



## NFACC Information Update: February 2025

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### UPDATES ON CODES OF PRACTICE UNDER REVISION/AMENDMENT

#### Beef Cattle Code Update

The beef cattle Code Committee (CC) had a productive, two-day meeting in January. Thanks to the diligent work by the subcommittees who met (online) throughout the fall, the CC was able to essentially come to consensus on three chapters of the updated Code of Practice:

- Animal Environment (e.g. protection from extreme weather, handling facilities)
- Feed and Water (e.g. body condition, feed management)
- On-Farm Euthanasia (e.g. criteria for euthanasia, acceptable methods).

Building on initial discussions on transport at the previous meetings, the committee also made good progress on the updated transport chapter and will continue those discussions in the winter/spring with emphasis on recommended practices for that chapter.

The Scientific Committee (SC) has also made great progress having now completed two chapters of their report (End-of-Life Management and Pain Control for Pain and Painful Procedures). The Chair of the Scientific Committee presented both chapters to the CC, and the research served as a key point of departure for the committee's discussions on how to approach those topics in the updated Code. The SC is now working on the remaining chapters of their research report on [priority welfare issues](#).

In addition to detailed consideration of the content in each section of the Code, the CC is also in a good routine of taking an important step back to consider the topics more broadly, identify content that may need to be addressed consistently across the Code of Practice, and ensure they are giving due consideration to priorities identified at the outset of the project, including those from the [top-of-mind survey](#).

The next in-person meeting for the Code Committee has been scheduled for May 2025.

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

#### Equine Code Update

The equine Code Committee (CC) held its second in-person meeting in Ottawa in late November 2024. Each subcommittee led discussions with the full CC regarding proposed amendments, additions and deletions to the existing Code content. It was a very collaborative, highly productive meeting with robust discussion. Committee members also received a thorough update on the ongoing research activities of the Scientific Committee.

As a team-building activity, the CC visited the RCMP Musical Ride Stables, where they were given a behind-the-scenes tour of the stables and riding arenas. It was a great opportunity to learn about the rich history of both the buildings themselves and the horses living there.

By the end of the two-day meeting each of the subcommittees had clear direction for their next phase of section updates. Since the November meeting, the subcommittees have continued to deliberate (amongst themselves) about prospective edits to existing Code sections.

Looking ahead, the entire CC will meet in April to continue deliberations. Meeting three will be the penultimate in-person session prior to the submission of the draft Code in advance of NFACC's 60-day public comment period. The Chair of the SC will also provide a final summary of all remaining research conducted regarding the [priority welfare issues](#).

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

### Sheep Code Update

The first in-person sheep Code meeting was held in Ottawa in mid-December. Both the Code Committee (CC) and the Scientific Committee (SC) members were present. The two-day meeting had a full agenda to achieve three key outcomes:

- Build strong foundations for working together
- Reach consensus on the priority welfare issues (PWI) list for the SC research report
- Establish the order in which to review Code sections and create the associated subcommittees to begin the work.

Over two days, 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. The competition was fierce with prizes on the line. After some frustration, fun, and lessons learned, Team Tangerine came out victorious.



*Final building projects; (l-r) Team Purple, Team Blue, Team Green, Team Tangerine*

The SC and CC examined and discussed topics identified through the [Top-of-Mind survey](#) and were able to finalize the list of [priority welfare issues \(PWIs\) for sheep](#). Over the next year, the SC will review and summarize the available science on these topics.



Initial discussions on Code content are helping the CC identify the order-of-operations. Subcommittees are being formed to undertake an initial review of each Code section. Subcommittees will begin reviewing sections of the Code in preparation for the next in-person meeting in summer 2025.

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

### **Hatching Eggs, Breeders, Chickens, and Turkeys**

Online orientation sessions were attended by all Scientific and Code Committee (CC) members. The orientation sessions provided an overview of the following:

- [NFACC Code Development Process](#)
- Administrative activities and requirements
- Anticipated timelines for the project.

The first in-person meeting is scheduled for late March 2025 in Ottawa. Initial work to identify the priority welfare issues (PWIs) is just getting started. PWIs are selected because they are important for the welfare of the animal and will particularly benefit from a review of available research.

Some welfare topics may not be selected for scientific review if there is insufficient research or no new research available. These welfare issues can still be addressed by the CC if they fall within the scope of the Code. Both committees will provide input on PWIs before the meeting and then come together to reach a consensus on the final list at the March meeting. The PWI list is the basis for the scientific report. [Click here for the 2013 Scientific Report](#).

