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INSIGHT - INDUSTRY FACTS



More than **4,500**
poultry and egg farmers
provide access to fresh, local,
high-quality food for Canadians.

Canada's poultry
and egg sectors:



SUPPORT
144,016
JOB

ACROSS THE COUNTRY



CONTRIBUTE
\$2.7B
IN TAXES



DELIVER
\$11.1B
TO CANADA'S GDP

Message from the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

The vitality of our rural communities relies in large part on the 200,000 Canadian farm families who make up the landscape. I am pleased to see that this year *Farmers' Times* is shining the spotlight on many faces of the industry.

Consumers recognize the high-quality food produced in Canada. They know that our farmers follow the highest standards of safety, animal welfare and respect for the environment. They know, too, that our farmers are working hard to ensure the stability of our supply chains, while being tested by the pandemic, wildfires, drought, floods, animal disease and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Consumers want to get to know the families who work tirelessly to put tasty food on our plates. This recognition is fully deserved. In addition to providing delicious food, Canada's poultry, egg and dairy farmers make an important contribution to the economy and are key players in achieving our climate goals.

The Government of Canada continues to support farmers and our supply management system. We promised full and fair compensation to dairy, poultry and egg producers and processors, so they can manage the repercussions of Canada's trade agreements with Europe and the trans-Pacific region. We kept our word and announced investments totaling more than \$3 billion.

Our programs, built with industry, are helping producers modernize their operations, increase production, reduce their environmental footprint and improve animal welfare. In Budget 2022, we committed to announcing Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) compensation in this fall's Economic and Fiscal Update.

I am proud to see our producers' commitment to the environment. Their concern for the environment, their innovative practices and their new technologies will help Canada achieve our goal of carbon neutrality by 2050.



The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Our Government will continue to support these efforts: Budget 2022 devotes more than \$1 billion to support the adoption of sustainable practices and technologies. This investment will, among other things, triple funding for the Clean Technology in Agriculture Program which, for example, is helping producers install solar panels and greener grain dryers and adopt precision farming technologies.

We will continue to work hard to help Canada's supply-managed industries grow and prosper. So I invite you to celebrate and enjoy Canadian eggs, poultry and dairy all year long!



The Faces of Canadian Farmers: A Turkey Farmer's Commitment to Educating Canadians



Darren Ference, Turkey Farmers of Canada Board of Directors Chair and Alberta Turkey Producers Director.

A passionate poultry farmer, enthusiastic leader and community advocate, Darren Ference leads by example, raising the poultry sector's profile through community outreach and education.

As Turkey Farmers of Canada Board of Directors Chair and Alberta Turkey Producers Director, Ference believes trust between Canadian consumers and the agriculture industry is built on a

foundational understanding of where our food comes from and the farming practices that go into putting food on the table. This belief has come to define his personal approach to farming, work within his community and broader advocacy initiatives. By educating his community about turkey farming, Ference hopes to build support, combat misinformation and continue to promote made-in-Canada food.

Ference's zest for educating Canadians about farming started when he began working closely with animal science professor Frank Robinson at the University of Alberta to train agricultural students through the school's mentorship program. More recently, Ference started to teach youth at a neighbouring elementary school, Altario School, about agriculture and turkey farming — donating a miniature turkey barn to their Ag Learning Centre to help bring the lessons to life. The small-scale barn houses 40 turkeys for full production cycles, mimics a commercial barn and provides first-hand farming experiences to the students. Eventually, turkeys raised at the Ag Learning Centre are donated to the local community food bank, providing students with an immersive farm-to-table experience.

"I've always felt strongly that Canadians should understand the processes that are involved in food production, and have an appreciation for the work farmers do, the land that they help maintain and the animals that they take care of," says Ference. "By educating students of all ages about Canada's agricultural industry, we are teaching them to be passionate about the quality of their food, to advocate for animal welfare and realize the importance of maintaining a sustainable, domestic food system, ultimately benefiting the future of the industry and our communities."

Ference upholds the same values and commitment to leadership, innovation and sector advancement on his own farm too, where sustainability and the modernization of farming remain at the forefront. Ference's farm, Raeyson's Poultry, is highly innovative, using the latest in automation for feeding, watering and environmental control across two of his three barns, which produce approximately 700,000 kilograms to 600,000 kilograms of turkey a year. A reverse osmosis system also treats water for all the barns, the family's wheat supply is used in the turkey feed, and canola straw is used as bedding. Meanwhile, Ference plans to bring his third

barn up to speed in the future, to increase energy efficiency and lower overall costs.

At the heart of Ference's investment in on-farm innovation and his local community is the stability provided by the system of supply management.

"Because of supply management, my fellow turkey farmers and I are able to plan our production cycles guaranteeing a steady supply of fresh, local, high-quality turkey year-round to meet consumer demand while earning a fair return in the process, so we can continue reinvesting in the sustainability of our farms while contributing to the vibrancy of our communities. It's a win-win situation."

