



DEVELOPMENT PROCESS FOR CODES OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF FARM ANIMALS

Codes of Practice Introduction and Objectives:

The Codes of Practice are nationally developed guidelines for the care and handling of the different species of farm animals. They are intended to promote sound management and welfare practices through recommendations and requirements for housing, management, transportation, processing and other animal husbandry practices. Requirements refer to either a regulatory requirement, or an industry imposed expectation outlining acceptable and unacceptable practices. Recommended best practices strive for continuous improvement and encourage a higher level of care.

Each Code of Practice is audience specific with the scope related to the particular industry involved. Codes of Practice serve multiple purposes including:

- Providing information and education
- Serving as the foundation for animal care assessment programs
- Providing reference materials for regulations

The Code of Practice Guideline document (Appendix A) offers further information on how these objectives are to be met. The development of a Code of Practice is anticipated to be at least a two-year process.

National Development Process of a New or Revised Code

The process, as outlined below, is the same for the development of new Codes and Code revisions. Codes should be regularly reviewed (i.e. every 5 years), and revised as needed, to ensure they are current with government policy/regulations, industry practices and scientific research.

Step One: The national commodity or specialized industry group should first contact the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) to indicate its interest in developing a Code of Practice. NFACC will supply all appropriate materials outlining the process to the contact person of the national commodity or specialized industry group.

Following this, if the national commodity or specialized industry group chooses to proceed, it will write to NFACC to request the development of a new or revised Code. The request will be accompanied by:

- The commodity or specialized industry group's list of members on its Code Development Committee and their contact information. The commodity will identify their Code

Development Committee based on the Code Guideline document (Appendix A) and assign a Chair.

- Written and signed standard agreement identifying that the national commodity or specialized industry group is and has been made fully aware of this process and the financial responsibilities for Code development, revision and reprints (Appendix B).
- Mail or email to:
 - National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC)
 - 660 Speedvale Avenue West
 - Suite #205, Guelph, Ontario, N1K 1E5
 - Email: nfacc@xplornet.com

NFACC will provide a notice on its website advising when a Code is to be developed or revised. There will be a 30-day comment period to solicit input and assess potential interest.

Step Two: a) NFACC will strike a Scientists' Committee consisting of 6 scientists familiar with research on the care and management of the animals under consideration. NFACC will request two nominations from each of 1) Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, 2) Canadian Society of Animal Science, and 3) Canadian Chapter of the International Society for Applied Ethology. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Research Branch may also serve a role on the Scientists' Committee. This committee will elect its own chair and will invite the commodity group to assign a producer representative to serve ex officio. The committee will identify a priority list of issues (3 – 6 specific and manageable topics that they consider to be particularly important for animal welfare in the species being considered and that will particularly benefit from a review of the available scientific literature.

b) The commodity or specialized industry group's Code Development Committee will identify its priority list of welfare issues.

c) The two committees will come together to collectively identify a list of issues for the species within the Code being addressed.

Step Three: Following Terms of Reference developed by NFACC (Appendix C), the Scientists' Committee will then write or commission a review of the scientific literature for each of these issues and create a report.

Step Four: After the Scientists' Committee has approved its report it will be made available to the Code Development Committee to ensure that the report answers the questions originally posed relating to the priority issues. The Scientists' Committee report will be publicly available when the Code is released for a 60-day comment period.

Step Five: The Code Development Committee will be responsible for drafting the Code by utilizing the recommendations from the Scientists' Committee and following the Code of Practice Guideline document. The Scientists' Committee will continue to consult with the Code Development Committee as needed. The Chair of the Scientists' Committee will sit on the Code Development committee. The Code Development Committee should consult as required with their constituents to arrive at a final draft of the Code.

Step Six: The final draft Code of Practice will be submitted to NFACC. The commodity will complete and return the standard reporting form, which will provide NFACC with sufficient information to determine whether or not the NFACC Code process was followed. If the Code of Practice development process was appropriately followed, NFACC will support the Code. NFACC will make the draft available to the public for a 60-day comment period. A template for providing submission will be made available during the public comment period to facilitate the organization and consideration of feedback received by the Code Development Committee.

Step Seven: Following the 60-day public comment period the Code Development Committee will consider any feedback, revise the draft if required and submit a final Code to NFACC for printing.

