



April 6 2022

Re: Canadian Coalition for Farm Animals' better chicken commitment petition campaign

You may already be aware of a petition campaign by the Canadian Coalition for Farm Animals (CCFA) asking for Canadian grocery companies to make various commitments regarding Canadian chicken, including signing on to the “better chicken commitment.”

As the organization responsible for producing the Canadian chicken products you rely on, we want to remind you about our animal welfare practices before you decide whether to respond to CCFA's demands.

People and organizations that raise animals for consumption are frequently the target of campaigns like this. These campaigns are usually aimed at restaurants and retail companies and are designed to pressure them into requiring changes to their suppliers' animal welfare practices.

Our sector has enforceable and auditable food safety and animal care programs, supported by a process that brings together farmers, animal welfare scientists, veterinarians, processors, retail and restaurant associations, transporters, animal welfare organizations, and provincial and federal governments – to develop robust, science-based Codes of Practice. The National Farm Animal Care Council leads this Code development process and while the Codes themselves are voluntary, our on-farm programs are not.

CCFA claims to be genuinely interested in bettering animal welfare. However, their campaigns and the other organizations whose work they heavily promote are focused on promoting a vegetarian/vegan diet.

We respect the choice of people who do not eat meat. However, when those choices are made based on a misunderstanding of Canadian poultry welfare practices, or with a broad-brushed approach that does not consider the Canadian reality, we have a responsibility to educate and inform.

The Canadian supply management system is the only of its kind and, unlike other countries, mandates that farmers must be licensed to grow chicken. This allows the sector to implement strict on-farm food safety and animal care programs that are mandatory, enforceable, and auditable. There is only one standard for animal care in Canada that is delivered on each Canadian chicken farm. Ours is the only Animal Care Program that reaches all 2,800 chicken farms in Canada; no other program can achieve this reach.

The *Raised by a Canadian Farmer* Animal Care Program covers all key aspects of chicken welfare, including feed and water management, air quality and lighting, stocking density, personnel training and codes of conduct for bird welfare, bird monitoring and handling, health care and euthanasia practices, and humane handling during catching and loading.

The CCFA and other organizations use this tactic to build a relationship with your organization that they will later use to increase pressure on you to continually make unattainable commitments on



animal welfare. Moreover, once a commitment is made, there is a continual ratcheting up of threats and demands. For this reason, we know several companies who have chosen not to engage with CCFA and similar NGOs involved in activist and advocacy activities.

Ours is a process that includes animal welfare organizations who are legitimately focused on improving animal welfare, not on eliminating animal agriculture.

If you are considering taking part in their initiative, we strongly encourage you to reach out to us first. We understand how stressful it can be to have these demands and threats put on your company. We will be happy to discuss any concern you may have, answer your questions and provide you with the tools you need to respond, or respond on your behalf, to your customers' questions about animal welfare.

As always, we are available at your convenience if you have any questions or require any additional information. Please reach out to Lisa Bishop-Spencer at lbishop@chicken.ca.

Many thanks,

Michael Laliberté
Executive Director
Chicken Farmers of Canada