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# CHICKEN FARMERS OF CANADA



## Animal Care & On-Farm Food Safety Programs

Chicken Farmers of Canada (CFC) is proud to present the findings from NSF International's 2023/24 third-party audits, marking its eighth year through the audit cycle. The results demonstrate that CFC has effectively and consistently implemented the *Raised by a Canadian Farmer* On-Farm Food Safety Program and the *Raised by a Canadian Farmer* Animal Care Program.

These annual third-party audits are comprehensive and assess all three areas of the programs: implementation of the programs by farmers, the consistency and effectiveness of the CFC audit team, and the program management and maintenance at the national and provincial offices.

This year's third-party audit cycle included the national office, three provincial board offices, two witness audits for the majority of CFC auditors, and assessment of on-farm implementation on 57 farms.

NSF International is an internationally recognized third-party certification body accredited by the [Standards Council of Canada](#), the [American National Standards Institute](#) and the [International Accreditation Service](#).

Canadian chicken farmers are proud to deliver on expectations of Canadian consumers and proud to be able to demonstrate this commitment through

the implementation of food safety and animal care programs on their farms.

### A HISTORY OF COMMITMENT

Implemented by over 2,800 chicken farmers from coast to coast, CFC's *Raised by a Canadian Farmer* [On-Farm Food Safety Program](#) and *Raised by a Canadian Farmer* [Animal Care Program](#) are concrete, accountable means of demonstrating the pride and commitment of farmers in raising quality chicken Canadians can trust.

In 2001, CFC proactively implemented an auditable, national On-Farm Food Safety Program and subsequently became the first commodity in Canada to receive full recognition from the federal, provincial and territorial governments for its effective implementation. To maintain recognition, the program undergoes reviews by the federal and provincial governments on a minimum 20-month cycle.

In 2009, CFC furthered its on-farm programming by releasing the Animal Care Program. The program is designed to provide assurance that farmers are meeting appropriate and recognized animal care standards.

The On-Farm Food Safety and Animal Care programs are developed, maintained and updated by Chicken Farmers of Canada and each provincial board office has the authority for the enforcement mechanisms for each of the programs.

In 2016, CFC initiated third-party audits to further demonstrate to customers, consumers, and the general public both the commitment of farmers and the effectiveness of the programs.

### **ONE SET OF NATIONAL STANDARDS TO ENSURE CONSISTENCY FROM COAST TO COAST**

CFC is the only organization that can audit and enforce one national program for all chicken farmers in Canada.

CFC's *Raised by a Canadian Farmer* On-Farm Food Safety Program is HACCP-based and has been developed to meet and exceed the standards developed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and the provincial and territorial governments.

The On-Farm Food Safety Program requirements address personnel training, biosecurity measures, controlling access to the farm, feed and water, cleaning and disinfecting, chicks, input materials, the grow-out period, disease management and record keeping. Each of these farm management aspects has been reviewed to reduce and/or eliminate biological and chemical hazards.

CFC's *Raised by a Canadian Farmer* Animal Care Program was developed based on the [Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Hatching Eggs, Breeders, Chickens and Turkeys](#). This Code is maintained by the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC), a world leader in bringing together stakeholders with different perspectives – farmers, veterinarians, processors, transporters, animal welfare associations, researchers, and provincial/federal governments – to develop robust and sound Codes of Practice. The Animal Care Program requirements address several standards including feed, water, space, temperature, air quality, lighting, back-up systems, bedding, bird handling, and health care practices. The comprehensive program demonstrates the level of care given to Canadian chickens.

Both programs are managed using the ISO-based Management Requirements of the federal, provincial, and territorial governments for on-farm food safety programs. Each program has mandatory requirements, which farmers must follow to become certified, and highly recommended items for continuous improvement of their operations.

### **AUDITABLE AND MANDATORY PROGRAMS WITH ACCOUNTABILITY FROM EVERY FARM**

Using over 40 trained auditors, every farm in Canada is audited annually on both programs. The On-Farm Food Safety and Animal Care Programs are mandatory in all 10 provinces.

In each province, the provincial board has enforcement measures for farms that are not compliant. Enforcement measures vary by province and include monetary penalties, reduction in allocation, or license suspensions. Any removal of certification is communicated with supply chain members – hatcheries and processors – to ensure transparency and enforcement.