Note: In the event of contingencies causing delays in the Code development process, the Code Development Committee must notify NFACC as soon as possible. NFACC will work with the Code Development Committee to identify means of resolving any issues and address budgetary impacts.

NFACC's Responsibilities

NFACC will:

- Provide secretariat support for the Scientists' Committee
- Provide secretariat support for the Code Development Committee;
- Provide a Secretary for the Code Development Committee, if required, whose duties will be to:
 - o Attend all Code Development Committee meetings and record decisions
 - o Provide secretariat support for Code Development Committee members
 - o Prepare and revise drafts of the Code of Practice as required in both official languages and prepare final electronic copies for printing
- Coordinate the translation and first printing of a new or revised Code of Practice
- Make Codes of Practice available on its website

NFACC will pay expenses for (actual dollar figures will be developed for each Code):

- Scientists' Committee meeting related expenses, including supplies, room rental, hospitality, travel expenses to a maximum of \$_____ per Code. Receipts must be provided for reimbursement;
- Remuneration and expenses for a Scientists' Committee research reviewer/writer with the appropriate science background to compile and synthesize information into a report. The reviewer/writer will be contracted to a maximum dollar amount of \$_____;
- Code Development Committee meeting related expenses, including supplies, room rental, hospitality, and travel expenses to a maximum of \$_____ per Code. Receipts must be provided for reimbursement;
- Remuneration and expenses for the Code Secretary, if required. The Code Secretary will be contracted to a maximum dollar amount of \$_____;
- Translation of drafts and final Code to a maximum dollar amount of \$_____;
- Printed copies (English & French) of a new or revised Code to a maximum of \$_____.

Note: NFACC's ability to cover these expenses is ultimately tied to funding provided by the federal government. NFACC reserves the right to further limit maximum expenses allowed as funding dictates. NFACC will advise the commodity or specialized industry group of any required adjustments to the Code development budget prior to initiation of the Code development process.

Responsibilities of the Code Development Committee

- Represent the interests of their respective organizations, collaborate with other committee members and contribute to the development of the Code of Practice;
- Attend all meetings of the committee;
- The Code Development Committee members will inform the Code Development Committee Chairperson of the number of copies of the Code required for their respective organizations. The Chair will advise NFACC of the total number of copies required;
- The Chairperson, with the support of the committee members, is responsible for ensuring the text and graphics for the new or revised Code are electronically available in the format required by NFACC;
- The Code Development Committee members will be responsible to ensure distribution of the Code to their members.

Commodity or Specialized Industry Group Responsibilities

- Ensure the NFACC Code process is followed;
- Submit a completed Reporting Form to NFACC outlining how the Code process was followed;
- Coordinate distribution of the Code across the country. Provincial commodity groups will ensure distribution to organizations within their respective provinces.

- Pay for any reprints of a Code
- Make the Code available on its website

Codes of Practice Format

Codes of Practice will be produced according to an established format so as to be instantly recognizable as a product of this development process. This is important in order that users of the Code will recognize the credibility of the information based on the process from which the Code was developed. Copyright for each Code will be jointly held by the commodity association/industry group involved and NFACC. Each Code should also have an ISBN to ensure its availability through Library and Archives Canada.

NFACC will supply a template for the input of the text and graphics for the Code of Practice to the contact person of the national commodity or specialized industry group. All Codes must be developed using this template.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) is pleased to participate in this project. AAFC is committed to working with industry partners to increase public awareness of the importance of the agriculture and agri-food industry to Canada. Opinions expressed in this document are those of the National Farm Animal Care Council and not necessarily those of AAFC.



APPENDIX A

Code of Practice Guideline Document

The Codes of Practice are nationally developed guidelines for the care and handling of the different species of farm animals. The Codes contain recommendations for housing and management practices for farm animals as well as transportation, processing and other acceptable animal husbandry practices.

The Codes are intended to promote sound management and welfare practices. The Codes contain recommendations to assist farmers and others in the agriculture and food sector to compare and improve their own management practices. It should be noted, however, that Codes have been accepted as the standard of practice and have been recognized as such by some courts.

