

Chicken Farmers of Ontario

Summary of Regional Farmer-Member Consultations on Modular Loading and Chick Supply Optimization

June 23, 2016 London, Ontario
June 28, 2016 Grimsby, Ontario
June 30, 2016 Walkerton, Ontario
July 21, 2016 St. Isidore, Ontario

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Executive Summary

In June and July of 2016 farmer-members of the Chicken Farmers of Ontario met in London, Grimsby, Walkerton and St. Isidore for highly interactive consultation sessions facilitated by Bryan Boyle. The purpose of the sessions was to generate valuable input from farmer-members to assist the Board of Directors of the Chicken Farmers of Ontario:

- 1) Understand farmer-member perspectives and their accountability on issues relating to the safe, healthy and sustainable production of chicken, with a focus on the farmer-members' transformation towards modular loading
- 2) Understand farmer-member perspectives and their accountability on issues relating to procuring, placing and growing chicks

To set the stage for the consultation session Gwen Zellen from Chicken Farmers of Ontario provided a brief description of current and future drivers for animal welfare and why modular loading is an important transformation.

Participants were asked, "How will we know that we "got it right" with modular loading as we grow safe, healthy and sustainable chicken?" They identified the desired outcomes from the perspective of various key stakeholders.

The desired outcomes identified for specific stakeholders were grouped into the following themes:

For Farmer-Members and Processors:

Animal Welfare, Efficiency and Practicality, Facilities and Equipment, Financial Implications, Quality, Safety and Standardization

For Government and Consumers:

Animal Welfare, Reduced Pressure from Consumers, Financial Implications, Proactive Chicken Industry, Quality and Safety

The farmer-members present were asked, "What actions have farmer-members taken or will they be taking to implement modular loading on their farms?" Responses were clustered into the following key areas: renovate barns, improve driveways and farmsteads, improve communication, set standards, consider financial implications and establish liability.

Gwen Zellen from Chicken Farmers of Ontario provided a brief description of chick supply optimization and some of the related issues.

Farmer-members present were asked “How will we know that we “got it right” in procuring, placing and growing chicks?”

The desired outcomes identified for specific stakeholders were grouped into the following themes:

For Hatcheries, Farmer-Members and Processors:

Financial Implications, Production Efficiency, Quality, Reduced Antibiotic Use, Relationships with Other Stakeholders and Sourcing

For Government:

Financial Implications, Quality, Reduced Antibiotic Use, Relationship with Other Stakeholders and Sourcing

For Consumers:

Animal Welfare, Pricing, Product Quality, Reduced Antibiotic Use and Market Awareness

Farmer-members shared their experiences with chick supply and proactive steps they have taken relating to those experiences. Their experiences were clustered around inferior quality chicks, number of chicks, timing, chicks from the USA and the need for compensation.

Participants were asked, “What actions should farmer-members be taking to ensure an optimized chick supply to allow them to maximize their potential to grow safe, healthy and sustainable chicken?” Their suggested actions were clustered into the key areas of: utilize incentives or penalties, expand hatchery ownership, improve communications, enhance breeder flocks, add regulations, source chicks differently as well as improve farmer-members’ animal husbandry.

The Chicken Farmers of Ontario farmer-member consultation sessions were productive events, where the farmer-members present were very engaged. Through their valued input, participants shared their perspectives relating to modular loading and chick supply optimization as an important step in helping to ensure a strong and vibrant Ontario chicken industry in the future.

Chicken Farmers of Ontario

Farmer-Member Consultations
 London, Grimsby, Walkerton and St. Isidore
 June and July, 2016 Facilitated by Bryan Boyle

Purpose of the Session

To generate valuable input from farmer-members to assist the Board of Directors of the Chicken Farmers of Ontario:

- 1) Understand farmer-member perspectives and their accountability on issues relating to the safe, healthy and sustainable production of chicken, with a focus on the farmer-members' transformation towards modular loading
- 2) Understand farmer-member perspectives and their accountability on issues relating to procuring, placing and growing chicks

Throughout this report points made by participants are noted by total number. Location and frequency are denoted by a letter and a number,

e.g. (Lx3) – Three discussion groups made this comment in London

(Gx3) – Three discussion groups made this comment in Grimsby

(Wx3) – Three discussion groups made this comment in Walkerton

(Sx3) – Three discussion groups made this comment in St. Isidore

Safe, Healthy and Sustainable Production: Modular Loading

What lies ahead for the Ontario Chicken Industry?

Gwen Zellen provided a brief description of current and future drivers for animal welfare and why modular loading is an important transformation.

Desired Outcomes

Participants were asked “How will we know that we “got it right” with modular loading as we grow safe, healthy and sustainable chicken?” They identified the desired outcomes from the perspective of various key stakeholders.