### **CFC IS COMMITTED TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT; WE EVOLVE AS WE LEARN.**

Continuous improvement is integral to CFC's *Raised by a Canadian Farmer* On-Farm Food Safety Program and Animal Care Program – it's the reason the food safety program is in its 6<sup>th</sup> edition and the animal care program relies on a dedicated working group to remain relevant.

On an annual basis, CFC conducts management reviews, internal audits, witness audits of auditors and third-party audits of the entire program. Each of these initiatives helps to ensure effective implementation and to refine the programs.

### **Five examples of CFC's continual improvement in 2023/24 include:**

**Disease preparedness:** Avian influenza remains a threat to the global poultry industry and CFC has been working closely with CFIA and the other national poultry groups in Canada to continually improve and refine our response. CFC plays an active role on several national working groups with both industry and government to ensure we remain prepared and able to mitigate the impact of any future outbreaks. The plans and relationships developed between industry and government will serve us well not only for avian influenza, but other disease threats that may come in the future.



**Joint Animal Welfare Working Group:** This is a coalition between CFC and the Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors (CPEP) to directly support the continuous improvement of the Animal Care Program. The group has continued regular meetings to discuss key aspects of broiler welfare, informed by several scientific literature reviews. These reviews, and the discussions taking place within the working group, will make important contributions to the upcoming review of the poultry Code of Practice. The working group has identified several action items for improving animal care standards and program management, which are being addressed by both CFC and CPEP.

**Antimicrobial use reduction initiatives:** Building on the success of previous reductions, CFC has convened a focus group with diverse stakeholders and experts in AMU reduction. The group is looking at opportunities for a non-regulatory approach to further reducing antimicrobial use, with specific attention on reducing the preventive use of Category III antimicrobials. Recommendations from this group will be presented to CFC Directors for consideration.

**Enhanced auditor training:** CFC holds regular auditor training sessions to promote consistency in auditing across the country and to share information and strategies for handling situations and performing audits. In 2023, this was enhanced with a return to in-person sessions for our annual auditor training which brought together auditors from all provinces to learn from each other. A specific session was held this year for provincial

Certification and Delivery Agents, to discuss common issues and share best practices for improving the management of the programs. Additionally, all auditors participated in a virtual session on managing difficult conversations. Finally, a calibration session took place between CFC staff and NSF auditors to refine the third-party audit process and promote national consistency.

**In-barn hatching addendum:** With the implementation of the revised Hatchery Regulations, in-barn hatching is no longer a licensable activity by CFIA. As such, this emerging practice needs to be considered as part of the *Raised by a Canadian Farmer* On-Farm Food Safety and Animal Care programs. Working with provinces and auditors, CFC created new requirements for in-barn hatching from food safety and animal care perspectives, and the new requirements have been reviewed by CFIA and the NFACC. As such, the On-Farm Food Safety Program maintains full government recognition and the Animal Care Program continues to meet the NFACC's Animal Care Assessment Framework requirements. The addendum to the current programs is to be included in the audit process for those farms implementing in-barn hatching.





## **NSF Agriculture**

# **Chicken Farmers of Canada (CFC) 2023/2024 Summary Report**

**Report Date:** 27-August-2024  
**Completed By:** Elaine Vanier, NSF Technical Scheme Lead  
**Provided To:** Jean Lavallée, Chicken Farmers of Canada

## Summary:

The Chicken Farmers of Canada (CFC) objective for 2023-2024 audit cycle was to continue with third-party audits to assess the effectiveness of CFC's implementation of its *Raised by a Canadian Farmer* Animal Care Program (ACP) and On-Farm Food Safety Program (OFFSP).

### Annual Third-Party Audit Program

<b>Audit Dates:</b>	Chicken Farmers of Canada (CFC): 31-Aug-2023 Éleveurs de volailles du Québec : 28-Nov-2023 Manitoba Chicken Producers: 11-Dec-2023 Chicken Farmers of New Brunswick: 12-Dec-2023  Provincial CFC Auditor Witness Audits: 10-May-2023 to 19-Apr-2024
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The audit cycle began on May 1, 2023, and ended April 30, 2024. The 2023/2024 plan for the structured audit program included:

- annual national office
- three (3) provincial office audits
- witness each provincial auditor twice per audit cycle

NSF is an Accredited Certification Body (CB) by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to ISO 17065 with experience providing on-farm food safety and animal care auditing services to the agricultural sector. NSF auditors selected to conduct the audits have current PAACO Poultry certification, HACCP and food safety training and successfully completed CFC program-specific training provided by CFC on the ACP and OFFSP.

