

# EggNotes

## Board of Directors

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**Director:** John Hofer  
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**Director:** Peter Waldner  
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**Director:** Bernadette Vandeborn  
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## EFA Staff

General Manager: Susan Gal  
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Marketing & Comm. Manager: David Webb  
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Marketing & Social Media Coordinator: Angie Lang  
ext: 103

Farm Programs Manager: Christina Robinson  
Industry Development Officer: Jenna Griffin  
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Office Manager: Laurel Martin  
ext: 121

Logistics Coordinator: Brandy Addai  
ext: 101

Farm Services Administrator: Erin Johnston  
ext: 127

Business Manager: Kari Buijs  
ext: 132

Fields Services Coordinator: Dave Lastiwka  
ext: 128

Fields Services Coordinator: Murray Minchin  
Application Support Specialist: Kelly Pow  
ext: 105

## EFA Vision Statement

Healthy Food, Healthy Farms,  
Healthy Families

## EFA Mission Statement

Cultivating a sustainable egg industry  
together with farmers, consumers & other  
stakeholders

## EFA Office Hours

Office hours as normally scheduled

## Egg Price Update

Effective November 12, 2017

Canada Grade	Size	Price Per Dozen	
A	Extra Large	2.150	↑
A	Large	2.150	↑
A	Medium	1.920	↑
A	Small	1.550	↑
A	Nest Run	2.025	↑
A	Pee Wee	0.270	-
B		0.750	-
C		0.150	-

Note: From the minimum paying price, processors can only deduct charges as authorized by the EFA Board. Farm-gate pickup rates were set in August 2010, and no increase in individual freight rates have been approved since that time.

EggNotes is the official newsletter of  
Egg Farmers of Alberta.

Submissions should be sent to:  
[info@eggs.ab.ca](mailto:info@eggs.ab.ca)

Next Issue: May 11, 2018

Note: EggNotes can be accessed on the EFA website  
(both full issue PDF and blog posts) or EFA's producer  
website



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Email: [info@eggs.ab.ca](mailto:info@eggs.ab.ca) Office hours: M-F: 7:30am - 4:00pm

## Mass Depopulation Update

The EFA Board of Directors has established a committee to guide the direction for mass depopulation. The objective is to develop options to offer affordable, effective, humane mass depopulation that producers will embrace, which meet the national standards for animal care. The goal will then be to develop SOP templates for each option, gather the financial track records, and develop and offer training for all approved options.

There are four options being investigated:

1. Whole Barn Gassing
2. Sea Container Gassing
3. LAPS
4. MAC Carts

If new options become available that meet the above goals they will also be considered. With respect to pre-charge MAC carts, producers should be aware that there are hurdles to overcome from a standards perspective. The committee is investigating options to adapt existing carts so they can continue to be used.

With respect to physical methods (decapitation and cervical dislocation), producers should be aware that they are not recommended for the depopulation of large numbers of birds, due to fatigue and the potential for inconsistency.

For the time being, the soft audit process introduced last year reviewing detailed requirements of each method has been put on hold.



# HEALTHY BIRDS

## HEALTHY FARMS HEALTHY EGGS

### HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

#### 10 Year Extension

406,116 birds were placed in the pool and 344,910 were requested allowing all requests for quota from the pool to be filled at 100%. Because of excess supply, producer payments for quota put into the pool have been pro-rated to \$6.2782. These figures are subject to change with any further requests for quota from this pool.

There is still 61,306 quota available, depending on the dates required. Please call Erin if you are looking to increase your capacity.

All detailed statistics for this pool and previous pools are posted to the producer website and will be updated on a monthly



#### CAP Volunteers Needed

EFA is a proud member and supporter of the Classroom Agriculture Program (CAP), which has been helping to teach grade 4 students about agriculture since 1985. CAP is a fantastic opportunity for EFA's Egg Ambassadors to talk to kids about egg farming, and to help explain where their food comes from.

To learn more about CAP, please visit: [www.classroomagriculture.com](http://www.classroomagriculture.com).

