

# What we heard – NFAHW Council Forum 2011

## Summary Comments

December 7, 2011

### Session 3

#### Animal Welfare

##### Guidance Questions (provided to facilitators):

1. Document:
  - a. Does the document reflect in principle the feelings of those in the breakout session?
  - b. Does the content accurately reflect the current status of the animal welfare system in Canada?
  
2. How do various partners move forward to achieve desired outcome? Are there any gaps which may exist which need to be corrected by this sector to reach the desired outcome?

Each breakout group will be assigned one of the following as a second discussion item:

Table	Question
1	What are the next steps for NFACC?
2	What are the next steps for federal partners?
3	What are the next steps for provincial and territorial partners?
4	What are the next steps for industry partners?
5	What are the next steps for those responsible for education and training?
6	What are the next steps for partners responsible for enforcement and compliance?
7	What are the next steps for NFACC?
8	What are the next steps for federal partners?
9	What are the next steps for provincial and territorial partners?

3. Are there other interests that must be considered in developing an enhanced animal welfare system in Canada?

**Q1 - Document:**

- a. **Does the document reflect in principle the feelings of those in the breakout session?**
- b. **Does the content accurately reflect the current status of the animal welfare system in Canada?**

The breakout groups generally agreed that the document reflected in principle the feelings of the participants. There was one table which did not agree. Several of the tables had suggestions for modification and many questions were raised.

Comments on content of the document:

- It may be limiting if restricted to farmed animals
- What is the timeframe of the Vision? (25 years?)
- The vision should have more about the impact on animals.

***Vision***

*For Canada to have a comprehensive farm animal welfare assurance system that reflects Canadian values, involves science-informed national standards, and includes a suite of compliance activities sufficient to ensure domestic and international confidence in the welfare of farmed animals in Canada.*

- The components might be reordered: Leadership and coordination, Research, Science informed and outcome based standards, Education and extension, and Compliance ... (*rather than: Leadership and Coordination, Standards, Compliance, Research, and Education and extension*).
  - Standards should be “Science informed and outcome based” rather than “Science based”
  - There is a compliance pyramid – education, legislation, enforcement and prosecution with education as the main component.
- There needs to be a rationale for the initiative to provide a basis for briefing decision makers.
- Change “compliance activities” to “compliance tools”
- The power of retailers in forcing compliance is not mentioned.

## Questions raised:

- What are the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders?
  - Who coordinates compliance? How do commodity groups get feedback on compliance?
  - What is the accountability?
- Is there an over-emphasis on the impact of genetics on animal welfare?
- What resources are required? Where will resources come from? A credible system requires adequate resourcing.
- What will be the assessment system? It must be credible and trusted or there will not be assurance of animal welfare.
- How to educate the public on animal welfare in farm production?
- If integrated with on-farm food safety, what happens to groups without on-farm food safety programs?
- What are the legalities for provinces in terms of referencing the codes?
- How do we track public values? What is the moral obligation and ethical responsibility?

## **Q2 - How do various partners move forward to achieve desired outcome? Are there any gaps which may exist which need to be corrected by this sector to reach the desired outcome?**

### **Federal partners**

- Along with other stakeholders, ensure stable secure funding for NFACC as the “go-to” organization for animal welfare nationally.
- Assist provinces with restricted resources
- Advisory role re education and training
- Consultative role
- If we used the Australian animal welfare model, would we lose federal money?
- Gaps –
  - The same animal welfare standards need to be applied in both federal and provincial slaughter plants
  - Current capacity gap federally should be quantified and a plan for resolution developed
    - More enforcement depth is required
  - Individual owners may need help on a personal level (psychological, relationship and social) which might be part of the animal welfare issue they are facing.

## **National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC)**

- Document desire to have this role
- Identify permanent funding – sustainable funding for ongoing activities
- Extension, education and communication – public and stakeholders
- Clarify the ownership of the codes. (NFACC official owner of codes?) - CFIA referencing issue
- Become the national coordinator of harmonizing the implementation of the codes and the expectations of the industry in the application of the codes.
- Develop a process that allows NFACC to be the coordinator of identification and resolution of provincial gaps
- Establish a roles and responsibilities framework
- Ensure there “orphan species” are included
- Extension/communication to all stakeholders – public, producers, industry, government
- Bring competing interests between commodities and NFACC together
- Resources/funding
- Meet OIE standards
- Develop trust with producers re assessment
- Role in rolling out audit consistently – codes/awareness/audit
- Gaps –
  - Need to develop international recognition of Canada’s animal welfare process

## **Education and training**

- Identify those who’s needs must be met
- Establish objectives for enhanced education and training
- Establish a policy objective to achieve national consistency
- Collaborate with public, consumer and retail
- Develop reasonable expectations
- Manage attitudes – get marketers and teachers involved. Capitalize on the pros. Link with food safety
- Gaps –
  - Science on euthanasia
  - Vision statement must be more clearly articulated to describe where we want to go.

## **Industry**

- Ensure codes are updated and relevant
- Ensure there is consistent application across Canada
- Develop proactive auditable programs re assessment

## **Provincial/Territorial**

- Clarify the role of provinces? – It will be different between provinces.
  - Alberta – research and consultation with industry
  - Manitoba – enforcement

## **Enforcement and Compliance**

- CFIA humane transport – ensure enforcement is consistent with code

## **Q3 - Are there other interests that must be considered in developing an enhanced animal welfare system in Canada?**

We must consider:

- There may be problems if restricted to farmed animals ... but too broad a mandate may lead to failure
- Consumer/retail benefits
- Producer trust with regard to assessment
- OIE Standards
- Impact on trade – if we can't impose standards on imports, then we can't impose on our producers
- Funding, support and available resources
- Consider different value systems in society
- The ethical debate of religion vs welfare
- The application of harmonization and the audit function
- Coordinating the compliance audit for multi-commodity producers
- NFACC needs to consider "One stop shopping" for audits – cost, hassle and biosecurity