### National & Provincial Office Audits

The purpose of the CFC National and Provincial Office Management Systems audit was to verify the implementation and maintenance of the CFC programs and policies for operating as a recognized national producer organization (NPO) under the CFIA On-Farm Food Safety (OFFS) program. The National Office and three (3) Provincial Offices which operate as recognized CFC Certification Agents were audited. The scope for the audits included both the CFC ACP and OFFSP.

The CFC Management System implementation and maintenance was found to be conducted in an effective manner at both the provincial and national level. Management program responsibilities are shared between the National and Provincial Offices. The management of the system and the technical documents is the responsibility of the national office. The provincial office maintains responsibility for the on-farm certification services.

Commitment was observed when interviewing both the national and provincial office personnel. The CFC Management Manual provided the guidance of program requirements. Continuous maintenance of the program was observed. Completed records and meeting minutes demonstrated compliance and continuous improvement. Program maintenance and communication was observed between the provincial offices, committees and boards, and between the national office members via emails, letters, etc. Completed records and meeting minutes demonstrated compliance and continuous improvement to the program requirements.

Compliance to program requirements was evident among the provincial offices throughout the records review and interviews with the responsible parties. Documentation overall was well organized and readily available. Program management differs slightly between the different provincial offices, nevertheless the technical program developed and maintained by the national

office has been implemented effectively in each province.

There were no non-conformances (NC) cited at the national and provincial office audits.

In conclusion, based on the national and provincial office audits which include an assessment of the management of CFC's OFFSP and ACP implementation, it is concluded that the on-farm programs are being implemented effectively and maintained on an on-going basis.

### **Provincial Auditor Witness Audits & On-Farm Implementation Verification**

The purpose of the CFC Provincial Auditor Witness Audits was to:

- evaluate the provincial auditor's knowledge, understanding and assessment of the ACP and OFFSP on-farm programs
- evaluate the farmers' implementation of the ACP and OFFSP.

CFC Auditors (33) required witness audits while conducting ACP and OFFSP audits in the 2023/2024 audit cycle. The sample size of on-farm witness audits is determined based on the square root of farms, in accordance with ISO guidelines <sup>1</sup>for third-party audits. Based on 2,826 farms in Canada, 53 witness audits are required. For ease of planning and considering the number of auditors, each provincial auditor witnessed should receive two (2) witness audits, for a total of 66 on-farm third-party audits.

Twenty-seven (27) CFC Auditors received both witness audits.

Three (3) CFC Auditors received one (1) witness audit.

- Challenges were encountered with coordinating audits due to time frames and audit cancellations by producers.

Three (3) CFC Auditors were not witnessed in the 2023-2024 cycle. Pressures due to outbreaks of avian influenza in British Columbia limited availability to conduct provincial auditor witness audits.

When witnessing CFC Auditors performing the audits, the NSF Auditor concluded that the CFC Auditors met CFC auditor expectation criteria:

- auditors assessed the CFC program requirements correctly.
- auditors used appropriate auditing techniques to gain objective insight of the farmers practices.
- opportunities for improvement were discussed and recorded for future auditor calibration with the national office.

Opportunities for improvement identified during any witness audits were included in audit reports provided.

During the course of the witness audits, NSF Auditors also verified farmers' implementation of the CFC ACP and OFFSP. Overall, the ACP and OFFSP was implemented effectively and maintained at the visited farms (57). No instances of willful acts of abuse or serious food safety issues were observed.

