

# DRAFT Contingency Plans for Alberta's Broiler Hatching Egg Industry

## April 7, 2020

### Background & Context:

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to outline contingency plans for the broiler hatching egg industry to respond to potential delays and /or an inability to ship eggs. While plans will always be fluid to respond to each unique circumstance, the following is a framework to proactively guide planning and decision-making related to the current COVID-19 crisis and any future issues that impact the broiler hatching egg supply chain.

### Underlying Goals & Principles:

- Maintaining transparency, open communication, and a collaborative approach across the value chain.
- Protecting the health and safety of people.
- Protecting the health and welfare of the birds in our care (euthanasia is an absolute last resort).
- Responding to market demand and using every measure possible to prevent or mitigate disruption throughout the chicken value chain.

### Contingencies & Protocols:

*The following are contingencies for scenarios we may face as an integral part of the broiler hatching egg and chicken value chain as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

#### **A. A Producer has returned from travel outside of Canada:**

- As directed by Health Canada, they must self-isolate for a period of 14 days and inform their hatchery, vaccination/catching crews and suppliers.
- During this time, the Producer must not interact with anyone on their farm, including vaccination/catching crews, hatchery staff and service providers; however, they may continue to care for their birds provided they are doing so in isolation from others and following proper handwashing and sanitization protocols.
- If after the 14-day period the Producer shows no signs of having contracted COVID-19, they are able to resume their normal daily routine, continuing to follow all Public Health recommendations.

#### **B. A Producer, or family member or employee of a Producer, has contracted COVID-19:**

- The Producer must self-isolate and inform their hatchery, vaccination/catching crews and suppliers.
- As the workplace includes Producers' barns, the Producer must have contingency plans in place for replacement personnel to care for their birds.

**C. A Hatchery's Employee(s) are Impacted by COVID-19:**

**Scenario 1: Replacement employees / inspectors are utilized to maintain schedules**

- Business as usual. No change to practice at the hatching egg farm.

**Scenario 2: Reduced number of employees**

- Hatching egg producers will work with their hatchery in response to changes in egg pick up schedule.

**D. Reduction in chicken production**

- AHEP and Hatchery staff will work with producers to determine egg storage capacity on farm and on hatchery egg room floor.
- The AHEP Board will work with hatcheries to discuss reworking the domestic/import blend of hatching eggs, giving preference to domestic.
- If, storage capacity is reached and domestic supply continues to exceed demand, the AHEP Board will take appropriate measures to reduce egg supply (ie. reduce flock life, delay age of onset of shipping settable eggs for hatching etc.).
- If the processing plants are unable to remove flocks, AHEP staff will work with egg graders/breakers to determine their potential of accepting surplus eggs.
- If egg graders/breakers are unable to accept surplus eggs, AHEP staff will work with producers regarding the destruction of surplus hatching eggs and/or humane removal of flocks.

**E. Public Health Authority issues hatchery closure and hatchery diverts eggs to alternate hatchery (inter or intra provincial)**

- AHEP and hatchery staff will work with the impacted producers to determine if an alternate hatchery has capacity to accept additional eggs. In the event of the need for of inter-provincial movement, CHEP will be notified.
- The AHEP Board will work with hatcheries to address the domestic/import blend of other hatcheries in favor of domestic eggs from the closed hatchery.
- AHEP producers will work with their hatchery in response to changes in shipping schedule.

**F. Public Health Authority issues hatchery closure and hatchery is unable to divert eggs to alternate hatchery (inter or intra provincial)**

- Actions taken by the Board will depend on which hatchery is affected, and therefore, the number of surplus eggs in question. Options include:
  - Reduce designated flock life
  - Delay age of onset of shipping settable eggs for hatching
  - Breaking of eggs
  - Removal of flocks
- AHEP Board and Hatcheries will assess impact and determine appropriate course of action

\*\* Should CFIA issues a destruction order, CFIA will take control of the depopulation

\*\**The National Poultry Agencies together with Pork, Beef and Dairy organizations are preparing a joint letter to the federal Minister of Agriculture. This letter is seeking support with depopulation and compensation (using the Health of Animals Act) and other means of income loss support (such as AAFC's suite of income support programs). The maximum compensation for breeder hens is listed under the Health of Animals Act is \$60/ bird: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2000-233/page-2.html>*

**Guiding Principles for Addressing Market Shifts and / or Hatchery Capacity**

- All parties are committed to upholding the highest standards of animal care.
- Our decisions will best serve the interests of our membership as a whole, while striving to maintain individual fairness. In all decisions we make, producers will be treated fairly
- It is of primary importance to produce the required number of quality broiler hatching eggs to meet the demand of the Alberta chicken industry
- Decisions that impact currently projected requirements will be a collaborative, value-chain effort that is guided by transparency, data/facts and trust with a view to the needs of the Alberta chicken industry and our collective obligation as an industry to ensure a steady supply of high-quality Alberta broiler hatching eggs.
- All parties recognize the need to be equally flexible in these extraordinary circumstances while as best as possible ensuring stability for Hatcheries and the chicken value chain.
- All parties are committed to timely, accurate and consistent communication with all affected parties.

The check list below was developed by the **BC Hatching Egg Commission**, with approval to use its contents to allow member provinces to share with their members and producers.

# ***AHEP Daily Checklist for Producers in Response to COVID-19***

This is a daily checklist of screening and On-site practices for the health and safety of those who work here. This form is completed by the producers and signed off each day as complete. These forms are kept in a visible area in case someone on site becomes ill.

## **Screening Practices**

### **Monitor symptoms**

- Example: employers can monitor common symptoms for each employee. Anyone exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 or temperatures above 38 °C (100.4 °F) should not be work

### **Exposure**

- Anyone in close contact with someone diagnosed or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should not be at on-site, should remain in self-isolation for 14 days and follow public health protocols.

### **Travel**

- If you have travelled, you must self-isolate for 14 days. This includes the barns and property

## **On-site Practices**

**In addition to the mandated standards required by producer agencies and government regulators, farmers, employers and employees must follow best practices for limiting exposure on-site and ensure that all practices are well displayed and documented.**

Discontinue all non-essential visits to farms.

Essential visitors attending farms must sign into visitor log, wear biosecurity PPE, gloves and face mask.

- Necessary equipment, door handles, floors etc. that visitors touch should be disinfected after each appointment such as egg pickups, sawdust deliveries, feed deliveries etc.
  
- Egg collection stations should be disinfected after each collection and/or an employee change
  
- Employees should wear gloves and use a new pair for each activity: ex. Barn walk, egg collection, weighing birds etc. and wash hands frequently.
  
- Disinfect surfaces that are touched on a daily basis at the end of each day: ex. Door handles, equipment, egg sorting tables, counters etc.

**Additional Resources**

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada: [www.agr.gc.ca](http://www.agr.gc.ca) Canadian Food Inspection Agency: [www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca) Public Health Agency of Canada: [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)

Consult your provincial or territorial government's website regularly for additional regional guidance.

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- Disinfect anteroom twice a week, this includes floors, tables, stairs, chairs, bathrooms and any surfaces that are touched on a daily basis

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_