



**National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare  
Council Guidance Document on Procedures for  
Conducting National Reviews of the Marketing  
of Vulnerable Groups of Animals**



**2020**

**NFAHW**   
**COUNCIL**

This document was prepared by the National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Council. The Council was formed in 2010 to advise governments and the animal-source food industries on all aspects of the health and welfare of farmed animals in Canada, in support of Canada's National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Strategy. The Council is funded jointly by Canada's animal production sector, the federal government, and provincial-territorial governments. Council members are designated by their constituency because of broad expertise in farmed animal health and welfare, public health, and an interest in approaching topics and developing advice in the context of One Health.

The Council would like to thank the National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Council Animal Welfare Committee for their work in developing this document and for their time and commitment to improving Canada's farmed animal health and welfare system.

David Fraser – Working Group lead

Dave Taylor

Hélène Trépanier

Marco Volpé

Nicole Wanamaker

Jackie Wepruk - NFAACC

## Table of Contents

<b>Background.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Procedure.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Reporting .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Follow-up .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Reviews to date.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Practical matters .....</b>	<b>5</b>

## Background

Certain categories of animals – including culled breeders and end-of-production animals – are often of less commercial value than other animals, and their marketing (including transport) can raise practical challenges plus concerns over animal welfare, animal health and biosecurity. In its report “A National Farm Animal Welfare System for Canada – 2019”, the Council took on responsibility for reviewing the marketing of these special groups. This document describes the relevant procedures.

## Procedure

After consultation with the sector(s) involved, the Council’s Animal Welfare Committee will propose priority topics to the Council for review, discussion, and decision.

Once the area of activity has been approved by the sector and the Council, an Expert Consultation meeting will be convened of up to 20 participants who represent a wide geographic range (Atlantic provinces, Quebec, Ontario, prairies, and west coast) and bring a high level of experience in one or more (as appropriate to the issue) of production, transport, marketing, further processing, veterinary medicine, research, and federal and provincial regulation. By having such diverse players together, problems and solutions are often identified that might not be recognized by any one group acting alone. The meeting typically ends with agreement on a number of issues that need to be addressed plus suggested actions.

Recruitment of experts is normally done through the national organizations of each relevant sector such as national organizations of producers, meat processors and auction markets. Where no appropriate national organization exists, provincial organizations can sometimes assist. The primary national producer organization is involved at every stage of the process including the decision to convene the meeting, planning the meeting, finding experts, and reporting, and may also provide staff support for organizing the meeting.

## Reporting

Based on the discussion at the Expert Consultation meeting, the chairperson and support staff draft a “consensus report” of the findings and recommendations, and circulate this to all members of the Expert Consultation for comments and corrections. This process is repeated multiple times, normally until consensus on all substantial issues is reached. The resulting report of the Expert Consultation is then submitted as advice to the Council. The Council then discusses the report and makes recommendations based on the actions identified by the Expert Consultation.

The recommendations are often wide-ranging and may include:

- areas where more information needs to be assembled,
- topics that require scientific research,
- practices that need improvement,
- training materials or programs that would be beneficial, and
- communication channels (federal-provincial, producer-processor) that need to be strengthened.

Some recommendations may be relatively long-term such as suggestions for regulatory changes (to be made when provincial or federal regulations are updated) or changes that might be incorporated in a subsequent revision of a Code of Practice. Some recommendations may incur significant costs and proposed sources of funding can be identified.

The Council, in consultation with relevant partners, then decides how best to direct recommendations to appropriate partners including industry organizations, federal/provincial/territorial governments, veterinary organizations, educational and research institutions. The Council, taking advice from the Expert Consultation into account, also decides on the best method of disseminating the recommendations. This may involve posting the Expert Consultation report plus the Council recommendations on the Council website, or in cases where recommendations are considered sensitive, the Expert Consultation may recommend (and the Council may decide) to delay publication until players have had time to act, or the documents might be posted on a secure website available only to those who are granted access.

## Follow-up

After a report and recommendations have been issued, Council, in consultation with relevant organizations, may decide to conduct a follow-up exercise to assess progress toward the recommendations. This may involve using information known to Council members, asking organizations to report on progress, creating a survey (for example, of producers, veterinarians or regulators), or calling a further meeting. Normally the Council would then publish a follow-up report on progress on the recommendations. Stakeholders are encouraged at any time to report progress on the recommendations, or other related information, to the chairperson of the Council's Animal Welfare Committee by e-mailing the Council at [info@ahwcouncil.ca](mailto:info@ahwcouncil.ca).

## Reviews to date

- The meeting on cull dairy cows was held in Ottawa in 2016 with the assistance of Dairy Farmers of Canada and funding from the Council. Some significant recommendations have been accomplished and others are in progress.
- The meeting on male dairy calves in 2019 was funded by the BC Ministry of Agriculture using Canadian Agricultural Partnership funds and was therefore held in Vancouver. As well as other recommendations, it identified an urgent need (currently under way) for

the industry and regulators to develop an implementation plan for the new Transport of Animals Regulations, as these would severely affect many current marketing procedures.

## Practical matters

- The Council's Animal Welfare Committee can provide overall guidance for the process, and a Council member may chair the meeting and take the lead in preparing the report, or Council may delegate this responsibility.
- The producers involved in the Expert consultation meeting should include at least one Council member who is a director of the relevant industry association. This individual ensures close communication with the association and brings a broad industry perspective.
- Significant staff time is needed to recruit and communicate with participants, organize the venue, and work with the chairperson to draft, circulate and revise the report. Dairy Farmers of Canada provided staff support for the previous reviews, and a UBC graduate student (receiving an honorarium) did the bulk of the organizing and administration.