**Table 1 - Summary of Provincial Auditor Witness Audits & On-Farm Implementation Verification**

Prov	CFC Auditor	Audit Date	Farm Code	Location
AB	CFC AB Auditor-1	16-Oct-2023	AB Farm - 1	Fort MacLeod
		17-Oct-2023	AB Farm - 2	Lethbridge County
	CFC AB Auditor-2	01-Nov-2023	AB Farm - 3	Olds
		09-Nov-2023	AB Farm - 4	Ponoka
BC	CFC BC Auditor-1	04-Oct-2023	BC Farm - 1	Interior
		04-Oct-2023	BC Farm - 1	Interior
MB	CFC MB Auditor-1	08-Apr-2024	MB Farm - 1	R.M. of Hanover
		09-Apr-2024	MB Farm - 2	R.M. Headingly
NB	CFC NB Auditor-1	22-Nov-2023	NB Farm - 1	St François-de Madawaska
		23-Nov-2023	NB Farm - 2	St François-de Madawaska
NL	CFC NL Auditor-1	10-May-2023	NL Farm - 1	Whitbourne
		11-May-2023	NL Farm - 2	Whitbourne
NS	CFC NS Auditor-1	11-Sep-2023	NS Farm - 1	Port Williams
		14-Sep-2023	NS Farm - 2	Canning
	CFC NS Auditor-2	12-Sep-2023	NS Farm - 3	Canning
		13-Sep-2023	NS Farm - 4	Canning
ON	CFC ON Auditor-1	30-Nov-2023	ON Farm - 1	District 8
		30-Nov-2023	ON Farm - 2	District 8
	CFC ON Auditor-2	19-Oct-2023	ON Farm - 3	District 2
		24-Jan-2024	ON Farm - 4	District 8
	CFC ON Auditor-3	13-Oct-2023	ON Farm - 5	District 2
		23-Oct-2023	ON Farm - 6	District 2
	CFC ON Auditor-4	12-Jan-2024	ON Farm - 7	District 9
		05-Feb-2024	ON Farm - 8	District 9
	CFC ON Auditor-5	23-Nov-2023	ON Farm - 9	District 5
		23-Nov-2023	ON Farm - 10	District 5
	CFC ON Auditor-6	18-Oct-2023	ON Farm - 11	District 1
		17-Nov-2023	ON Farm - 12	District 7
	CFC ON Auditor-7	16-Nov-2023	ON Farm - 13	District 1
		06-Dec-2023	ON Farm - 14	District 1
	CFC ON Auditor-8	01-Dec-2023	ON Farm - 15	District 2
		16-Jan-2024	ON Farm - 16	District 7
	CFC ON Auditor-9	07-Dec-2023	ON Farm - 17	District 7
		07-Dec-2023	ON Farm - 18	District 7
	CFC ON Auditor-10	26-Oct-2023	ON Farm - 19	District 9
		04-Dec-2023	ON Farm - 20	District 9
	CFC ON Auditor-11	03-Nov-2023	ON Farm - 21	District 3
		24-Nov-2023	ON Farm - 22	District 3
	CFC ON Auditor-12	10-Nov-2023	ON Farm - 23	District 7
		08-Dec-2023	ON Farm - 24	District 7
	CFC ON Auditor-13	27-Oct-2023	ON Farm - 25	District 5
		27-Oct-2023	ON Farm - 26	District 5
PEI	CFC PEI Auditor-1	11-Apr-2024	PEI Farm - 1	Queens County
QC	CFC QC Auditor-1	19-Apr-2024	QC Farm - 1	Montérégie
	CFC QC Auditor-2	09-Apr-2024	QC Farm - 2	Beauce
	CFC QC Auditor-3	30-Jan-2024	QC Farm - 3	Montérégie
		09-Feb-2024	QC Farm - 4	Montérégie
	CFC QC Auditor-4	17-Jan-2024	QC Farm - 5	Beauce
		17-Jan-2024	QC Farm - 6	Beauce
	CFC QC Auditor-5	16-Jan-2024	QC Farm - 7	Cantons-de-l'Est

Prov	CFC Auditor	Audit Date	Farm Code	Location
		16-Jan-2024	QC Farm - 8	Cantons-de-l'Est
	CFC QC Auditor-6	07-Sep-2023	QC Farm - 9	Rive-Nord
		07-Sep-2023	QC Farm - 10	Rive-Nord
	CFC QC Auditor-7	06-Feb-2024	QC Farm - 11	Centre-du-Québec
		06-Feb-2024	QC Farm - 12	Centre-du-Québec
SK	CFC SK Auditor-1	20-Mar-2024	SK Farm - 1	Waldheim
		20-Mar-2024	SK Farm - 2	Waldheim