Previous progress updates can be found [here](#).

### **Pig Code Update**

An update to the 2014 Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pigs will be initiated soon. Watch for the official announcement and the Top-of-Mind survey.

### **Pullets and Laying Hens Code Amendment**

At the inaugural pullet and laying hen Code (Amendment) Committee meeting in September 2024, subcommittees were formed to develop proposed approaches for two of the Code's [three amendment topics](#). Throughout the fall, each subcommittee met virtually to develop viable amendments supported by strong rationale, including both scientific research and producer experience. By the end of November, both subcommittees had developed proposed approaches which were shared with the Code Committee (CC) during three online meetings. Committee members were given the opportunity to conduct internal stakeholder consultations in an effort to invite feedback and secure support for the proposed direction. Feedback was summarized in advance of the CC's second in-person meeting, which was held in Ottawa on January 22, 2025. All three amendment topics were discussed at the meeting and the Committee was able to arrive at consensus.

While the subcommittees were hard at work on the amendments, the Scientific Committee's research report was working its way through the peer review process. It is expected that the report will be accepted by the peer review coordinator in early February, after which it will undergo copyediting before being translated.

The Public Comment Period is expected to start in March 2025, at which time the proposed amendments will be posted along with the Scientific Committee's research report.

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

To see the overall timeline for all Code updates and the amendment, click [here](#).

**Financial support was provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the AgriAssurance Program under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership.**

## WHY ESTABLISHING CODE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEES EARLY IN THE CODE PROCESS IS CRITICAL

Canada's Codes of Practice provide critical guidance for the care and handling of farm animals. The Codes serve as our national understanding of animal care requirements and recommended practices.

Canada's Code process is led by the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) and the inclusion of Scientific Committees early in the Code process is critical.

Code Scientific Committees support sound, science-informed decision-making on Codes of Practice. The committee is established early in the process for each Code, selecting leading scientific experts familiar with research on the care and management of the animals under consideration.

Scientific Committees are currently in place for updates to the beef cattle; sheep; equine; chickens, turkeys, and breeders Codes of Practice, along with a Scientific Panel for the pullets and laying hens Code amendment. The primary task of a Code Scientific Committee is to review the scientific literature in relation to priority animal welfare issues to be covered by the Code and to prepare a peer-reviewed report based on this review for use by the Code Committee.

Priority welfare issues are confirmed for the following Code Scientific Committees:

- [Beef cattle](#)
- [Sheep](#)
- [Equine](#)

The topics being covered by the pullets and laying hens Scientific Panel for that Code's amendment are available [here](#). Priority welfare issues for chickens, turkeys, and breeders, along with pigs will follow once those Code and Scientific Committees have their first meeting.

### Code Scientific Committees support sound, science-informed decision-making on Codes of Practice.

- ✓ Established early in the Code process.
- ✓ Composed of leading scientific experts familiar with research on the care and management of the animals under consideration.
- ✓ Reviews scientific literature in relation to priority animal welfare issues to be covered by the Code.
- ✓ Prepares a peer-reviewed report based on the review for use by the Code Committee.



**NATIONAL FARM ANIMAL CARE COUNCIL**  
**CONSEIL NATIONAL POUR LES SOINS AUX ANIMAUX D'ÉLEVAGE**

In developing its report, each Scientific Committee assesses priority welfare issues based upon three overlapping concepts of animal welfare, including:

1. Biological functioning (including health and productivity)
2. How the animal "feels" (including measures of pain and preferences)
3. Naturalness (including the animal's ability to perform behaviors that are important).

The aim is to bridge these distinct but overlapping viewpoints of welfare to find a balance that addresses each in a manner that sets us on a path of continual improvement.

Each Scientific Committee report provides scientific conclusions but not recommendations. This is based on the principle that "Science can tell us what is . . . but not what ought to be." Animal welfare is all about the ethical concerns related to how we ought to treat animals. The 'ought to be' deliberations are the task of the Code Committee.

## NFACC IN THE NEWS

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

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Humane Canada's Summit for Animals  
April 27 – 29, 2025  
Montréal, Quebec  
[Registration](#)
- [Animal Health Canada Forum 2025](#)  
September 23 – 24, 2025  
Ottawa, Ontario & Online

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

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