Dedicated to promoting research, knowledge sharing, efficiencies and consumer awareness, Turkey Farmers of Canada continues to strive to build a better future for Canadian farming through education and grassroots initiatives. Leaders like Darren Ference continue to champion a brighter future thanks to their ongoing commitment to Canada's agricultural industry and contribution to the well-being of farmers, processors and the community.

Farming Spotlight: Broiler Breeders, an Integral Part of the Chicken Supply Chain



Hatching eggs being collected on a conveyor belt.

While most Canadians are familiar with the eggs they purchase in the grocery store, they may not be as familiar with broiler hatching eggs, which happen to be eggs that are fertilized and eventually hatch to produce a chicken. Broiler hatching egg producers represent an essential segment of the nation's poultry industry, with 232 hatching egg producers operating in 8 provinces across Canada. These producers also play an important role in Canada's food supply chain.

In 2021 for instance, the hatching egg farmers produced approximately 822 million broiler hatching eggs, which helped supply over 2,800 chicken farms across the country. Some insight into the process from egg to chicken within the supply chain: it takes about 8-9 weeks, all starting with fertilized broiler hatching eggs bred on the farm. The fertilized eggs are then sent to hatcheries where they are placed into special incubators for approximately 21 days. Eventually, these fertilized eggs

hatch into broiler chicks that are then sold to chicken farmers, who raise them until they are fully grown.

All this is made possible by broiler hatching egg producers working collaboratively under the system of supply management with other producers in the industry to gauge how many eggs they will need to produce per year in order to meet the demands of chicken producers, and in turn, consumers. In turn, this system remains essential to keeping the hatching egg producing industry sustainable, preventing overproduction and waste while giving smaller producers in the industry the chance to be a part of a thriving domestic agricultural sector. Supply management also allows egg hatching producers to maintain their facilities and continue to supply safe, high-quality chicken to Canadian consumers and the food industry.

"Supply-managed farmers across Canada benefit from the system as it allows them to have a predictable income, meaning they can plan ahead, invest in their operations, and support their local communities without additional government funding," says Brian Bilkes, Chair of the Canadian Hatching Egg Producers (CHEP). "It also allows us to invest in programs like the *Animal Care Program*, and ensure our fertilized eggs are produced to the highest of standards," he adds.

Ensuring that egg hatching producers maintain a positive and healthy environment for their birds remains a top priority for CHEP. With a strong focus

on animal health and welfare, CHEP developed an audible on-farm *Animal Care Program* back in 2019 to verify that farmers meet requirements and guidelines for space, water, feed, air circulation and lighting, ensuring all producers adhere to the Poultry Code of Practice.



Two broiler chicks feeding.

"The mandatory *Animal Care Program* is based upon a continuous improvement approach," says Bilkes. "In addition to the many audits and inspections we have in place to ensure our animal welfare standards are met, we invest in ongoing research in the hatching egg sector to help improve the health and performance of our breeder hens, taking into account environmental and animal welfare concerns."

Moreover, CHEP's ongoing commitment to upholding rigorous standards helps maintain a reliable poultry industry backed by committed farmers and producers and a sustainable and continuous food source for Canadians.

A Look at the Next Generation: Young Egg Farmers and the Importance of Mentorship Programs



Anneke Stickney, a graduate of Egg Farmers of Canada's Young Farmers Program.

Egg farming plays a vital role in providing Canadians with a reliable, accessible source of protein. Looking to the future, Egg Farmers of Canada (EFC) proudly supports up-and-coming farmers through a number of mentorship programs, ensuring new generations of egg farmers, whether they're making a start in egg farming for the first time, or carrying on their family farm, are empowered. These programs not only serve as a way to help farmers connect with each other, but also help them give back to their communities and share best practices for farm ownership and operation, ensuring continued farming stability, innovation and success.

The *Young Farmers Program* and *Women in the Egg Industry Program* are just two of EFC's current mentorship initiatives. The *Young Farmers Program* aims to help build knowledge, prepare farmers for potential leadership roles and strengthen their overall technical and leadership skills. Individuals participating in the program are able to hone their animal care and sustainability knowledge, learn the inner workings of the farming industry and help contribute to the overall strength of Canada's food system.

As graduates of the *Young Farmers Program*, Anneke Stickney and Cheryl Norleen have carried their program learnings back to the

barn. Stickney, who began her career in finance after obtaining a business degree, decided to return to her roots to take over her family's egg farm in Ontario. Soon after graduating from the *Young Farmers Program*, Stickney was able to expand her family farm, transitioning the laying barn



First-generation egg farmers, Cheryl and Marc Norleen, supporting Heart for Africa's Project Canaan in Eswatini.

to an enriched housing system, equipped with new technologies that provide improved ventilation and space for the hens.

