



July 27, 2018

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DELIVERED BY EMAIL

Gunta Vitins, Chair
BC Egg Marketing Board

Dear Ms. Vitins:

REGULATED MARKETING AND ANIMAL WELFARE – BCFIRB POSITION AND EXPECTATIONS UPDATE

Following the recent animal welfare issue in the BC egg industry, BC Farm Industry Review Board (BCFIRB) reviewed and discussed its supervisory position and expectations in relation to regulated marketing and animal care.

Context

Regulated marketing operates in the public interest. Along with other public interest issues such as food safety, the ethical treatment of animals is a public expectation. The recent issue with the care of laying hens reflected poorly on the industry and undermined confidence in the sector as a whole. Such situations impact provincial and national producers, processors, consumers as well as the allied trades that support the regulated sectors and market their products

The addition of s. 14(1)(a.1) to the *Natural Products Marketing (BC) Act* in 2015 further clarified board and commission authority to establish or designate a biosecurity program and to require producers to implement or comply with the biosecurity program. “Biosecurity program” is broadly defined in the *NPMA*. It encompasses any program resulting in “...protecting and providing for the safety of a natural product”. This may include animal welfare programs.

Animal welfare, monitoring and enforcement

BCFIRB recognizes that the Egg Board, as all of BC’s supply-managed boards, was proactive in establishing mandatory producer animal care programs. It also recognizes the Egg Board’s prompt response to the recent reported animal welfare concerns, including immediate farm identification, follow-up with appropriate inspections, and coordination and communication with the other supply managed industries, the BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Ministry of Agriculture.

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However, while mandatory standards are a key part of ensuring animal welfare, these standards are only effective if monitoring and enforcement are timely and effective.

The Egg Board is to provide a written report to BCFIRB no later than August 10, 2018 on:

- Enforcement and any other follow-up actions being taken by the Egg Board with farm operations, producers or any other parties in relation to the recently reported incidents;
- Any gaps in the Egg Board's monitoring and detection of operations that are in non-compliance with its animal care and housing condition standards, including a description of any gaps that resulted in the lack of detection of the operations recently reported on;
- The steps, including implementation actions and timelines, that the Egg Board is taking to remedy and address any gaps identified.

Following receipt of this report, BCFIRB may request a board to board meeting.

BCFIRB understands that many boards, including the Egg Board, are waiting on the authority to use administrative penalties. Once the two relevant sections of the *NPMA* are brought in to force by Cabinet, boards will be better positioned to take effective, proportionate enforcement action on animal care violations, in addition to exercising their existing authorities to suspend or cancel production.

Conclusion

BCFIRB's overall position and expectations regarding animal care are not new. It is vital for all regulated marketing boards, including the Egg Board, to ensure mandatory programs are accountable through effective and timely monitoring and enforcement.

If your board has any questions, please feel free to contact BCFIRB.

Yours truly,



John Les
Chair

cc: Wes Shoemaker, Deputy Minister
Ministry of Agriculture

James Mack, Assistant Deputy Minister
Agriculture Science and Policy
Ministry of Agriculture

Robin Smith, Chair
BC Chicken Marketing Board

Jim Collins, Chair
BC Broiler Hatching Egg Commission

Ben Janzen, Chair
BC Milk Marketing Board

Kevin Klippenstein, Chair
BC Turkey Marketing Board

Bert Van Daltsen, Chair
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BCFIRB Website