Farmer-Members

1. Animal Welfare

Comments	Number	Meetings
Less stress on birds	5	Gx2 Wx2 Sx1
Less handling of birds	4	Gx2 Wx2
Improved bird care and welfare	3	Lx2 Gx1
Consumer confidence of animal welfare during loading and transport	1	Sx1
Reduced pressure from animal rights groups	1	Sx1

2. Efficiency and Practicality

Comments	Number	Meetings
Equal or faster catching and loading process	4	Lx1 Gx3
Faster loading on one, two and three-storey barns	1	Lx1
Practical system	1	Lx1
Practical implementation	1	Lx1
Transition done efficiently	1	Lx1
Modular loading can be done in any weather conditions	1	Gx1
Less requirement for barn management during catching	1	Gx1
Less labour required	1	Wx1
Every producers' birds are loaded	1	Wx1
Birds get shipped on schedule	1	Wx1
More chicken to market	1	Wx1

3. Facilities and Equipment

Comments	Number	Meetings
Minimal renovation to barns	1	Lx1
No barn damage	1	Lx1
Adequate ventilation is retained after renovations	1	Lx1
Orderly transition from crates to modules	1	Lx1
Practical approach for second-floor loading	1	Gx1
Requirements for ceiling heights, door widths, etc. are readily available to farmer-members	1	Gx1
Barn modifications don't "break the bank"	1	Wx1
Still able to use our third production floor of our barn	1	Wx1

Every farm yard can accommodate truck staging for outdoor modular loading	1	Sx1
Barns will be able to accommodate modules and still have room for additional quota needs	1	Sx1

4. Financial Implications

Comments	Number	Meetings
Cost of renovations are covered by processors since processors reap all the economic benefits	3	Lx1 Gx2
Cost recovery included in Cost of Production formula	2	Lx1 Gx1
Minimal cost or subsidized equipment changes	2	Gx2
Cost effective system	1	Lx1
Financially feasible	1	Gx1
More profit	1	Wx1
Potential shared cost to update	1	Wx1
Labour cost savings	1	Sx1

5. Quality

Comments	Number	Meetings
Fewer condemnations	8	Lx2 Gx2 Wx2 Sx2
Less wing and leg damage	3	Lx1 Gx2
Better quality	1	Wx1
Less contamination	1	Wx1
Fewer dead on arrivals (DOA's)	1	Wx1

6. Safety

Comments	Number	Meetings
Easier and safer for the catchers	2	Wx1 Sx1
Transition and loading done safely	1	Lx1
Better biosecurity	1	Gx1
Farm worker safety is preserved	1	Sx1

7. Standardization

Comments	Number	Meetings
Standardized modules are used for all processors	2	Gx1 Wx1
Uniform standards for all module systems	1	Lx1
Compatible system	1	Lx1
Modular is not a provincial requirement	1	Sx1

Processors (Our Customers)

1. Animal Welfare

Comments	Number	Meetings
Improved bird care and welfare	4	Lx2 Gx2
More humane initial handling of birds within the plant	2	Gx1 Wx1
Stronger public perception of loading and transport	2	Wx1 Sx1
Processors can demonstrate to the customers that they are striving for positive animal welfare	1	Gx1
Facilitate gas stunning for less stress on the birds	1	Gx1
Birds are less stressed	1	Sx1
Reduced pressure from animal rights groups	1	Sx1

2. Efficiency and Practicality

Comments	Number	Meetings
More efficient handling	3	Gx2 Wx1
Allows more efficient gas stunning	1	Lx1
Improves overall efficiency	1	Lx1
Processors can access birds from any barn	1	Lx1
Better bird health management under extreme conditions	1	Gx1
Reduced catching time	1	Gx1
More efficient plants	1	Gx1
System works efficiently	1	Wx1
Less handling of birds	1	Wx1
More automation	1	Wx1
Québec processors will not be using modules and have no plans to convert to modules	1	Sx1

3. Facilities and Equipment

Comments	Number	Meetings
Orderly transition from crates to modules	1	Lx1

4. Financial Implications

Comments	Number	Meetings
More profit for processors from proven efficiencies	1	Lx1
Cost-effective	1	Wx1
Increased profitability	1	Wx1

5. Quality

Comments	Number	Meetings
Fewer condemnations	10	Lx4 Gx4 Wx1 Sx1
Better quality product	6	Lx3 Wx3
Less bruising and broken wings on birds	5	Lx1 Gx1 Wx2 Sx1
Fewer portions trimmed	2	Gx2
Better yields	2	Gx1 Wx1
More usable product	1	Gx1
Quality of the catching crews improved	1	Gx1

6. Safety

Comments	Number	Meetings
Improved worker safety in the plants	2	Lx1 Sx1
Improved catcher safety	1	Sx1

7. Standardization

Comments	Number	Meetings
Standard modular equipment	1	Gx1

Governments

1. Animal Welfare

Comments	Number	Meetings
Improved animal welfare	5	Lx1 Gx3 Wx1
Consumer confidence of animal welfare during loading and transport	4	Gx3 Sx1
Increased protection for consumers	3	Gx3

