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## Chicken Farmers of Ontario - Industry Session Nov 20 2018

CFO hosted an industry meeting where part of the meeting was to gather industry input on the chicken industry and secondly to share a few observations from the farmer survey. The focus was to gather industry input on how they see the future of the chicken industry in Ontario, what is going well, concerns and suggestions or the Chicken Industry as CFO develops its next Strategic Plan.

In attendance was Feed representatives, Hatchery representatives, Processor representatives, Veterinarians, a representative from the Feather board command centre as well as CFO board members.

### Industry Relationships

After sharing some highlights of the farmer survey on relationships with the industry participants the group was asked what the industry can do to enhance relationships with chicken farmers? The main suggestion was for improved communication. Secondly education and dialogue was encouraged. The specific responses focused were:

- Ensure there is a safe platform for discussion
- Need to work upon communication and education and have a willingness to communicate. Need to open up the discussion on issues and barriers to communicate.
- Need case to case interaction
- Need to develop credibility with farmers
- Financial farmer concerns/succession may have some impact
- Develop a discussion paper
- Need for improved/increased collaboration
- Need more education to better understand the flow of issues
- Better communication between the producers and veterinarians
- More chick/hatchery transparency was suggested as an opportunity for enhanced communication



## Going well in Chicken Industry

The industry group was then asked what they thought was going well in the industry. There was an overwhelming response on growth in the industry. The specific responses focused were:

- Growth
- #1 protein
- Financial success
- Border control – reduced fowl imports
- Public trust in the industry
- Responding to changing consumer needs
- Investment in industry
- Risk management (FBCC)
- Competition on the hatchery end

## Expected Changes to the chicken Industry

The industry members were asked what they envision as to changes expected in the chicken industry in the next 3 – 5 years. The common response was less use of antibiotics and its impacts and secondly an increased focus upon animal welfare. The specific responses focused were:

- Reduced use of antibiotics
- Transition to modular loading
- Focus on animal welfare
- Responding to consumer pressures
- Alternatives to antibiotics
- Disease pressures
- Increase in treatment medications
- Potential alternative energy sources and energy conservation
- Water recycling
- Transportation/catching changes
- Outcomes based welfare
- Closer relationships with veterinarians
- Watch what greenhouse industry is doing
- Robotics
- Common vulnerability (border issues)
- Increased focus on traceability

- Bottlenecks in processing
- Protocols for RWA flocks

## Changes Expected on the farm

The industry members were asked what they envision as to changes expected on the farm in the next 3 – 5 years. The common response was more reporting, less use of antibiotics and need for enhanced biosecurity. The specific responses focused were:

- Opportunities for alternate animal raising
- More reporting/accountability
- Improved biosecurity
- Reduced antibiotics
- Consolidation of quota ownership
- Succession planning
- Increased technology on the farm
- Animal welfare priorities
- Enrichment in broiler birds
- Focus on research
- Sustainability (air, water, land)
- Protein replacements

## Concerns to be addressed

The participants were also asked what concerns they have about the chicken industry. Common issues and concerns raised were building trust with the consumer and meeting their demands, education to children and the public, government support for supply management, and building stronger industry relationships. The specific responses focused were:

- Public trust and advocacy
- Renewed partnership mentality
- Research investment
- Strong government support
- Better surveillance programs
- Stronger activism in more areas
- Consumer driven demands
- Alternative solutions to sustain disease outbreak
- Climate change potentially affecting crops

- Vulnerability to unique and specific situations (e.g. mold)
- Protest groups – disproportionate influence of negative news
- Industry relationships up and downstream
- ✓ What is being taught in schools regarding food production?
- Research facilities becoming outdated
- Make sure all parties are working together
- ✓ Education regarding industry
  - Not reactive
  - Train youth
- Imports – future trade negotiations
  - Employee welfare
- Ability to share “good” in the industry with the public.
- Consolidation – is it good?
- Documentation/red tape
- Communication of solutions

## Advice to CFO as it develops its Strategic Plan

The last area where the industry participants were asked for input was on advice they have for CFO as it starts its Strategic Planning process. The key themes are to communicate and collaborate. **The specific responses focused were:**

- Transparency
- Keep open
- Producing food is a sacred responsibility
- Engage youth – speak at student clubs, universities, etc.
- Whole value chain
- Remember that CFO can’t solve all the problems without collaboration
- Patience will be needed as the veterinarian world is changing