Initiation of Code development and revision remain the responsibility of the individual commodity. The National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) will keep a record of Code revisions and provide encouragement to commodities to do revisions on an ongoing basis. Review and revision of Codes should occur regularly or as production practices, or our body of knowledge, changes through experience or research. Changes in government policy and international agreements on animal welfare guidelines could also have an impact on the Codes.

NFACC recommends and supports the development and maintenance of animal welfare verification programs, which will be the responsibility of individual commodity organizations. Codes will form the basis of verification programs.

All commodities should develop or revise their Codes in accordance with these guiding principles. NFACC will support Codes of Practice that follow these guidelines and the NFACC Code development process. NFACC's will facilitate an overall Code development process by ensuring that coordination and secretariat assistance is available for Code development.

Code Guiding Principles

1. Codes should be based on sound science and other acceptable knowledge sources (peer-reviewed science, industry publications/experience, expert opinion, anecdotal evidence, etc.), referencing those sources wherever possible and providing a rationale for recommendations. Recommended practices should be defensible and changed as new and improved information is brought forward. In addition, recommended practices should be practical, manageable and consider the economic impact of any recommendation.
2. Codes should be clearly articulated to ensure easy understanding by all users. The layout and design of Codes should facilitate an understanding of basic acceptable practices (must's) and recommendations that promote a higher level of care (should's).
3. Codes should primarily deal with the criteria that need to be met in order to achieve an acceptable level of animal husbandry. Where there are regulatory requirements the guidelines should contain the word 'must', and where there is a clear line between acceptable and unacceptable practices, the term 'must,' should also be used. Basic acceptable practices should be clearly worded and have measurable components, recognizing that they may be used in a verification process.
4. Codes should also strive for continuous improvement in animal care through recommendations that promote sound management and welfare practices.
5. Codes should be regularly reviewed (every 5 years), and revised as needed, to ensure they are current with government policy/regulations, industry practices and scientific research.

6. Codes should take into consideration other standards or Codes that may have implications for Canadian producers, in order to promote the continued sustainability of Canadian animal agriculture.
7. The Codes should avoid redundancy and aim to be consistent where there may be overlap (i.e., transportation Code and species specific sections on transport within a Code).
8. Following the development of a Code, animal welfare research needs identified within the code development process should be compiled and submitted to an appropriate funding body for consideration. Research needs should be tracked to determine if efforts were made to address them prior to the next update of a Code.
9. All Codes should be publicly available
10. Some critical issues should be addressed in the Codes for each species, even if not part of the normal practice of industry (e.g., euthanasia). The following is a list of issues to be included in each Code:
 - Accommodation/Housing/Handling Facilities
 - Food and Water
 - Management (including young and cull animals/poultry)
 - Health (e.g., record keeping, lameness, condition scoring, sick and injured animals)
 - Transportation
 - Euthanasia
 - Husbandry/Stockmanship

Participation

There should be broad participation of knowledgeable people within an industry in the Code development process. The process should be transparent. The following participants must be involved in the Code development process, where applicable:

- Producer (at least one representative from each production phase)
- Transporter (specialized in the specific species)
- Veterinarian (specialized in the specific species)
- Animal welfare organization
- Animal welfare regulatory enforcement body
- Retail and food service organization
- Processor
- Agriculture Canada and/or CFIA
- Researcher/academic (Chair of the Scientists' Committee)
- Technical expertise (e.g., agricultural engineer)

This list is not finite. Other participants may be included if their input would benefit the Code development process within a particular commodity.

Appendix B

Sample letter for standard written and signed agreement

We (Name of national commodity group or specialized industry group) have received and are fully aware of the contents of the NFACC Code development process and related guidelines for the Recommended Codes of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals.

We are also fully aware of our financial responsibilities as outlined in the above-mentioned document and hereby accept those responsibilities.

Signed, on this (date) _____

Authorized signature of national commodity or specialized industry group

Signature of NFACC Chairperson

APPENDIX C

Scientists' Committee Terms of Reference

Background

It is widely accepted that animal welfare codes, guidelines, standards or legislation should take advantage of the best available knowledge. This knowledge is often generated from the scientific literature, hence the term "science-based".

In re-establishing a Code of Practice development process, NFACC recognized the need for a more formal means of integrating scientific input into the Code of Practice process. A Scientists' Committee review of priority animal welfare issues for the species being addressed will provide valuable information to the Code Development Committee in developing or revising a Code of Practice. As the Scientists' Committee report is publicly available, the transparency and credibility of the Code process and the recommendations within are enhanced.

