

New Project Puts Farm Animal Welfare on the Agenda

June 14, 2006 - In agriculture, animal welfare issues are seldom discussed until a problem arises. A new national project, coordinated by the Ontario Farm Animal Council (OFAC), its three sister groups in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta and the new national farm animal council plans to change this by developing a coordinated, proactive approach to farm animal welfare.

John Maaskant, OFAC's chairman, said that the newly launched project will promote the work being done across Canada to improve farm animal care. Said Maaskant, "The *Putting Farm Animal Welfare on the Agenda* project will promote these initiatives to farmers and veterinarians who work directly with the animals, as well as to consumers who are interested in knowing how animals are raised. "

"Our goal is to work together to contribute to a greater understanding of farm animal welfare research and issues facing the agriculture community across Canada, expanding upon each group's efforts," commented David Hyink, Alberta Farm Animal Care's Chairman. "This project puts much needed funding behind some collaborative ideas the farm animal care groups have discussed for some time now."

The three major components of the project each target a specific audience, and include the following:

A Workshop and Speakers Bureau:

- Developing a database of informative speakers on animal welfare from around the world;
- Sponsorship of costs for animal welfare experts to speak at meetings and events;

Enhanced Communications:

- Newsletters, articles in trade magazines, radio advertisements and promotion of a www.livestockwelfare.com website for farmers and veterinarians;
- Farm animal care displays and brochures available for consumers at public events ;

Farm Animal Handling Training:

- Interactive training workshops for youth, including 4-H members and agricultural college students;
- Workshops and resources designed for livestock transporters.

Funding for this project is being provided, in part, through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Program. This is a collective outcome partnership with the Agricultural Adaptation Council in Ontario, the Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council, the Saskatchewan Council for Community Development and the Alberta Agriculture and Food Council.

The project is valued at almost \$700,000 and will be delivered over the next three years. Look for more details on this project at www.livestockwelfare.com. Contact the Farm Animal Council in your province, or the project lead, Crystal Mackay at OFAC for more information.

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