

the Cackler Newsletter



MARCH 2016

Relevant news, information and statistics for Ontario egg farmers and pullet growers.

COMMENTS FROM THE COOP

Time to stand up and speak up for our hens

by Scott Graham, EFO Chair

The time has come. Time for Ontario's egg farmers to stand up and speak clearly about continuing to provide the best housing for the health and welfare of our hens. They provide our livelihood and our lives revolve around our responsibility for them every day.

Media headlines have seen fast food restaurant chains falling over each other to release competing announcements about plans to switch to "cage-free eggs", in competition for market share. In addition to this, the Retail Council of Canada recently announced that its members were "voluntarily committing to the objective of purchasing cage-free eggs by the end of 2025." This is also an attempt to protect their brands from attacks by professional activists opposed to all animal agriculture. Activists opposed to people choosing eggs for breakfast.

Meanwhile, egg farmers have been working on these issues every day for many years. To proactively gather credible research to guide decisions on hen housing, Egg Farmers of Ontario supported a major study by the Coalition for Sustainable Egg Supply (CSES) in the U.S. over a four-year period ending in 2015.

The CSES research engaged in a commercial-scale study to evaluate

various laying hen housing systems and potential impacts on food safety, the environment, hen health and well-being, worker health and safety and food affordability. It provides food system stakeholders with science-based information on sustainability factors to guide informed production and purchasing decisions.

The research found there are positive and negative impacts and trade-offs associated with each type of hen housing system. The bottom-line is that enriched housing provides the best balance of the five sustainability factors.

Following the results learned from this research, Canadian egg farmers have undertaken a progressive step forward by committing to phase out the use of conventional housing which has been so successful in reducing hen mortality, disease and antibiotic use while improving sustainability and affordability.

Decades ago, innovation dramatically improved laying hen welfare by moving birds up off the floor, away from their own manure, into elevated, hygienic housing in small social groups. This resulted in dramatic reductions in: hen mortality; deaths by predators; insect infestations; disease and antibiotic use while improving environmental sustainability and

consumer affordability.

Conventional housing was tremendously successful in addressing four of the *Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare* better than any previous system.

These are the freedom from hunger and thirst, freedom from discomfort, freedom from pain, injury or disease and freedom from fear and distress.

Meanwhile, evolutions in housing have continued with new housing options being constantly tested and refined, improving hen health and welfare.

Enriched housing, developed in Europe, evolved to address providing all of the five freedoms. This means addressing the fifth element, the freedom to express normal behavior, in a way that provides the best balance of all of the issues of any of the housing systems.

This is not to diminish the role of free run and free range systems for laying hens. As with all systems, it is possible to produce eggs humanely in these "cage-free" systems, although research and practical experience both show that it is more difficult to consistently provide all five freedoms in these systems than it is with enriched housing.

See THE TIME HAS COME, page 3

Upcoming Board of Director's Meetings:

April 7 & 8, May 5 & 6

FARMER NOTICES

SRED Claim 2015

Ontario Egg Farmers will be receiving a letter for your Scientific Research and Experimental Development Expenditures (SRED) relating to 2015 in March. Please follow the instructions provided in the letter.

Note the SRED for 2015 needs to be filed with your 2015 tax return before the end of June 2017.

Should you have any questions on how to claim this credit on your tax return speak to your accountant/tax specialist.

Check your mail

The 2015 Per Bird Levy and EFP statements (week 45-52) have recently been mailed out. Be sure to check your mailbox for receipt of this. If you have any questions, please contact Suzanne Walton at swalton@getcracking.ca.

Upcoming Census



Statistics Canada will be conducting their next *Census of Agriculture*, starting in May 2016 and a letter will be sent to all Canadian

farm operators with instructions on how to complete the user-friendly, easy to use online questionnaire.

EFO strongly encourages all farmers to participate in this census as it is used as the primary source of data and leaders will use it to act in the interests of farmers, farm communities and agricultural operations.

Please see attached Census of Agriculture insert for details.



Crustless Chai-Coconut Pie is an easy and flavourful dessert suitable for any occasion.

A NEW AND EASY PIE FOR EASTER

It might be crustless, but nothing else is missing from EFO's latest recipe, *Crustless Chai-Coconut Pie*.

This simple-to-make and even easier to eat pie is suitable for any occasion, but is sure to be a hit on any Easter dessert table. It can be dressed up with the addition of whipped cream or, for the more adventurous, rum-spiked whipped cream.