If you want to register as a CAP volunteer, please visit: [http://classroomagriculture.com/volunteer\\_registration.php](http://classroomagriculture.com/volunteer_registration.php)

EFA has created a CAP Volunteer Toolkit that provides additional information about CAP classroom presentations and ideas for engaging the students. Please contact David Webb at the EFA office to request a CAP Volunteer Toolkit, to help plan your presentation, or to help you prepare for your school visit as a CAP volunteer!



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# Healthy Farms

## SC-SC Program Changes Coming - Effective August 15, 2018



EFC has been conducting an in-depth review of the Start Clean – Stay Clean™ Layer Program. During the review, recommendations have been brought forward to strengthen the food safety program and processes.

The following changes to the SC-SC™ Layer program have been approved by EFC's Board of Directors and will come into effect August 15, 2018.

Like the Animal Care Program, the elements in the SC-SC™ layer program have now been categorized into 4 different types of elements:

- **Critical Control Elements** – if full points for critical control elements are not received, there will be an immediate 7 day hold of the SC-SC™ part 1 and 2 evaluation. A corrective action request (CAR) will be issued with a 7 day deadline to complete. If the CAR is not corrected within 7 days, the result will be an immediate failure of the SC-SC™ program. Critical Control Elements in the program are:
  - o Cooler temperature is maintained at 10°C to 13°C
  - o Eggs are gathered at least once daily in systems with egg rollouts and twice a day for systems with no rollouts (point value increasing from 3 to 5)
  - o No on-farm washing of eggs
- **Major Elements** – Corrective actions will have a 30 day timeline to complete.
- **Minor Elements** – Corrective actions will have a 6 month timeline to complete until August 15, 2019. After August 15, 2019 corrective actions for minor elements will have a 3 month timeline to complete.
- **General Elements** – Corrective actions will have up to a 12 month timeline to complete.

If major, minor and general corrective actions are not completed by the timelines noted above, the farmer will not be able to regain lost points once the CAR is addressed.

The Start Clean – Stay Clean Program will also require the following records after August 15th, 2018. Most of these records were previously required under the Animal Care program:

- Mortality recorded daily
- Feed consumption recorded daily
- Water consumption recorded daily

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- Letter of certification from the feed supplier
  - o A Letter of Certification from the Feed Supplier is required when purchasing feed from a supplier, as well as when feed is mixed on-farm for own use. This letter is also required from all feed mills, regardless of the HACCP accreditation status. HACCP accredited feed mills can no longer solely indicate that they are HACCP accredited.
    - o The Letter of Certification must contain the following statements:
      - ☐ a. No pharmaceuticals were added to the feed OR any pharmaceuticals that were added have been listed on the feed slip.
      - ☐ b. To the best of our knowledge, this feed/feed ingredient has been manufactured in an environment free of SE.
      - ☐ The letter must include the terms feed AND feed ingredients.
    - o A template for the letter of certification is available on the Producer website under Start Clean – Stay Clean, SC-SC Layers.
    - o Please make sure you have one available from each of your feed mill sources by August 15th!



For a complete copy of the handout developed by EFC to communicate the changes, please visit the SC-SC Layer page on EFA's Producer website. This document includes a full listing of every program element, its point value and the element type.

### Upcoming Events

April 19 – Mass Depopulation Committee Meeting (EFA Office)  
April 19-20 - EFA Board Meeting (EFA Office)  
May 3 - EFA Board Meeting (Red Deer)  
June 4 - EFC Summer Meeting registration and hotel deadline

We are pleased to launch the 2018 Canadian Egg Farmers Summer Conference registration website. Information concerning the conference program, social activities, registration and hotel accommodations can be found at the link below.

Please register early to avoid disappointment as some events have limited capacity. Registration link: [https://events.myconferencesuite.com/2018\\_Canadian\\_Egg\\_Farmers\\_Conference/reg/landing?l=100](https://events.myconferencesuite.com/2018_Canadian_Egg_Farmers_Conference/reg/landing?l=100)



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## Employment Standards



Alberta's Employment Standards Code and Regulation has been significantly updated with changes that came into effect on January 1, 2018. Changes and additions to existing laws cover areas like; leave eligibility, maternity/paternity leave, minimum wage, youth employment, overtime and holiday pay. The changes impact agriculture employers and employees in both primary production and secondary processing.

