



TURKEY FARMERS
OF CANADA®
LES ÉLEVEURS DE DINDON
DU CANADA^{MD}

Submission to the House of Commons
Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food
Bill C-205, An Act to Amend the Health of Animals Act

Submitted by
Turkey Farmers of Canada (TFC)

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Background on Turkey Farmers of Canada (TFC)

Turkey Farmers of Canada (TFC) was created by proclamation of the Canadian Parliament under the federal *Farm Products Agencies Act (FPAA)* in 1974, as the Canadian Turkey Marketing Agency (CTMA).

A primary responsibility of TFC is to ensure our farmers produce the right amount of turkey to meet consumer needs while obtaining a fair return on their labour and investment, through the national system of supply management. TFC works with farmers, processors and further processors to determine anticipated market requirements and it is the responsibility of TFC to set production levels accordingly, in accordance with the *Farm Products Agencies Act (FPAA)* and the *Federal-Provincial Agreement for the Marketing of Turkey in Canada (FPA)*. In that capacity, TFC represents the interests of Canadian turkey farmers and of the sector generally, in collaboration with downstream stakeholders.

TFC represents over 520 farmers across the country in our eight-member provinces, from Nova Scotia to British Columbia, the turkey industry generates \$4.0 billion in economic activity annually and supports over 16,000 jobs across rural and urban centres. The turkey industry also contributes over \$1.2 billion to Canada's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and generates approximately \$400 million in annual farm sales.

Introduction

TFC appreciates the opportunity to provide input to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food for the study on Bill C-205, an *Act to Amend the Health of Animals Act*. Farmers have an important role in providing safe and nutritious food to Canadians across the country, however, they have been facing increased pressure and stress on farm from various groups and activist organizations.

TFC supports Bill C-205, which seeks to make it an offense to unlawfully enter a farm and breach biosecurity protocols and, in doing so, protects Canadian farmers against the negative ramifications of activism on farm. TFC requests that committee members carefully consider Bill C-205, which would help uphold the safety and welfare of turkeys on farms, in addition to that of farmers, employees and rural families across Canada.

On-Farm Programs in place on turkey farms

Canadian turkey farmers take great care to ensure the humane treatment of their turkeys, while providing safe, high quality food to consumers. The Canadian turkey industry uses science-based measures with respect to food safety and animal care through two mandatory on-farm programs that ensure Canadian turkey is raised to stringent standards. Both the TFC On-Farm Food Safety Program© (OFFSP) and the TFC Flock Care Program© (FCP) are reviewed annually and audited by qualified on-farm auditors.

The *TFC Flock Care Program© (FCP)* is based on Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Hatching Eggs, Breeders, Chickens and Turkeys and was reviewed by the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) and is recognized as following the NFACC Animal Care Assessment Framework (ACAF). The ACAF process involved a diverse range of stakeholders in the current update, including: turkey farmers, auditors, researchers, veterinarians, retailers, processors, genetics companies, Provincial Board staff, and animal welfare group representation. This program demonstrates and verifies Canadian turkey farmers' commitment to ensuring the proper care and respectful treatment of their birds, and that programs are reviewed by a third-party process. The TFC FCP is also audited annually by a third-party company. NSF Canada Agricultural Certification Company is an internationally-recognized, third-party certification body with Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization (PAACO) certified auditors. Third-party audits were initiated in 2017 and have consistently showed that the national Flock Care Program has been implemented and maintained effectively on an on-going basis, and program elements have been consistently applied.

The *TFC On-Farm Food Safety Program© (OFFSP)* is a HACCP-based program, which focusses on controlling pathogens on-farm, minimizing disease transmission to turkey flocks and ensures that turkeys marketed are free of medication and other chemical residues. The TFC OFFSP received full government recognition under the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) Food Safety Recognition Program. This programs shows that Canadian turkey farmers have national consistency in terms of food safety and biosecurity, while providing consumers with assurances that Canadian turkey products are of the highest quality and safety.

These On-Farm programs layout the strict biosecurity procedures applicable to farm personnel and visitors that are in place to prevent the spread of disease in barns, while upholding animal welfare and

food safety standards. The biosecurity procedures include signs on farm, locking barns, foot biosecurity and clothing measures, in addition to tracking visitors to the farm and barns. Those trespassing on farm are putting these protocols at risk, potentially exposing the turkeys to unknown pathogens and increased stress. Farmers take great care to maintain the atmosphere in barns, keep birds safe, barns clean and mitigate stressors. When individuals enter a farm without authorization, they are directly risking the health and welfare of the birds in the barn.

Impact on farmers

Many turkey operations are also the home of the farmers that run them – break ins and trespassing come with huge stressors placed on the shoulder of the farmers and their families living there, affecting how secure they feel in their own home, their wellbeing and mental health. Even with larger operations, break ins affect the farmers and the individuals they employ. Increased penalties for breaking into private farms could help deter these activities.

In conclusion

TFC again appreciates the opportunity to provide input to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food for the study on Bill C-205, an *Act to Amend the Health of Animals Act* brought forward by MP John Barlow.

Similar work is being done in some provinces, however, TFC feels that Bill C-205 will provide national consistency and ensure all farmers across Canada will receive the same protections.

Turkey farmers and the full turkey value chain work hard to ensure that Canadian turkey is produced with the highest care for the birds' health and welfare. This Bill would help uphold these standards and ensure no outside sources impede on the programs in place on farms. TFC is supportive of this Bill for the safety and welfare of turkeys and many other animals, in addition to the safety of farms, employees and rural families across Canada.