For this recipe and more delicious treats for your Easter celebrations, visit www.getcracking.ca.

Operators connect with eggs at Restaurants Canada show



EFO's display at the Restaurants Canada Show, ready for action.

Egg Farmers of Ontario (EFO) once again participated in the Restaurants Canada Show, held February 28 to March 1 in Toronto. Foodservice staff was available on-site daily to encourage operators to promote eggs, sign-up for the newly updated online portal *Egg Chef* and e-newsletter service.

EFO was also proud to sponsor the *Breakfast With Champions* media event, held March 1 at the Liberty Grand.

WITH THIS ISSUE

• denotes to egg & pullet farmers only

- OMAFRA Farm Safety Notice
- Ontario Animal Health Network information sheet
- Census of Agriculture information sheet

THE TIME HAS COME, continued from page 1

The real challenge for public understanding of the benefits of enriched housing is their natural tendency to see “cage-free” through the lens of human experience and thought processes rather than through the eyes and instinctive processes of hens.

“Cage-free” egg production suffers from a number of drawbacks including: higher mortality levels; higher disease exposure;

increased potential for antibiotic use; larger environmental impact and lower sustainability; degraded conditions for worker health and safety; and lower food affordability. These challenges can be managed and mitigated, but higher costs of doing so means lower food affordability for consumers. Consumers can and will continue to have these choices in the marketplace. The level of “cage-free” production will continue to be determined by consumers willing to

pay those higher costs. So the science and practical experience are clear for hen housing in Canada - enriched housing is the next step in the evolution of hen housing and is the gold standard for hen health, hen welfare, environmental footprint, worker health and safety, sustainability and affordability. We will all need to work hard to tell our story to our entire supply chain – from farm, to grader, retailer and consumer – as we continue to tell them, *Who Made Your Eggs Today*.

REMINDER: Enhanced biosecurity during spring bird migration

With the spring migration quickly approaching, all farmers are urged to continue vigilant on-farm biosecurity measures to protect their flock and the industry from further incidence of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI).

In April 2015, HPAI infections were identified in Ontario. These disease incidents were devastating to the individual affected farms and had a significant impact on the Ontario poultry industry. Properly implemented biosecurity is the poultry producers' first-line of defense against infectious diseases. Your farm biosecurity protocols should be well thought-out, stringently implemented and continuously followed. Currently Canada remains “AI-free”; however, it is imperative that farmers not let their guard down. Constant and rigorous biosecurity measures should be practiced at all times.

The following is a list of suggested biosecurity measures:

- Each farmer, employee and every person entering all poultry barns must put on clean footwear, protective clothing and follow all biosecurity protocols on every entry into barns.
- Minimize visits to other poultry production sites and avoid any co-mingling of birds or contact with outside/wild birds.
- Avoid exchanging equipment with other poultry production sites.
- Ensure all vehicles/farm equipment that access the barn vicinity are properly washed and disinfected and that the laneway is restricted/secured.
- Ensure adequate training of farm and company personnel in biosecurity and disease prevention.
- Ensure adequate control of wild birds and rodents.
- If possible, have a pressure washer or a hose available to wash tires and equipment, and make this available to all service vehicles and visitors.
- If possible, “heat treat” the barn/litter ahead of chick or poult placement (to 30°C for a minimum of 3 days).

Farmers should immediately contact their veterinarian and board if their birds show any signs of illness or increased mortality.

2015 PRODUCTION STATISTICS

(in boxes of 15 dozen)

Ontario Production (week ending #4)

2016 – 1,253,666
2015 – 1,167,953

Ontario IP (week ending #4)

2016 – 249,383
2015 – 229,648

Ontario EFP (week ending #4)

2016 – 91,200
2015 – 91,200

US Imports to Ontario (week ending February 13, 2016, #7)

2016 – 187,187
2015 – 176,654

For Sale

Valli cages, 3 rows and 4 high, capacity of 6720, holds brown or white. Fans & controls. Egg cooler, 2 - 6 ton feed bins. Respond to 2dchesney@execulink.com.

Ford-Dickson A-frame cages with Ziggity water nipples, 16” centres, automatic feeders and elevators. Will separate.
1 1/2-HP egg cooler. 60”-0”
Farmer Automatic rod conveyor.
Contact: Pete at 519-902-3508 or Colin 519-328-7787.

Six 4-tier Farmer Automatic egg elevator ends. If interested, please call 519-871-8202.

Farmer Automatic - 2 front end units, floors and doors, gear boxes and other parts for sale. Please call Willy at 519-494-6114.