2. Reduced Pressure from Consumers

Comments	Number	Meetings
Receive fewer comments from animal welfare activists	2	Lx1 Sx1
Fewer critics of the system	1	Lx1
Implementation works	1	Lx1
Fewer problems and negative feedback from consumers	1	Wx1
Keeps consumers happy	1	Wx1
Nobody is complaining	1	Wx1

3. Financial Implications

Comments	Number	Meetings
Funding is available under Growing Forward 2	1	Gx1

4. Proactive Chicken Industry

Comments	Number	Meetings
Encouraged that the chicken industry is addressing issues instead of requiring government regulations	2	Gx2
Positive image of the chicken industry	2	Lx1 Sx1
Respect for modern industry	1	Lx1
More support for the industry	1	Lx1
Industry-wide solution	1	Lx1
Happier Canadian Food Inspection Agency	1	Gx1
Looks good to government	1	Wx1
Perception by the public of progress in the chicken industry	1	Wx1
Provides a great photo opportunity	1	Wx1

5. Quality

Comments	Number	Meetings
Fewer condemnations and fewer Dead on Arrivals (DOA's)	1	Gx1

6. Safety

Comments	Number	Meetings
Improved worker safety at all levels	2	Lx1 Gx1
Safer working conditions for catchers	1	Lx1

Consumers1. Animal Welfare

Comments	Number	Meetings
Improved animal welfare and handling of birds	9	Lx5 Gx3 Wx1
Chickens loaded more humanely and processed without pain	5	Lx1 Gx3 Sx1
Welfare concerns are addressed with a strong standard	4	Lx1 Gx3
More humane treatment of birds during catching and processing	4	Gx3 Sx1
Reassurance of farmers' commitment to animal care	1	Lx1
Less stress to birds in hot or cold weather extremes	1	Wx1
Able to use the barn environment longer during loading	1	Wx1
Meat birds are lower concern for animal welfare activists than caged laying hens	1	Wx1

2. Reduced Pressure from Consumers

Comments	Number	Meetings
Consumers don't know now and won't notice any change	2	Lx1 Sx1
"Feel good" idealism	1	Gx1
Consumers don't know or care about modular loading	1	Gx1
Will consumers know the difference between handling using crates or modules?	1	Gx1
Consumers pleased with this approach	1	Wx1

3. Financial Implications

Comments	Number	Meetings
Reasonable pricing	1	Lx1

4. Proactive Chicken Industry

Comments	Number	Meetings
Public perception improves		Wx1
Science-based information influences consumers' perception		Wx1

5. Quality

Comments	Number	Meetings
Better quality product	2	Lx1 Gx1
Fewer broken wings and leg damage	1	Lx1
Positive food safety	1	Lx1
Quality of the meat is recognized by consumer	1	Gx1
Ultimately, a better product for the consumer	1	Wx1

6. Safety

Comments	Number	Meetings
Confidence that the gas used for stunning is not toxic to workers or impacts meat quality	1	Sx1

Potential Actions

- We continue to grow safe, healthy and sustainable chicken to meet the changing needs of our customers, governments and consumers.
- The Ontario chicken industry will have fully transformed to modular loading over the next few years in response to the changing needs.

The farmer-members present were asked, “What actions have farmer-members taken or will they be taking to implement modular loading on their farms?”

1. Renovate Barns

Comments	Number	Meetings
Renovate barns as required	8	Lx3 Gx3 Wx1 Sx1
Secure an engineering report for barn renovations	7	Lx1 Gx3 Wx2 Sx1
Strongly consider single-storey for new barn construction	6	Lx1 Gx2 Wx3
Create larger doors and openings	4	Lx2 Wx1 Sx1
Add additional reinforcements for the second floor	3	Lx1 Gx1 Wx1
Ensure that new construction is modular-ready	2	Lx1 Sx1
Adjust to the needs of the systems to make it work	2	Wx2
Consult with a building contractor	1	Lx1
Anticipate possible changes to our barns	1	Gx1
Decommission our three-story barns	1	Gx1

2. Improve Driveway and Farmstead

Comments	Number	Meetings
Create wider farm laneways	6	Lx2 Gx1 Wx2 Sx1
Modify farm yard to improve accessibility	3	Lx1 Wx1 Sx1
Improve quality of farm laneway	1	Lx1
Identify the ideal laneway requirement specifications	1	Gx1
Add larger concrete yards and level surfaces	1	Wx1

3. Improve Communication

Comments	Number	Meetings
Consult with our processors for protocol, timing, etc.	9	Lx3 Gx1 Wx3 Sx2
Use self-education to become updated on the modular process	3	Gx1 Sx2
Research other jurisdictions to see how they handle modular loading	1	Gx1
Find out the specifications of modules	1	Lx1
Develop practical and cost-effective alternatives to loading from second and third story barns	1	Lx1
Communicate to ensure a practical implementation	1	Lx1
Look for further direction from Chicken Farmers of Ontario and our processors	1	Gx1
Engage in feedback sessions like this one	1	Gx1
Make equipment providers aware of the specifications required for modular loading	1	Gx1
Evaluate existing barns in other areas through videos or photos	1	Gx1
Encourage some farmer-members to modify and update	1	Wx1
Show a good attitude to adjust and make the necessary changes	1	Wx1