The Ministry of Labour is hosting a series of information sessions around the province to inform employers of the changes. During the two-hour session, employment standards officers will give a 75-minute presentation, followed by a 45-minute discussion period, covering:

- changes to general holiday pay
- overtime banking
- averaging agreements
- job-protected leaves
- deductions

Athabasca – Tuesday, April 10

Calgary – Thursday, April 19

Fort McMurray – Monday, April 9

Hinton – Thursday, April 12 from 8:30 to 10:30 am

Lethbridge – Monday, April 9

Lloydminster – Thursday, April 12

Medicine Hat – Tuesday, March 27

St. Albert - Monday, April 16

St. Paul – Wednesday, April 11

All sessions run from 9:30 to 11:30 am unless otherwise indicated. Please visit <https://www.alberta.ca/ES-info-sessions.aspx> to register.



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# Healthy Communities



Egg Ambassadors play a vital role for EFA, when it comes to both promoting the provincial egg industry, and educating the public about where their food comes from and how it was produced. More importantly, Egg Ambassadors put a face on egg farming, allowing consumers to make a personal connection with the farmers that provide the food they feed their own families.

Over the past six years, EFA's Egg Ambassador program has grown from just 8 farmers to well over 40 farmers! The two workshops held this past April in Red Deer and Lethbridge were well attended, attracting 15 new recruits to the Egg Ambassador program. The workshops are a great opportunity for egg farmers to learn how they can get involved, hear from fellow farmers who have been active in the program (a big thank you to Mike Froese for his session at the Red Deer workshop!), and practice engaging the public and answering common questions.

With the busy event season just around the corner, EFA looks forward to seeing our Egg Ambassadors in action! EFA is always looking for new recruits, and will be holding workshops again next spring. If you'd ever like to learn more about the program or talk about how you can get involved, please don't hesitate to contact David or Angie at the EFA office.

## Welcome back Christina! • • • • •



EFA would like to welcome back Christina from her amazing adventures over in New Zealand.

She will be returning to the office on Monday, April 23 and back to full-time hours. She would love to hear from you, but give her a couple of days to get back as many will be contacting her welcoming her home.

We all can't wait to hear all your stories!



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# Healthy Birds



## Managing Feather Cover

This year, Egg Farmers of Alberta introduced feather cover monitoring to the record keeping books with the goal of helping our farmers identify issues early and to act as a tool for managing feather cover. As you are starting to get more comfortable with monitoring feather cover, you may be wondering what to do if you identify an increase in feather loss in your flock.

Feather loss in the back of the head and rump area is a sign of injurious feather pecking. This is the most common cause of feather loss and is believed to be redirected foraging behavior. Feather pecking can be a learned behavior and can be difficult to stop, so catching it early and taking preventative measures is vital. In addition to monitoring feather cover records, you can identify feather cover issues by watching:

- If feathers are disappearing from the floor, this can be an early sign that they are being ingested and could lead to feather pecking. There may be nutritional deficiencies.
- If you see bloody eggs come to the packer, investigate right away as it can indicate a problem with vent pecking. Determine where in the barn the bloody eggs are coming from. Monitor that area to determine what the cause may be. Is there too much light in the nest? Is there a noise or lighting issue creating stress in the birds in that area?

Every case of feather pecking is different and there is no one solution that will help you manage the problem. In fact, it has been found that the more different solutions used in combination, the lower the chances of feather loss. Below we have outlined some of the factors and solutions to consider as you work to manage feather cover in your flock:

- The most common cause of injurious pecking is CHANGE, which causes stress in the birds. Bird stress can result in feather pulling and pecking:
  - Make any changes in your barn slowly to avoid stressing your flock.
  - Pay close attention to birds after sudden changes in weather, sudden noises or bright light.
  - If you are noticing more feather pecking, and you believe stress may be the reason, take time to sit and watch your flock. You can learn a lot about what might be impacting them by observing.

