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BY E-MAIL

April 24, 2006

**Mr. S. Baumel
The Aquarian**

Re: Article on Farm Animal Welfare

In responding to your e-mail request about animal care, I've highlighted your question followed by my response.

What numbers or percentage (exact or approximate) of registered egg producers in Manitoba have opted into CEMA's Animal Care Program?

- **99% of our registered egg farmers in MB participate in the program.**

Do the animal welfare criteria for CEMA's Program differ in any way from the 2003 CARC "Recommended Code of Practice for the care and handling of pullets, layers and spent fowl?"

- **The Care Program is built on the key criteria contained in the Code. The Program was developed in part to help create awareness about the revisions implemented in the 2003 update of the Code. We use the Animal Care Program as an educational tool for producers and as a gauge to see how they are complying with the Code.**

Are the audits (about once a year?) unannounced or do producers receive notice?

- **All farms are inspected once a year under CEMA's Animal Care Program. The third party inspectors are the same individuals who conduct inspections under the national on-farm HACCP based food safety program, Start Clean – Stay Clean™. The inspection visits are unannounced.**

How well are Manitoba producers performing so far?

- **All of our farmers have successfully passed the inspections.**



How does the Program deal with producers who don't meet the audit criteria? Are there consequences for severe infractions or repeated failures?

- **We have established a peer review program to help producers redress weaknesses identified through the administration of both the Animal Care Program and the on-farm food safety program. MEP has in the past requested action by a provincial veterinarian under the Animal Care Act to investigate a registered egg farm. The farm was inspected, recommendations were made and the farmer undertook a major renovation of his facility as required.**

Do you have any statistics or general information on how spent hens are disposed of in Manitoba and the methods used for onsite disposal? I have an AFAC estimate for 2002, but it sounds like things are changing rapidly. For example, for onsite euthanasia is Alberta's new MAC unit catching on? What about high speed macerators?

- **In Manitoba, hens are euthanized on-farm by methods approved by the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. To my knowledge, several high-speed macerators are in use locally. Plans for Alberta's MAC unit have been distributed to several farmers who have expressed interest.**

Does MEP offer tours to media or humane organizations of typical egg barns or provide videos during the end of lay period when the quality of animal care is likely to be most evident?

- **Farmers follow biosecurity protocols that restrict all unnecessary traffic into their laying hen barns. The primary reason is to protect the health of the birds. The public has the opportunity to view hens in cages and talk to farmers about husbandry and care at three events each year: Touch the Farm at the Red River Ex, Through the Farm Gate at the Royal Winter Fair and Amazing Agricultural Adventure school tours. MEP has also made a financial commitment to the development of the Glenlea Farm Education Centre where the general public will have an opportunity to learn about farm animal care and food production.**