4. Set Standards

Comments	Number	Meetings
Set and coordinate one uniform and standardized modular loading system	4	Lx3 Wx1
Established a timeline for transition to modular loading	2	Gx2
Farmer-members will hold off on action until standards are established	2	Gx2
Identify the specifics of modular loading	1	Lx1
Develop practical and cost effective alternatives to loading second and third storey barns	1	Lx1
Implement modular loading by mid-2018 to allow the first widespread shipment of chickens in modules during summer rather than winter conditions	1	Lx1
Encourage Chicken Farmers of Ontario to set an engineering standard for doors, floors, driveways, etc.	1	Wx1
New barn building plans should be approved by Chicken Farmers of Ontario before producers get a building permit	1	Sx1

Ensure that bio security standards are met	1	Sx1
Pressure processors to ensure modular uniformity in the industry	1	Sx1

5. Consider Financial Implications

Comments	Number	Meetings
Ensure that farmers are compensated for their costs	3	Lx1 Gx1 Wx1
Ensure that the processors pay for conversion to modular loading	2	Sx2
Evaluate the affordability of a new barn	2	Lx1 Gx1
Budget for the cost of barn changes	1	Gx1
Evaluate the cost to the producer compared to the benefit to the processors	1	Lx1
Spend the money for the conversion	1	Gx1
Investigate the requirements and estimate the costs	1	Gx1
Arrange financing because renovations may be costly	1	Gx1
Retire and sell my quota	1	Wx1
Investigate equipment costs	1	Wx1
Initiate a cost-share strategy with our processor	1	Wx1
Commission the financial study on modular loading because we are moving too fast to implementation	1	Sx1

6. Establish Liability

Comments	Number	Meetings
Identify who carries insurance relating to modular loading activities	1	Lx1
Find out who is liable for damage to property	1	Lx1
Find out who trains and licenses forklift operators for modular loading	1	Lx1

Optimization of Chick Supply

What is chick supply optimization?

Gwen Zellen provided a brief description of chick supply optimization and some of the current issues relating to it.

Desired Outcomes

Farmer-members present were asked “How will we know that we “got it right” in procuring, placing and growing chicks?” They looked at the desired outcomes from the perspective of various key stakeholders.

Hatcheries

1. Financial Implications

Comments	Number	Meetings
Business becomes more profitable	4	Lx1 Gx1 Wx1 Sx1
Reduced adjustments for inferior chicks	2	Lx1 Wx1
Reduced production costs	2	Gx2
Reinvestment in new equipment and plants	1	Sx1

2. Production Efficiency

Comments	Number	Meetings
Lower 10-day mortality	3	Lx1 Wx2
Improved hatchability	3	Lx1 Gx2
Lower condemnations	1	Lx1
By providing more attention to breeder growers, able to “raise the bar” in production	1	Lx1
More efficient	1	Lx1
Fewer veterinarian trips required	1	Gx1
Meet the schedules required	1	Gx1
More chicks to sell	1	Wx1
Improved quality eggs from breeder barns	1	Wx1
Higher number of hatches	1	Wx1
System developed to allow feed and water for chicks at the hatchery	1	Sx1

3. Quality

Comments	Number	Meetings
Increased quality chicks	4	Lx2 Wx1 Sx1
Healthy chicks	2	Wx1 Sx1

4. Reduced Antibiotic Use

Comments	Number	Meetings
Reduced antibiotic use	2	Wx1 Sx1
Less resistance due to fewer veterinarian scripts	1	Gx1

5. Relationships With Other Stakeholders

Comments	Number	Meetings
Fewer or no complaints from farmer-members	10	Lx4 Gx4 Wx2
Less need to admit they are supplying inferior chicks	1	Lx1
More satisfied customers	1	Lx1
Able to use data to analyze and identify issues and act on them to demonstrate accountability	1	Gx1
Transparency is more possible	1	Gx1
Happier hatcheries salesmen		Gx1
Better relationships with farmer-members		Wx1

6. Sourcing

Comments	Number	Meetings
Equalized USA and Canadian chick quality at a high level	2	Wx2
Less competition from USA	1	Gx1
Control of USA supply of chicks	1	Gx1

Farmer-Members

1. Financial Implications

Comments	Number	Meetings
Increased profitability	5	Lx1 Gx2 Sx2
Higher returns	2	Wx2
Increased investment in infrastructure	1	Lx1
Adequate compensation for chick quality issues	1	Wx1

