

Chicken Farmers of Ontario

Regional Farmer-Member Consultation On Optimization of Chick Supply

July 21, 2016
St. Isidore, Ontario



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Executive Summary

On July 21, 2016 farmer-members from District 9 of the Chicken Farmers of Ontario met at the Recreation Centre in St. Isidore for a highly interactive consultation workshop facilitated by Bryan Boyle. One of the purposes of the session was to generate valuable input from farmer-members to assist Chicken Farmers of Ontario Board of Directors understand farmer-member perspectives and their accountability on issues relating to procuring, placing and growing chicks.

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?”

Examples of the desired outcomes identified for specific stakeholders include:

Hatcheries: system in place to supply feed and water to chicks, lower mortality, reinvestment in hatcheries, reduced issues with farmer members, fewer antibiotics used, higher profitability

Farmer-Members: continued good supply of quality chicks from Québec, use fewer antibiotics, higher profitability, lower mortality, appropriate levels of compensation for chick quality, Chicken Farmers of Ontario not involved in chick issues

Processors: fewer condemnments, less antibiotic use, profitability improves, reinvestment in hatcheries, able to get out of the hatchery business

Government: less antibiotic use, lower mortality, fewer chick imports, happy consumers

Consumers: fewer antibiotics used, humane chick hatching, handling and delivery

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, chicks from the USA, number of chicks 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: incentives and penalties, hatchery ownership, improved communication, enhanced breeder flocks, added regulation as well as sourcing.

The Chicken Farmers of Ontario farmer-member consultation workshop was a productive event, where the farmer-members present were very engaged. Through their valued input, participants shared their perspectives relating to 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 Consultation
Recreation Centre, St. Isidore, Ontario
July 21, 2016 Facilitated by Bryan Boyle

Purpose of the Session

To generate valuable input from farmer-members to assist Chicken Farmers of Ontario Board of Directors understand farmer-member perspectives and their accountability on issues relating to procuring, placing and growing chicks.

Throughout this report whenever two or more tables of participants offered the same or very similar comments they are noted with an “x” and the number, e.g. (x3)

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

- Lower mortality
- System developed to allow feed and water for chicks at the hatchery
- Reinvestment in new equipment and plants
- More profitable operations
- Reduced chick quality issues
- Less use of antibiotics and better chick health

Farmer-Members

- Lower mortality (x2)
- More profitable operations (x2)
- Less use of antibiotics and better chick health
- Continued good supply of quality chicks from Québec

- Adequate compensation for chick quality issues
- Chicken Farmers of Ontario is not involved in solving chick issues
- Chick quality is none of Chicken Farmers of Ontario's business
- Fewer eggs and chick coming from the USA
- Uniform bird weights
- Buying our chicks from an independent hatchery
- Better control of our growing environment

Processors (Our Customers)

- Lower mortality
- More profitable operations
- Less use of antibiotics and better chicken health
- Reinvestment made in hatcheries
- Able to get out of the hatchery business

Governments

- Less use of antibiotics and better chicken health
- Fewer imported chicks to supply the Canadian market

Consumers

- Fewer antibiotics used (x2)
- More humane treatment of chickens during hatching, handling and delivery

Farmer-Members' Experiences with Chick Supply

Inferior Quality Chicks

Personal Experience	Proactive Steps Taken
Received very uneven quality chicks from Ontario hatchery	Switched hatcheries
Limited support from hatchery for our chick start-up	Switched hatcheries
Poor quality chicks	Placed no more orders to that hatchery. Unlike Québec, this may not be a viable option in Ontario. U
Experienced high mortality and poor quality chicks	Switched hatcheries

Chicks from the USA

Personal Experience	Proactive Steps Taken
Received chicks from USA resulting in health issues	Treated with Uniprim; requested no more USA chicks for future flocks

Number of Chicks

Personal Experience	Proactive Steps Taken
Hatchery was short in supplying number of chicks ordered	Forced to place cockerels instead of pullets; negotiated a price adjustment; continue to communicate and work with each other

Need for Compensation

Personal Experience	Proactive Steps Taken
Experienced yolk sac infection and high mortality	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?”

Incentives or Penalties

- Pricing of chicks should be based on quality and/or mortality rates

Hatchery Ownership

- Start an independent hatchery

Improve Communication

- 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
- Provide some advanced communication to your hatchery if your needs for chicks will be increasing through quota purchase, etc.

Enhanced Breeder Flocks

- Work with Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg and Chick Commission (OBHECC) to make improvements to chick quality
- Improve the genetics in the breeder flocks
- Motivate breeders to accommodate increased production
- Control of the age of the breeder hens to ensure bigger chicks

Add Regulations

- Chicken Farmers of Ontario should regulate to ensure there are no two or three-way deals, e.g. hatcheries, feed companies, processors, etc. (x5)

Sourcing

- Evaluate different hatcheries by comparing different sexes, barns or floors (x2)
- Buy from an independent hatchery
- Ensure that hatchery can provide feed and water for chicks
- Receive 2% extra chick numbers to allow for mortality
- Use more Boire hatcheries
- Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg and Chick Commission (OBHECC) needs to get out of the chick pricing activities

Summary

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