

Our Responsibility Our Commitment

**A Guide to the
Turkey Farmers of Canada's
On-Farm Food Safety &
Flock Care Programs**





Canadian turkey farmers take great care to ensure the humane treatment of their turkeys and provide safe, high quality food to consumers.

As part of this commitment, Turkey Farmers of Canada (TFC) administers two auditable On-Farm Programs designed to demonstrate and ensure a high standard of care on Canadian turkey farms: the TFC On-Farm Food Safety Program[®] (OFFSP) and the TFC Flock Care Program[®] (FCP).

These On-Farm Programs provide commercial turkey farmers with thorough requirements and templates to ensure the proper management of food safety hazards,

With the TFC On-Farm Programs in place, turkey farmers are able to achieve national consistency in terms of food safety and flock care, and provide assurances to consumers that Canadian turkey products meet specified program standards.

biosecurity and flock care on their farms. Both programs require detailed on-farm record-keeping and documentation to demonstrate compliance, and are supported by ongoing reviews, as well as comprehensive management and auditor training systems.

The programs have been made mandatory, or are in the process of becoming mandatory, in all provinces, with certification numbers approaching 100% nation-wide.

TFC ON-FARM FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM[®] (OFFSP)



The TFC OFFSP provides turkey farmers with the most current measures to:

- Control salmonella and other pathogens on-farm;
- Minimize the risk of bird disease transmission in commercial flocks;
- Ensure that turkeys marketed are free of medication or other residues; and,
- Ensure that farm personnel are appropriately trained.

The TFC OFFSP covers all aspects of farm management practices that are important with respect to food safety and biosecurity, including:

- Farm premises and barn biosecurity protocols;
- Visitor access control and personnel biosecurity requirements;
- Input controls (e.g., poults, feed, bedding, health management products, cleaning and pest control chemicals);
- Water quality management;
- Barn and equipment cleaning and maintenance procedures;
- Pest control;
- Disease management;
- Use and administration of health management products;
- Daily flock supervision; and,
- Farm personnel training requirements.



TFC FLOCK CARE PROGRAM[®] (FCP)



All farmers who raise turkeys in Canada are expected to meet or exceed the national standards outlined in the National Farm Animal Care Council's *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Hatching Eggs, Breeders, Chickens and Turkeys*.

To complement and augment the *Code*, Turkey Farmers of Canada has also developed and implemented the TFC Flock Care Program[®] (FCP), which applies the *Code of Practice* and requires detailed on-farm record keeping and documentation to verify that farmers are meeting all requirements to properly handle and care for their birds.

The key objectives of the TFC FCP are to:

- Promote awareness of good turkey care and handling techniques among existing farmers;
- Provide guidelines for new farmers regarding the proper care and handling of turkeys; and,
- Ensure consistent flock care by demonstrating adherence to the *Code of Practice*.

The TFC FCP covers all aspects of farm management practices that are specific to animal care, including:



- Maintenance of litter quality;
- Maintenance of adequate barn microclimate (e.g., humidity, ammonia levels);
- Lighting program;
- Maintenance of adequate barn temperatures;
- Emergency preparedness procedures;
- Stocking density requirements;
- Provision of unlimited access to feed and water that meet the turkeys' nutritional requirements;
- Protocols for humane euthanasia for sick or injured birds and for managing mortalities; and,
- Catching and loading procedures.

Funding for the TFC On-Farm Food Safety Program[®] (OFFSP) has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

ON-FARM AUDITS

Farmer compliance with the requirements of the TFC On-Farm Programs is verified through annual audits, performed by trained and qualified on-farm auditors.

The audit cycle is rigorous and meets CFIA Technical Review:

- The TFC audit cycle requires that farmers undergo at least one full audit, one partial audit, two records reviews and two self-declaration audits within a six-year period;
- Additional random partial on-farm audits are conducted on seven percent of farms that are in various stages after their initial audits; and,
- Triggered audits can occur at any time based on laboratory or audit reports, complaints of non-conformities, changes to farm management practices or any event that impacts food safety and bird care.

Certification is granted to farmers following successful completion of the initial full audit and is re-confirmed thereafter via the yearly audits. The TFC OFFSP and FCP are separate programs and farmers are certified under each program separately. Suspension or termination of a granted certification will occur if the TFC OFFSP and/or TFC FCP are no longer maintained on a farm, or if a farmer declines an audit. Where programs are mandatory, Provincial Boards will penalize a non-compliant farmer until a corrective action has been proven to have taken place.

All TFC On-Farm Programs auditors must fulfill strict qualification and training requirements. Auditors are required to take generic auditor and HACCP training courses, and pass the TFC Turkey-Specific Auditor Training Course. The course is provided by experienced TFC staff trained in HACCP and auditing principles, and certified as Poultry Welfare Auditors by the Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization (PAACO). In addition, TFC carries out performance assessments of all TFC On-Farm Programs auditors within a five-year period to confirm that they continue to adhere to the TFC auditing and certification requirements.

TFC ON-FARM PROGRAMS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Turkey Farmers of Canada (TFC) has developed a Management Manual, which is based on ISO (International Organization for Standardization) standards. The manual, which has passed CFIA Technical Review, outlines the responsibilities of all parties involved with the development, maintenance and implementation of the TFC OFFSP and FCP, and describes how the two programs are managed.

The responsibilities within the TFC On-Farm Programs management system are shared by three parties, in order to maintain objectivity in program implementation and the ongoing audits:

- TFC maintains control over the design and content of the two programs, delivers training to provincial on-farm auditors, and provides direction and oversight to ensure consistent implementation across the country.
- Provincial Turkey Marketing Boards are responsible for on-farm implementation, including farmer training and the provision of on-farm auditing and certification services.
- Farmers are responsible for maintaining compliance with the requirements of the TFC On-Farm Programs and for undergoing audits according to the TFC certification process.

TFC is also committed to ensuring the ongoing maintenance of the TFC On-Farm Programs and management system by undertaking annual reviews of the TFC On-Farm Programs requirements, reviews of the TFC On-Farm Programs management system at least every 18 months, and internal audits of all program administrators at least every five years.