2. Production Efficiency

Comments	Number	Meetings
Lower early mortality rates	14	Lx5 Gx4 Wx3 Sx2
Lower condemnation rates	5	Lx3 Gx1 Wx1
Achieve production targets	2	Lx2
Single breeder flock source	1	Lx1
Allocations much closer to 100%	1	Lx1
Chicks delivered on time, not up to three days late	1	Lx1
Improved feed conversion	1	Lx1
Ability to hatch on the farm, given special rates	1	Gx1
Increase cycles to allow for on-site hatching	1	Gx1
Less stress on birds	1	Gx1
More predictability on weights and growing days	1	Gx1
Less culling required	1	Wx1
Uniform bird weights	1	Sx1
Better control of our growing environment	1	Sx1

3. Quality

Comments	Number	Meetings
Better quality chicks	7	Lx5 Gx2
Consistent supply of quality chicks year-round	1	Lx1
Consistent quality chicks	1	Wx1
Better chick health	1	Sx1

4. Reduced Antibiotic Use

Comments	Number	Meetings
Less medication used	4	Lx3 Gx1
Fewer antibiotics used	4	Wx3 Sx1
No Uniprim used	1	Lx1

5. Relationships With Other Stakeholders

Comments	Number	Meetings
Chicken Farmers of Ontario is not involved in chick issues	2	Sx2
Transparency is more possible	1	Gx1
Reduced stress on farmer-members	1	Gx1
Smiling farmer-members	1	Gx1

6. Sourcing

Comments	Number	Meetings
Mortality rates on both USA and domestic chicks is the same and minimal	3	Gx1 Wx2
Increased competition with more choice of hatcheries	1	Lx1
Better informed on the source of chicks and eggs, e.g. barcoded	1	Gx1
Continued good supply of quality chicks from Québec	1	Sx1
Fewer eggs and chicks coming from the USA	1	Sx1
Buying our chicks from an independent hatchery	1	Sx1

Processors (Our Customers)

1. Financial Implications

Comments	Number	Meetings
Increased profitability	4	Lx2 Wx1 Sx1
Reinvestment made in hatcheries	1	Sx1

2. Production Efficiency

Comments	Number	Meetings
Fewer condemnations	10	Lx3 Gx2 Wx4 Sx1
Birds and production within specifications	6	Lx1 Gx3 Wx2
More uniform bird size and weight	6	Lx1 Gx3 Wx2
Increased and stable supply of kilograms of chicken	3	Lx1 Gx1 Wx1
Less waste in the processing system	2	Lx2
Able to meet desired schedule more readily	2	Gx2
Less fluctuation in numbers of birds	1	Lx1
Even development of birds close to processing time	1	Wx1
Lower mortality	1	Sx1

3. Quality

Comments	Number	Meetings
Better quality end-product	4	Lx2 Gx1 Wx1
Healthier chicken	2	Wx1 Sx1

4. Reduced Antibiotic Use

Comments	Number	Meetings
Fewer antibiotics used	3	Lx1 Wx1 Sx1
Quality control of imports	1	Wx1

5. Relationships With Other Stakeholders

Comments	Number	Meetings
Improved predictability	1	Gx1

6. Sourcing

Comments	Number	Meetings
More choices of hatcheries	1	Gx1
Able to get out of the hatchery business	1	Gx1

Governments

1. Financial Implications

Comments	Number	Meetings
Profitable businesses generating more taxes	1	Sx1
Less laboratory service required	1	Gx1

2. Quality

Comments	Number	Meetings
Enhanced traceability	1	Gx1
No complaints about Ontario chicks, setting them apart from the poor quality received in USA chicks	1	Gx1
Quality control in place	1	Wx1
Healthier chicken	1	Sx1

3. Reduced Antibiotic Use

Comments	Number	Meetings
Less antibiotic use	7	Lx2 Gx2 Wx2 Sx1
Reduced antimicrobial resistance (AMR)	1	Gx1

4. Relationships With Other Stakeholders

Comments	Number	Meetings
Minimal complaints and criticism	2	Wx2
Industry is socially responsible	1	Lx1
Apathetic	1	Lx1
Happier government	1	Wx1
Keeping consumer satisfied	1	Wx1

5. Sourcing

Comments	Number	Meetings
Increased numbers of eggs and chicken produced in Canada	1	Lx1
Decreased number of imported chicks	1	Gx1

More Ontario hatcheries	1	Gx1
Spent hens and egg imports have been stopped	1	Gx1
Quality control of imports	1	Wx1
Fewer imported chicks to supply the Canadian market	1	Sx1

Consumers

1. Animal Welfare

Comments	Number	Meetings
Improved animal welfare	3	Lx1 Gx2
Humane hatching, handling and delivery of chicks	3	Wx1 Sx2
Camera-ready	1	Wx1

2. Pricing

Comments	Number	Meetings
Access to reasonably priced chicken	2	Lx1 Wx1

3. Product Quality

Comments	Number	Meetings
Safe and high-quality chicken	2	Lx1 Gx1
Improved consumer confidence in meat quality	1	Gx1
Better product	1	Wx1
Healthier product	1	Wx1
Consistency of product	1	Wx1

4. Reduced Antibiotic Use

Comments	Number	Meetings
Fewer antibiotics used	9	Lx2 Gx2 Wx3 Sx2

5. Market Awareness

Comments	Number	Meetings
Perceived need for specialty and core markets are filled	1	Gx1
Consumers don't know for the most part unless it is covered by media	1	Gx1

Farmer-Members' Experiences with Chick Supply

Farmer-members were asked, "What experiences have you had with chick supply and what proactive steps have you taken to address them?"