- Keep birds interested with enrichments in the barn. When chickens were wild, they spent

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up to 80% of their time looking for food by exploring with their beaks. In a farm setting, food is provided but your flock still has the natural instinct to explore with their beaks. Some enrichment options include well managed litter areas, pecking stones, novel objects like hanging ropes with knots and running the feeder more often.



- Feather pecking can be a sign that birds are not getting enough nutrients. It is important to work with a nutritionist who understands that loose flocks have different nutritional requirements. Work with your nutritionist, providing them with regular information on your flock and work together to determine:
  - Are your birds getting enough fiber?
  - What about protein? Sometimes protein is reduced to control egg size but this can create feather pecking challenges.
  - Is there too much salt in your flock's diet?
- Bird density plays an important role in feather pecking. If birds are competing for space or amenities (like perches or nest boxes) this can trigger feather pecking behavior. You may need to consider reducing the flock placement if you see ongoing feather pecking issues in multiple flocks and other causes have been ruled out. You may have the right number of birds in the barn but within the barn there may be areas that have a higher than optimal density. For instance shadows, light flickers, drafts, low water pressure, access to amenities may create “traffic jams” where the birds are either trying to move towards something they like or need, or away from unfavorable conditions.
- Lighting Factors:
  - Reducing the light level in the barn can stop feather pecking from spreading. Using red lights has also been a successful strategy for some farmers.
  - Ensure lights are not flickering, as this can cause stress in your flock
  - Some farmers have found that introducing natural light can reduce feather pecking.
- Sourcing the right pullets for your facility can help prevent feather pecking:
  - Match the pullet rearing and lay environment as closely as possible. Everything from the type of drinker and feeder, perch type, litter type, lighting, feeder timing and temperature should all be considered and matched as closely as possible.
  - Source quality pullets that are calm, uniform in size and in good health.

For more resources on managing feather cover, check out the Feather Cover page on EFA's Producer Website, which can be found under Animal Care, Best Practices.



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# Healthy Eggs

## Improve Egg Quality, Improve your Bottom Line

For every cracked egg that comes off your collection system, you are losing potential income. Did you know that it is not uncommon to see 4-6% breakage during the process of egg gathering alone? Broken and cracked eggs can result in significant losses – but there is a lot you can do!

While egg shell quality is dependent on many factors, this article will focus on the journey eggs take from the time they are laid, until they reach the cooler. If you take a close look at the equipment and processes eggs are exposed to during this timeframe, you can significantly decrease your undergrades and increase your profits.

Every barn and every egg collection system is different – so you need to be the detective and use a critical eye to evaluate your systems. Observe the eggs as they move through the system and follow through this list of items to assess.

- At each transition, or area where eggs are changing direction or moving to a new belt, watch and listen to the eggs move in this area.
    - Is the transition as flat as possible? If no, adjust the transition so it is as flat and smooth as possible.
    - Are any eggs bumping into each other or hitting equipment too hard? If so, consider making an adjustment to reduce these collisions. Possible solutions include:
      - ☐ Adding dividers so eggs don't run into each other
      - ☐ Adjust the speed of your system – slow it down!
  - Closely assess all of your egg gathering equipment.
    - Are there any:
      - ☐ pieces of wire that could cause eggs to get caught or poked?
      - ☐ protruding wires or clips?
      - ☐ improperly aligned collection belts?
- If you find any of these issues, take steps to repair or adjust your equipment to reduce the impact.
- Is your egg gathering equipment clean and well maintained? Cleaning and oiling gathering equipment has been shown to reduce cracks - in some cases by 1%. If you

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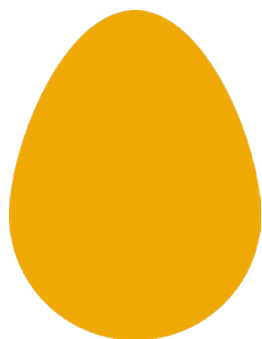
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haven't already, consider adding this as regular part of your maintenance schedule.

