots of activity occurring in several areas. The *Poultry Catching and Transport* Working Group (WG) has made great strides forward and is nearing completion of its poultry-specific content, with just a few more sub-WG calls scheduled and only a few topics on which consensus is still needed. The *Hatchery Transport* WG has been paused while it waits for common content from the Code Development Committee to review. The *Mink/Fox/Rabbit* WG has developed a near-final draft which is scheduled to be reviewed in its entirety by the WG in April.

Content that is considered to be common for all types of animals covered by the Code is currently being developed by Code Development Committee (CDC) sub-committees. The *Loading and Unloading* sub-committee has met several times online and has made significant progress reviewing content on topics related to handling, loading, unloading, isolation, and providing feed, water, and rest on fully-equipped vehicles. The *Understanding Fitness for Transport* sub-committee has also met a handful of times and continues to make progress populating content covering compromised and other vulnerable animals. The remaining 3 sub-committees (*Planning; Personnel & Equipment; Ventilation*) are scheduled to be activated this spring. In the meantime, efforts are underway to schedule a series of CDC meetings so that the full 23-member group can review sub-committee content, which will then be reviewed by reactivated WGs so that they can supplement the common content with species-specific details.

The *Editing & Review Committee* met online over several days in February in place of what would normally be a 2-day face-to-face meeting to discuss current WG/CDC status, next steps, and Code content and layout. The team is looking forward to being able to meet in-person soon to begin looking at how all the content coming from multiple sources can be pulled together into a cohesive and user-friendly Code.

Planning is also underway to hold a virtual conference in April for all participants involved in the Transportation Code development process. There are nearly 100 people representing 125+ WG/CDC positions and other supportive roles working at various times to bring this project to fruition. Exclusive to Transport Code participants, the conference will serve to help demonstrate the size and scope of the project and to allow everyone to see fellow WG participants and WG members.

While the goal is to post a draft code for public comment in the summer of 2022, the inability for the CDC and WGs to meet in-person has certainly been challenging. Zoom-fatigue is certainly a reality for several participants. As pandemic-related restrictions begin to lift and people become more comfortable with travelling, it is expected that in-person meetings will convene for CDC meetings and for other groups that have not been able to arrive at consensus on some topics.

Previous progress reports are available [here](#).

AN EXERCISE TO ALIGN EXISTING ON-FARM CODES WITH THE NEW HEALTH OF ANIMALS REGULATIONS

Between 2009 and 2018 twelve on-farm Codes of Practice have been updated or developed. Each Code contains a transportation chapter that addresses pre-transportation considerations like fitness for transport, arranging transport, loading, and receiving. The transportation chapters of all Codes relied on the federal animal transport regulatory framework that was in place at the time of their release. However, a complete amendment to Part XII (Transport of Animals) of the Health of Animals Regulations (HAR) took effect in February 2020 resulting in discrepancies between many on-farm Codes and the updated regulations.

NFACC's board made the decision that the transportation chapters of the on-farm Codes needed to align with the new HAR. To conduct this exercise in an expeditious and consistent manner it was agreed that the transportation Code team (i.e., Code Managers) should take the lead in proposing edits that would be limited to aligning the on-farm Codes with the new regulations (i.e., no new content would be included and only areas of discrepancy would be addressed).

The proposed alignment edits were taken to the Humane Transport team with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to confirm that all proposed edits do indeed align with the new regulations. Subsequently the proposed edits went to each industry lead organization for review and acceptance. The final step was NFACC Board approval. It was reiterated to all parties that alignment edits would only be implemented as required to meet the new regulations.

The exercise has been more involved than envisioned as even minor alignment edits have impacted glossaries, footnotes, cited references, hyperlinks, appendices, and layout. However, the transportation Code team is now in the final stages of preparing updated transportation chapters for all affected Codes. An announcement will be made when the updates are available from NFACC's website.

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.

AN UPDATE ON AMENDMENTS TO THE FARMED MINK CODE OF PRACTICE

The Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farmed Mink was released in 2013. The Code's five-year review was completed in 2018, and it recommended that the Mink Code be amended in response to a number of [challenges](#).

A Code Amendment Committee was created in May 2020. The Committee reached a consensus on proposed amendments.

The proposed amendments were made available for public comment from December 7, 2020, to February 4, 2021. The Code Amendment Committee is reflecting on the feedback collected through the public comment period, and the final Code will be released in the summer of 2021.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat: Why It's So Hard to Think Straight About Animals - A Conversation with Drs. Hal Herzog and Mike Von Massow – by the Campbell Centre for the Study of Animal Welfare**
March 24, Online Seminar
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/ccsaw/events/2021/03/some-we-love-some-we-hate-some-we-eat-why-it%E2%80%99s-so-hard-think-straight-about-animals>

- **National Animal Welfare Conference by Humane Canada**
April 6 - 8, Online Conference
<https://humanecanada.ca/nawc/>

NFACC IN THE NEWS

For media coverage featuring NFACC in the news click [here](#).



If you have an animal welfare event that you would like us to feature, please email Liz at liz@nfacc.ca.

Questions or comments should be directed to NFACC's General Manager, Jackie Wepruk at nfacc@xplornet.com.