These advancements have also meant that Stickney's current egg collection can be done more quickly and delicately, improving the efficiency of the farm and reducing waste.

On top of egg farming and raising four sons, Stickney also finds time to contribute to her community, taking part in Egg Farmers of Ontario's egg donation program at local schools while fulfilling her duties as Treasurer of the Ag Women's Network, a group of more than 2,000 farmers and leaders that empower women in agriculture.

When asked about her experience with the *Young Farmers Program*, Stickney remarked, "the program really helped kick start my career in farming by helping me build my skill sets. It has also fed my passion for contributing to women's agriculture networks, giving me a forum to connect with my peers and pass on my knowledge to the next generation of farmers."

Meanwhile, Norleen is a first-generation egg farmer who, through the *Young Farmers Program*, was able to connect and build meaningful relationships with other young farmers in the industry as she and her partner embarked on their egg farming journey together. The program also introduced them to a unique volunteer opportunity, working to help sustain an egg farming operation set up and supported by

EFC — Heart for Africa's Project Canaan — which produces more than 4,000 fresh eggs each day for a community in Eswatini.

Another mentorship initiative from EFC is the *Women in the Egg Industry Program*, which aims to inspire and help prepare the next generation of leaders in Canadian agriculture while simultaneously enhancing connections. The program also addresses the challenges women face as farmers and provides them with the tools needed to help navigate their success.

Interestingly, the need for the *Women in the Egg Industry Program* was discovered during a research study done by Dr. Jodey Nurse which focused on the history of women in the egg industry. The study saw Nurse consult with women in the egg industry to tailor the program to their needs. Three key pillars were identified as crucial to the success of the program: connection, communication and confidence, which continue to guide the program today.

All this said, Canadian egg farming is proudly grounded in knowledge sharing, collaboration and community. These shared values continue to guide the egg farming industry, challenging it to address barriers to success and establish impactful programming to directly support the next generation of farmers, ensuring a prosperous future for years to come.



The Budd family at their farm near the village of Debec in western New Brunswick.

Raising the Next Generation of Chicken Farmers: An Interview with the Budd Family

Canadian chicken production is proudly rooted in family farming. Of the nearly 2,900 chicken farms across Canada, the majority are family-owned and operated, delivering the high-quality food Canadians know and trust and paving the way for the next generation of farmers.

Under the system of supply management, Canadian chicken farmers are able to produce the right amount of chicken to meet Canadian demand without surpluses. This means they have more stability to plan for their future, invest in their operations, focus on their personal development and the education of those they employ and help to raise the next generation of chicken farmers.

Moreover, generational farming is a key driver of Canada's agricultural success. In fact, over 90 per cent of all of Canada's chicken farms are family-owned and operated. This means Canadian chicken farmers can pass valuable knowledge down the family line, along with the skills and commitment required to raise chickens.

Another way the sector continues to innovate and invest in the future of farming is through leadership and mentorship

programs. In 2018, Chicken Farmers of Canada created the Chicken Farmers of Canada *Young Farmers Program*. The program aims to bring together young farmers nationwide to learn the ins and outs of the industry, while providing invaluable hands-on experience and the opportunity to share knowledge and best practices, all while reinforcing the values of community involvement.



Nicholas Budd in his family's chicken barn.

The Budds are a great example of a farming family, crediting their success in part to Chicken Farmers of Canada's *Young Farmers Program*. Nicholas and Susan Budd, along with their four children, live on their farm near the village of Debec in western New Brunswick. Nicholas was nine years old when his father bought their chicken farm. And for as long as he can remember, he has been a farmer. Nicholas went to school for heavy equipment mechanics through the New Brunswick community college apprenticeship program and later participated in the *Young Farmers Program* to increase his knowledge in the industry.

Valuable insights from the Chicken Farmers of Canada's *Young Farmers Program* have stuck with Nicholas throughout his many years of farming. "Through the program, I had the opportunity to learn about the industry at a national level and develop leadership skills," Nicholas says.

The Budds started their chicken farm in 2017 through the *New Brunswick Chicken Farmers' New Entrant Program*. Now, five years later, the Budd family continues

"Raising food, not only for our family but other families across New Brunswick and throughout Canada has been such a privilege."

to uphold their duty as chicken farmers and industry leaders. Nicholas and Susan continue the cycle, involving their children in day-to-day tasks and teaching them the key responsibilities of chores and hard work on the farm.

"Raising food, not only for our family but other families across New Brunswick and throughout Canada has been such a privilege," says Susan Budd. "It also helps us pave the way for a more sustainable future and farming practices, to feed our children, our grandchildren and generations of families here in Atlantic Canada."

Chicken Farmers of Canada's commitment to mentorship helps foster a community that actively works together to lift one another up and lay the groundwork for the next generation.