



## “Waiting Game” - Canada’s Chicken Farmers Still Waiting for Support

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**May 8, 2020 (OTTAWA)** — While welcoming the Prime Minister’s government announcement regarding financial support for agriculture and agri-food, Canada’s chicken farmers believe that the government does not fully understand what they need to mitigate specific impacts caused by COVID-19.

Farmers are doing their part to manage this crisis and have done so willingly and at their own expense. They have lowered their production by 12.6% for May and June and by 11% for July and August to address the concerns of their value chain partners and give the system a bit more breathing room.

There is no expectation of compensation for this.

“We’re not looking for compensation for our reduced production,” says Benoît Fontaine, Chair of Chicken Farmers of Canada, “We’ll take care of this ourselves. The issue arises with the potential of having to depopulate flocks. What we’re asking for is a commitment to cover both the value of the birds and the costs related to any required depopulations due to COVID-19.”

The entire value chain has worked tirelessly to avoid having to depopulate flocks, by rerouting birds when plants have had to close due to COVID-19 outbreaks. While no depopulations have happened to date, the unpredictability of the virus means that plant closures and depopulations remain a very real risk, and existing government plans fall far short of covering these losses.

The uncertainties resulting from COVID-19 are in addition to the financial stress farmers were already facing with the ratification of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Transpacific Partnership (CPTPP). Canada’s 2,877 chicken farmers lost a significant portion of their domestic market and have been waiting on government to announce programs to strengthen the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of the sector for over a year.

“Considering the waiting game we have been playing on CPTPP support since 2018, our farmers need clear decisions on COVID-19-related support. We don’t want to be dealing with these losses for years to come,” explains Fontaine, “Farmers and processors are proud to feed Canadians, and government support will help us continue to do so.”

As referenced in the Prime Minister’s announcement, Canada’s chicken farmers look forward to working with government to address these issues and learn more details on how government will better support them in the coming weeks.

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Chicken Farmers of Canada is online at [www.chicken.ca](http://www.chicken.ca).

Chicken Farmers of Canada represents the 2,800 chicken farmers from coast to coast, and ensures that the chicken that reaches Canadians' tables is safe, delicious, and raised to the highest standards: yours.