Each proactive step shared by a farmer-member is coded by the meeting in which it was shared (L: London, G: Grimsby, W: Walkerton, S: St. Isidore).

1. Inferior Quality Chicks

Personal Experience	Proactive Steps Taken
Received flock of poor quality chicks	L: Increased chick numbers in the next crop to compensate
	L: Following flocks: fog barn; disinfect after each flock; Agri acid in the water to increase pH; add nutrients and probiotics to the feed; vaccinate
	L: Change hatchery to find better chicks
	L: Take blood samples and check with veterinarian
	W: Continually culled and used Uniprim
	W: Worked with our veterinarian; major cull
Received very uneven quality chicks from Ontario hatchery	S: Switched hatcheries
Limited support from hatchery for our chick start-up	S: Switched hatcheries
Poor quality chicks	S: Placed no more orders to that hatchery. Unlike Québec, this may not be a viable option in Ontario.
Received unthrifty chicks	S: Medicated with Uniprim
Inconsistency between crops with some crops good and next crop not as good	G: Discuss with hatchery salesmen
Endured two or three crops of quality concerns with chicks	L: Organize meeting with Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg and Chick Commission (OBHECC), chick supplier and processor
Experienced high mortality and poor quality chicks	S: Switched hatcheries
High mortality rate after the first week	L: Introduce feed additives
First week's loss of 3%	G: Complained to hatchery
8% Mortality	W: Switched to a higher energy feed to try to reach our kilograms of allocation; shipped heavier birds

Lost 20% of 54,000 birds placed due to sick chicks; culled over 5000 and lost the rest to condemnments	W: Sought compensation
2% mortality by Day 10 in a Raised without Antibiotics (RWA) crop	W: Culled extensively
Hatchery only takes responsibility for mortality in the first 10 days	G: Encourage Chicken Farmers of Ontario to extend mortality of bird declaration from 10 to 15 days
Veterinarians inform me that my chick problem originated in the hatchery	G: Discuss problem with hatchery but they deny it. A large number of birds were culled and left in the barn at the end of production cycle.
Disease hit flock very early in production cycle	L: Medicate entire flock
Missing 90% antibiotic-free flocks	L: Communicate to hatchery that we must have healthy chicks to go antibiotic-free
Chicks were susceptible to N. Enteritis in a Raised without Antibiotics (RWA) crop	W: Routinely titrate iodine during the first weeks of growth for prevention
Inconsistent chick quality issues led to more antibiotic use which led to more resistance	W: Enhanced brooding; stopped medicating; the outcome was no more lingering mortality with nearly all mortality in the first seven days
Experienced "cobb" legs	W: Culled aggressively
Chicks delivered were dehydrated	G: Informed hatchery
Received dehydrated chicks	G: Despite putting out extra water for the birds, quality continued to deteriorate
Poor chicks with lower weight	W: Approached Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg and Chick Commission
Breeder male chicks delivered	L: Unsure how to handle the situation so communicated with hatchery
Receive pullets instead of mixed chicks	G: Kept the lights up, higher energy feed to get the weight for shipping
Overall we have had good deliveries on our farm.	G: In our 28 years' experience, we have used Uniprim only three times and received financial compensation from the hatchery on only six flocks.

2. Numbers of Chicks

Personal Experience	Proactive Steps Taken
Hatchery was short in supplying number of chicks ordered	L: Communicate with hatchery
	S: Forced to place cockerels instead of pullets; negotiated a price adjustment; continue to communicate and work with each other
Oversupplied with chicks	L: Shipped early to reduce kilograms marketed
Experience real difficulty in determining how many additional chicks are needed; health of chicks can determine under-market versus over-market shipping numbers	W: Tend to order slightly more than needed to buffer for a poor set of chicks leading to production problems
Over-ordered based on last crop's mortality, then overproduced and incurred a penalty	W: Nothing we could do. What works on one crop may not work on another!
Concern over chick payment	L: We never order supplemental chicks yet have to pay the same as producers who do

3. Timing

Personal Experience	Proactive Steps Taken
No chicks were delivered at start of production cycle	L: Called processor who then called Chicken Farmers of Ontario
Chicks were three days late being delivered	L: Talked to another hatchery but they were completely booked
Initial delivery was short in numbers	G: Separate the chicks that came the next day and provide extra water for them
Problem with availability so received multiple-day placings for our flock	G: Communicated concern to hatchery and paid special attention to the chicks
Received chicks in deliveries over two or three days from multiple hatcheries	G: Expressed displeasure to hatchery
No chicks were delivered as promised at start of production date	G: Waited patiently for a week to get chicks
Received approximately 30% of our chicks on the scheduled day with the rest later. Experienced three times the level of mortality in the early days	G: Reported the situation to the processor with all documentation
Chicks came later than expected	G: Adjusted the barn settings, e.g. water, air, heat, etc.

