

STANDARDS - ANIMAL WELFARE

Hormone and Steroid Free

All broiler chickens raised in Canada live in an open barn environment without the use of added hormones or steroids.

Regulated System

All Canadian chicken farmers are mandated to follow the standards for broiler chicken welfare strictly defined in Chicken Farmers of Canada's (CFC) Animal Care Program. CFC's Animal Care Program is built on the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) Canadian Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Chickens. NFACC is an authority on national farm animal care.

Canada's unique, science-based animal welfare code was developed with input from farmers, veterinarians, processors, the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and Agriculture Canada, along with consultation and comment from the Canadian public. It is implemented at the farm level on a mandatory basis by all chicken farmers in Canada.

The NFACC Code was updated in 2016 through a comprehensive multi-stakeholder process and based on the best independent, peer-reviewed science available. The NFACC Code is continuously reviewed and updated to reflect advancements in science, technology, and animal husbandry. Compliance with the CFC's Animal Care Program, which is supported by The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, is mandatory, unlike the United States where there is no mandatory industry code of practice.

Annual Independent Third Party Audit

All Canadian chicken farms are audited annually by trained third-party auditors certified to Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization (PAACO) standards, and all Canadian chicken farmers are held to the same high standard to support the effective and consistent implementation of these animal care programs.

Stocking Density

The stocking density standard for chickens in Canada, based on the NFACC Code, is amongst the lowest in the world. It dictates that density must not normally exceed 31 kg/m², lower than standards in the United States, Australia and European Union. This provides chickens ample room to roam and express normal behaviours.

Cleanliness and Air Quality

Litter- CFC's mandatory On-Farm Food Safety Assurance Program requires that chicken barns are fully cleaned after each flock and fresh bedding is placed into the barns. This requirement exceeds those requirements in other countries, and the cleaning and fresh bedding cycle helps to limit ammonia build up in barns, providing better air quality for the flock. Bedding helps to provide opportunities for birds to express normal behaviours (e.g. scratching, foraging and dust bathing).

Air Quality - The NFACC Code requires that corrective action be taken if ammonia levels reach between 20-25ppm. Barns are highly automated to control the environment in the barn. Air quality, temperature, and humidity are strictly monitored and controlled.

Lighting

Lighting is an important management tool that farmers utilize to ensure optimum health and welfare. The NFACC Code stipulates that chickens should be given a minimum of four hours of continuous darkness with a recommendation of six hours. While many farmers already meet or exceed the recommended six hours, Cara is working with our approximately 1,300 chicken farmers in Canada to provide at least six hours of darkness. It is our vision that this will be fully implemented by 2024.

Enrichments

Cara is working with our approximately 1,300 chicken farmers in Canada, CFC, and NFACC to have enrichments added to the NFACC Code. These include provisions such as straw bales, perches, and pecking substrates. It is our vision that this will be fully implemented by 2024.

Controlled Atmosphere Stunning

Certain Cara suppliers have already begun the transition to controlled atmosphere stunning. This more humane way of stunning allows for less handling of the birds, which causes them less stress. Cara commits to have its suppliers continue the conversion to this humane method with a vast majority of its suppliers completed by 2022 and all suppliers by 2024.

New Strains of Broiler Chickens

Cara, like many others, is closely monitoring University of Guelph research that is studying various genetic variations in chickens that could lead to measurable improvements in animal welfare. We are very interested in the results of this work and look forward to its recommendations on animal welfare, adaptability to the Canadian climate, and the environment.

Cara Supports Canadian Chicken Farmers

Cara is also a strong supporter of Canada's farm community and the approximately 2,800 chicken farmers from coast to coast of which the vast majority are family owned and operated. Presently, Cara is supplied by roughly 1,300 chicken farmers spanning all 10 Provinces across Canada. The chicken industry in Canada presently employs approximately 87,000 Canadians.

Meet Canada's Chicken Farmers www.chickenfarmers.ca/farmers/

Want to visit a farm to learn more about animal care -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=npbrOmdPA0E>