



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION No.: **421-01728**

BY: **MR. RANKIN (VICTORIA)**

DATE: **OCTOBER 20, 2017**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **THE HONOURABLE LAWRENCE MACAULAY, PC, MP**

Response by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Agricultural industry

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

The Government takes the issue of animal welfare very seriously. This is a shared responsibility that rests not only with the federal government, but also with provincial and territorial governments, producers, veterinarians, transporters, industry organizations and many others. The Government of Canada understands that animal welfare is important and that public trust may be influenced by how the industry, government and other stakeholders manage animal welfare and other issues important to the public. For instance, the Canadian Agricultural Partnership will include public trust as one of the six key priority areas, allowing the federal, provincial and territorial governments to continue investing in issues important to Canadians.

The Codes of Practice for the care and handling of farm animals are key tools for addressing farmed animal welfare in Canada. They serve as Canada's national understanding of animal care requirements and recommended practices for the various farmed animal species and are used by Canadian farmers to ensure sound management and welfare practices. They also are the basis for developing on-farm assessment programs, are referenced in provincial regulations and serve as tools for provincial enforcement officers.

The process for Code development is managed by the National Farm Animal Care Council, which has broad representation and participation from key organizations, including federal and provincial government representatives, as well as animal care organizations and industry associations. A rigorous process is followed to ensure the Codes are informed by the latest science while ensuring that they are also practical to implement. Each Code takes several years of hard work by a Code Development Committee to determine the most appropriate animal care requirements and recommendations. In addition to stakeholders who participate directly, the Code process also includes a public comment period to allow additional opportunities for input and perspectives to be shared.

Earlier this year, a revised Code of Practice for Pullets and Laying Hens was published by the National Farm Animal Care Council. The new Code introduces numerous changes compared to the 2003 version, and in particular will bring about a fundamental change in housing requirements for laying hens. As of April 2017, new requirements are being applied to all new construction or re-tooled holdings, which may no longer include conventional unfurnished cages.

The Code also sets out other criteria that will apply as Canadian egg farmers transition away from conventional cages. New housing systems for layer hens in Canada must support nesting, perching, and foraging (pecking and scratching) behaviour, whether in an enriched cage or a non-cage system.