Placement date arrived with insufficient chicks; delivery date was pushed over to the next day	W: Adjusted our schedule to adapt to this small change
Received our chicks over three days for one barn	W: No choice but to work with it
Could not get birds when we wanted them; even final delivery was delayed	W: Pushed back on processor and chick supplier to avoid repeating this situation

4. Chicks from the USA

Personal Experience	Proactive Steps Taken
Received unthrifty chicks from USA	L: Encourage regulators to ban importation of USA chicks
Aware prior to delivery that chicks would originate in the USA	L: Order an additional 4% extra to offset production losses
Chicks delivered from a hatchery that originated in the USA	L: Arrange for USA chicks to be delivered straight to our farm
Received poor quality chicks from USA	L: Encourage hatcheries to give advanced warning of American chicks
Chicks from USA delayed and held at the Canada-USA border	L: Tried to make contacts but mainly stood around and waited with the same feed and water for the chicks
Received chicks from USA hatchery; recorded 2 to 3 times the condemnations	G: Put in the extra work required to bring the flock along
Received chicks that had traveled 27 hours on the truck	G: Expressed concern to hatchery
Experienced 13% mortality on USA chicks	G: Approached hatchery for compensation
Given less than 24 hours' notice that we were getting USA chicks that had been in transport for 18 to 24 hours	G: Accepted the consequences and put out extra water in egg cartons; did the best we could
Received chicks from Miami, although they had no tan! Chicks endured 36 hours on the truck.	G: Extra preparations required. Flock was two days behind with much higher mortality
Lack of proper culling at the hatchery, egg shells in the crate, uneven flock that was dehydrated	G: Communicated with hatchery and found they were USA chicks
Received chicks from USA resulting in very high mortality	W: Requested to the hatchery, "Please do not send USA chicks again!"
Experienced poor results with USA chicks	W: Requested and received hatchery compensation

USA chicks were received instead of the expected Canadian chicks; poor quality due to prolonged transport	W: We were reimbursed by the hatchery for the high mortality overall.
Received chicks from USA resulting in health issues	S: Treated with Uniprim; requested no more USA chicks for future flocks

5. Need for Compensation

Personal Experience	Proactive Steps Taken
Production losses related to chick quality	L: Paid farmer-member without a hassle if there is high mortality
Experience high early mortality and lack of chick vigour	L: Tried but found no fair compensation for poor quality chicks
	L: Contacted hatchery with seven day mortality and was compensated immediately
Hatchery delivered chicks and invoice but did not deliver quality	L: Expressed our frustrations to hatchery
Poor quality chicks with navel infections were delivered	L: Aggressively seek compensation
Missing production targets, being either over or under	L: Establish who pays if the extra production is good quality and who pays if there is a production shortfall due to chick quality
Shipped more birds than I paid for causing me to be over the levy and lost production the next year	G: Torn between not getting enough chicks for a poor flock or too many chicks for good flock
Lower bird weights	W: Requested and received hatchery compensation
Experienced yolk sac infection and high mortality	S: Talked to hatchery that supplied the chicks; negotiated compensation; received a reasonable compensation; continue to buy chicks from that hatchery

Participants were asked, “What actions should farmer-members be taking to ensure an optimized chick supply to allow them to maximize their potential to grow safe, healthy and sustainable chicken?”

1. Utilize Incentives or Penalties

Comments	Number	Meetings
Hold hatcheries financially accountable	3	Lx2 Gx1
Discount for high mortality, high disease and low growth rate	3	Lx2 Sx1
Pay for our chicks based on the quality we receive, similar to the way we are paid for quality when we ship chickens for processing	2	Lx1 Gx1
Align incentives of hatcheries and producers	1	Lx1
Do not penalize farmer-members for being more efficient	1	Lx1
Ensure that all chicks are worth the same money by not paying the same for poor quality as good quality	1	Gx1
Eliminate the 2% extra chicks and make appropriate adjustments if needed	1	Gx1
All farmer-members should demand compensation every time it is warranted	1	Wx1
Insist on discounted prices when chick quality is compromised	1	Wx1

2. Expand Hatchery Ownership

Comments	Number	Meetings
Build a hatchery that is farmer-member owned	2	Lx2
Buy or build a hatchery	2	Lx1 Sx1
Organize a farmer-owned hatchery cooperative	2	Lx1 Wx1
Restrict corporate hatcheries from taking over the market	1	Lx1
Make it easier for independent hatcheries to get started	1	Lx1
Provide more choices in hatcheries	1	Gx1
Encourage more hatcheries in Ontario	1	Gx1