Eggs in the News

Mastering the egg

Boiled or Steamed - Both of these methods produce perfectly hard-cooked or soft-cooked eggs, a satisfying and reliable player in any kitchen. With hard-cooked eggs, the trick is to make them before you need them; cook a carton and stash in the fridge for quick-fix meals. Soft-cooked eggs with runny yolks are a delight to eat from the shell and can be used just like a poached egg when scooped out of it.

Poached - The poached egg is the fluffy, ethereal member of the family. The traditional French method calls for breaking an egg into a churning whirlpool of simmering water. This is daunting for home cooks - and it's not necessary. (Chefs do it when they have lots of eggs to poach at once.) Here's an easy, foolproof method for poaching on the stove. Or poach an egg in the microwave, which is much quicker once you have nailed down the timing.

Scrambled - Providing the most satisfaction in the least amount of time, scrambled eggs should be a back-pocket breakfast for every cook. If you have extra time, you might cook them slowly, over low heat, which yields soft, creamy curds. But for the impatient or weekday cook, here's a method for scrambling hot and fast.

Fried - It appears so simple: golden yolk, firm but tender white, buttery edges. But getting the yolk and whites cooked at the same time has challenged many great culinary minds. As is so often the case, room-temperature eggs and super-low heat are the keys to sunny-side-up success. If necessary, turn them over in the pan to speed up the yolks and call them over-easy.

- Waterloo Region Record, March 2, Byline: Julia Moskin

Alternative hen housing will push up egg prices

Today's food consumers increasingly challenge firms and farmers to change their production practices, but the evolution carries costs.

Fast-food firms - McDonald's, Burger King, Tim Hortons and others - recently announced plans to use only eggs from cage-free hen housing systems. The Egg Farmers of Canada followed with its own announcement that the use of conventional cages - will end by 2036.

Research suggests that the alternative hen housing will push up egg prices, although this may be a small price to pay for production practices that enable hens to pursue natural tendencies like perching, nesting, spreading their wings, etc.

However, we must recognize that the gains and losses associated with these changes will not be uniform.

Some egg farmers may make timely and profitable adjustments to their production practices. Others may not be so fortunate. Even the hens' welfare will vary. Some hens will enjoy the new freedom to roam but others may fall victim to attacks from other hens that would have otherwise been caged.

The challenge is to ensure that those who are affected have high-quality information about the tradeoffs they face when confronted with conventionally produced eggs and eggs from alternative housing systems. Quality information is needed all along the supply chain, from the farmer to the end consumer.

- Battleford News Optimist, March 1, Byline: Brady Deaton & John Cranfield

How to contact EFO Zone Directors

Your Directors are available to address any questions and comments you may have pertaining to your industry.

ZONE	DIRECTOR	EMAIL ADDRESS	PHONE
1	Scott Helps	shelps@ymail.com	519-464-2744
2	Dianne McComb	dmccomb@isp.ca	519-494-5360
3	Dan Veldman	dveldd@gmail.com	519-801-5216
4	Roger Pelissero	rpelisseroeggs@gmail.com	905-984-0279
5	Brian Miller	bwmiller@quadro.net	519-235-1126
6	Scott Graham	scottgraham06@gmail.com	519-284-1300
7	Bryan Hostrawser	bryanhostrawser@gmail.com	519-803-9076
8	Hubert Schillings	chschillings@hotmail.ca	905-260-0951
9	Craig Hunter	chunter@burnbraefarms.com	613-341-2006
10	Marcel Leroux	msleroux1@gmail.com	613-293-0730
Pullet	Andy DeWeerd	abdeweerd@hsfx.ca	519-502-5385

Egg Farmers of Ontario's Mission Statement - The mission of Egg Farmers of Ontario is to provide customers with a supply of high-quality eggs at a fair price and a fair return to egg and pullet farmers within a stable national supply management system.

PLEASE NOTE: Egg Farmers of Ontario Policies, Programs & Procedures are online

New policies and procedures will be updated and posted on EFO's farmer website

www.eggfarmersofontario.ca as they come into effect and will no longer be mailed to all farmers.

Policies, procedures and documents posted on EFO's farmer website contain the most up-to-date versions and should be used for all policy interpretation and quota transactions - please check this site frequently.

If further information or clarification on any matter is required, farmers should contact EFO's Board office.

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WHO MADE YOUR
EGGS TODAY?

EGG FARMERS
Ontario.ca

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