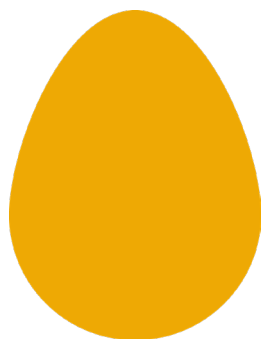
- Are there any areas where eggs are crowding?
  - If you have a system that advances your egg belt, you may need to adjust it so the belt is moved more often.
  - It may be helpful to gather eggs more frequently. It has been proven that the more often eggs are gathered the fewer egg collisions.
- Who is gathering eggs? Have they been trained to use gentle hands?
- Did you know that temperature can affect egg breakage? Higher environmental temperatures are associated with a decrease in shell quality. Allowing eggs to cool before handling or transporting from the lay house can reduce damage because shell strength increases as the shell temperature decreases. Maintaining hen house temperatures on the lower end of the spectrum may be beneficial.

As you gather eggs, take note of the number of cracks and breakages and take steps to investigate when your numbers increase. Below is a list of some of the common issues and some possible solutions.

- Do you see a lot of toe picks in your eggs?
  - Are your eggs piling up somewhere in the hen housing area? Take a close look at where eggs are resting before you run your egg belts and make necessary adjustments to ensure eggs are rolling out of the hen housing area.
  - Is the hen housing area calm and quiet during periods of lay? Be sure to leave your barn walk-throughs, cleaning and maintenance to times outside of peak lay hours so as not to disrupt the birds.
- If you have a furnished or loose housing system with perches, are you finding broken eggs under the perch or a large number of significant cracks? If so, your hens could be laying eggs from the perch. You may need to encourage hens to get off the perch and go to the nest to lay – you can try turning your lights on earlier so that birds have time to go to the nest before they lay.

If you are building or renovating your barn it pays to think about how your purchase decisions could impact breakages. Consider how you could decrease the distance eggs need to travel on the egg belt and how to reduce the number of transitions in your gathering system.

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Let us know if you've found this information helpful and if you have other suggestions to help reduce undergrades by e-mailing Christina at [Christina.robinson@eggs.ab.ca](mailto:Christina.robinson@eggs.ab.ca). [References: <https://en.engormix.com/poultry-industry/articles/broken-eggs-effect-t33958.htm> <http://algavita.pl/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Przyczyny-stuczek-ang..pdf> ]

## Egg Ambassador Reactions on EFA's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

In response to the request made at EFA's regional meetings in January for farmers to share their insights and memories to help EFA celebrate its 50th anniversary, a couple experienced Egg Ambassadors have stepped forward to answer the call. As promised, EFA is proud to share what these farmers had to say.

Levi Hofer, New York Colony:

*"I have been involved in the Alberta egg industry for the past 20 years, including 15 as the egg manager. In general, I appreciate EFA being forward thinking, always looking ahead to protect and benefit Alberta producers. More specifically, I like how EFA now oversees pullets to help the layer industry. The Producer Environmental Egg Program is an impressive program that really benefits egg farmers, while minimizing their impact on the environment. Developing the New Entrant Program was a successful way to expand the industry and help keep it innovative."*

Mark Hofer, Cayley Colony:

*"Looking back as a young boy growing up, to where we are now, times have changed dramatically. As the years have gone by, we as producers must keep up with this ever-changing industry to survive. All the new technology and the new rules changes every year, make us leaders in this industry. This is why supply management in the egg industry works for us."*

*"As an Egg Ambassador, we as producers can meet our customers and get to share our knowledge, and get their feedback so we can make this a great industry. The public has to understand how our trade works and operates. They also have to understand that we produce the best quality eggs, and we as egg farmers get to eat those eggs too."*

*"Let's not forget the great team we have at the EFA office, who put in a lot of time and effort to make this a thriving and successful industry. They are always looking to improve and to market eggs. Keep up the great work and here's to a brighter future ahead!"*

EFA plans to celebrate our 50th anniversary throughout 2018, and we welcome any insights, reflections and memories that egg farmers across Alberta have to share! Please contact David or Angie at the EFA office to share your story.



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