3. Improve Communication

Comments	Number	Meetings
Communicate our concerns to hatcheries	3	Lx3
Report 10-day mortality to the hatchery promptly	2	Lx1 Wx1
Communicate with hatcheries proactively before there are problems instead of dealing with complaints	2	Gx1 Wx1
Request flock information before flock arrival	1	Lx1
Encourage hatcheries to share average 10-day mortality	1	Lx1
Encourage discussions to improve the chick situation	1	Gx1
Voice our issues	1	Gx1
Change hatcheries	1	Gx1
Set up an industry-wide task force to deal with chick optimization issues immediately	1	Wx1
Insist on "HatchCare"	1	Wx1
Request new style incubators for your hatchery	1	Wx1
Encourage the Chicken Farmers of Ontario Board to do fewer surveys and engage in more action	1	Wx1
Recognize the producers have no power against the processors	1	Wx1
Encourage the Chicken Farmers of Ontario Board to put pressure on hatcheries and processors to improve chick quality	1	Wx1
Advise the Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg and Chick Commission (OBHECC) of issues directly and report these issues formally	1	Wx1
Create an evaluation or scoring system for Ontario hatcheries to compare with other hatcheries in Québec, USA and Europe in an effort to improve hatchery practices	1	Sx1
Provide some advance communication to your hatchery if your need for chicks will be increasing through quota purchase, etc.	1	Sx1

4. Enhance Breeder Flocks

Comments	Number	Meetings
Reward breeder farms for great hatching and production results	1	Lx1
Encourage more breeder flocks	1	Lx1
Place more breeders to keep up with growth in the industry	1	Lx1
Match growth in production in the last three years within	1	Lx1

Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg and Chick Commission (OBHECC) producers (4%) with Chicken Farmers of Ontario growth (12%)		
Increase Ontario breeder farms to supply Ontario hatcheries	1	Gx1
Encourage an increase in Ontario domestic supply of chicks	1	Gx1
Work with the breeder farmers to provide more funding for breeder nutrition and management resulting in better quality chicks	1	Wx1
Demand more broiler breeders for Ontario and Canada	1	Wx1
Work with the Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg and Chick Commission (OBHECC) to improve the chick quality	1	Sx1
Improve the genetics in the breeder flocks	1	Sx1
Motivate breeders to accommodate increased production	1	Sx1
Control the age of the breeder hens to ensure bigger chicks	1	Sx1

5. Add Regulations

Comments	Number	Meetings
Chicken Farmers of Ontario should regulate to ensure there are no two or three-way deals, e.g. hatcheries, feed companies, processors, etc.	5	Sx5
Hatcheries should be required to update equipment for production efficiency	1	Lx1
Do not allow breeders to market floor eggs	1	Lx1
Regulate so that chicks can travel no longer than four hours on a truck	1	Gx1
Lobby to change the USA mandatory chick limits	1	Gx1
Do not allow live chick importation from USA but rather accept quality eggs only	1	Wx1
Do not accept USA chicks in our barns	1	Wx1
Push for more inspectors in the hatcheries	1	Wx1

6. Source Chicks Differently

Comments	Number	Meetings
Buy chicks from Québec	1	Lx1
Stop sorting chicks into good and poor quality at the hatchery because some farmer-members get all the poor quality chicks	1	Gx1
Demand equal treatment since chicks are sorted for some producers and not for others	1	Gx1
Build a wall between the USA and Ontario that chicks can't get over!	1	Gx1
Require hatcheries to publish results and be accountable	1	Wx1
Increase hatchery transparency	1	Wx1
Expect better documentation of problems and inspections of hatcheries	1	Wx1
Hatcheries should automatically supply 3% more chicks if farmer-member is receiving USA chicks	1	Wx1
Expand Canadian hatcheries	1	Wx1
Encourage hatchery modernization	1	Wx1
Find a remedy to chick delivery that is happening on multiple days for the same flock	1	Wx1
Chicken Farmers of Ontario Board should insist that hatcheries fix the problems	1	Wx1
Switch processors	1	Wx1
Evaluate different hatcheries by comparing different sexes, barns or floors	1	Sx1
Buy from an independent hatchery	1	Sx1
Ensure your hatchery can provide feed and water for chicks	1	Sx1
Receive 2% extra chick numbers to allow for mortality	1	Sx1
Use more Boire hatcheries	1	Sx1
Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg and Chick Commission (OBHECC) needs to get out of chick pricing activities	1	Sx1

7. Improve Farmer-Members' Animal Husbandry

Comments	Number	Meetings
Optimize brooding management by taking the "Platinum Brooding" class	2	Gx1 Wx1
Ensure that our barns are ready to receive chicks	1	Lx1
Always maintain proper biosecurity on our farms	1	Lx1

Manage young chicks appropriately	1	Gx1
Carefully check and monitor chick health, e.g. weight, temperature, parents, etc.	1	Gx1
Ensure that all areas of the barns are heated evenly	1	Gx1

Summary

The Chicken Farmers of Ontario farmer-member consultation sessions were productive events where the farmer-members present were very engaged. Through their valued input, participants shared their perspectives relating to modular loading and chick supply optimization as an important step in helping to ensure a strong and vibrant Ontario chicken industry in the future.