For each Code of Practice being developed or revised, NFACC will identify a Scientists' Committee. This committee will consist of 6 scientists familiar with research on the care and management of the animals under consideration. NFACC will request two nominations from each of 1) Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, 2) Canadian Society of Animal Science, and 3) Canadian Chapter of the International Society for Applied Ethology. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Research Branch may also serve a role on the Scientists' Committee.

Purpose & Goals

The Scientists' Committee will develop a report synthesizing the results of research relating to key animal welfare issues, as identified by the Scientists' Committee and the Code Development Committee. The report will be used by the Code Development Committee in drafting a Code of Practice for the species in question.

Timeframe

The Scientists' Committee should expedite the completion of their report to the best of their ability. A report is expected to take one year to complete.

Accountability

The Scientists' Committee is accountable to NFACC in ensuring that they meet the requirements of this Terms of Reference.

Communication

The Scientists Committee, through its Chair, is expected to have an open line of communication with:

- NFACC, through the NFACC Coordinator
- The Code Development Committee.

Implementation Framework

The Scientists' Committee will elect its own chair, and will invite the commodity or specialized industry group to assign a producer to serve ex officio. The committee is expected to operate using a consensus model for decision-making.

The committee will identify a priority list of issues (perhaps 3 – 6 items) that they consider to be particularly important for animal welfare in the species being considered, and that will particularly benefit from a review of the available scientific literature.

The Code Development Committee will follow the same process. The two committees will meet to collectively identify a list of issues for the species within the Code being addressed. Once this priority list of issues is developed the Scientists' Committee will write or commission reviews of

the scientific literature for each of these issues. The Scientists' Committee can commission a research reviewer/writer with the appropriate science background to compile and synthesize information into a report (e.g., internship).

In developing the report, the Scientists' Committee should consider that evaluations of animal welfare can be based on three general overlapping types of concern: biological functioning (including health and productivity), how the animal 'feels' (including measures of pain and preferences), and the naturalness (including the animals ability to perform behaviours that are important to it). Veterinarians typically focus on the first, animal welfare scientists on the second, and critics of animal agriculture on the third. Much previous confusion has resulted from these different concerns being poorly articulated, and in some cases different recommendations can be derived from the same scientific findings if different types of welfare concern are considered most important.

The Scientists' Committee report should be based on a broad definition of welfare that encompasses all aspects of animal welfare and explicitly describes the link between the literature, the type of welfare concern, and the conclusion. After the Scientists' Committee has completed its report, the report will be made available to the Code Development Committee to ensure that it answers the questions originally posed relating to the priority issues.

The Scientists' Committee will approve the review only after it has gone through a peer review process. The peer review should be as broad as is practical within the timelines allowed, and should aim at achieving a scientific consensus. Following this the Code Development Committee will use the report in developing/revising the Code of Practice in question. The Scientists' Committee report will be publicly available when the Code of Practice is released for a 60-day comment period.

The Chair of the Scientists' Committee will sit on the Code Development Committee. The Scientists' Committee will be available if questions or issues arise in the Code development process that requires expert scientific opinion or guidance.

Deliverables

A Scientists' Committee report on identified animal welfare priority issues within the noted species that incorporates:

- A review of research related to each priority issue
- Synthesis of research results related to each priority issue
- Some analysis of research studies to ensure the validity of the results compared to other studies (e.g., sample size)
- Summary of any consensus of the scientific body of knowledge for each priority issue, taking into consideration the different perspectives for measuring animal welfare (e.g., biological functioning, feelings and naturalness). In some cases there may not be a consensus. This should be noted too, with possible explanations offered.
- Identify gaps in knowledge and areas for further research
- Other information relating to the priority issues that is deemed important in the development of a Code of Practice

Cost/Budget

Travel and meeting expenses for the Scientists Committee will be covered by NFACC according to Treasury Board of Canada guidelines. NFACC will also cover remuneration for a research reviewer/writer with the appropriate science background to compile and synthesize information into a report (e.g., internship).

A specific budget will be determined by NFACC and provided to the Scientists Committee prior to the start of their work.