



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

First-Ever Canadian Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Rabbits

(Lacombe, AB) 15 February 2018 – The National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) and the Syndicat des producteurs de lapins du Québec (SPLQ), working in partnership with other provincial rabbit groups, are pleased to announce the release of the first-ever Canadian *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Rabbits*.

Canada's Codes of Practice are nationally developed guidelines for the care and handling of farm animals. They serve as the foundation for ensuring that farm animals are cared for using sound management and welfare practices that promote animal health and well-being. Codes are used as educational tools, reference materials for regulations, and the foundation for industry animal care assessment programs.

“We are pleased to have a Code of Practice that will support the sustainability of the Canadian rabbit industry and the success of our producers,” said Maxime Tessier, rabbit producer, Vice President of the SPLQ, and Chair of the Code Development Committee. “Our industry's participation in the Code development process demonstrates our producers' commitment to animal health and welfare and dedication to responsible animal husbandry.”

NFACC's Code development process is a unique consensus-based, multi-stakeholder approach that ensures credibility and transparency through scientific rigour, stakeholder collaboration, and consistency. The development of the Rabbit Code was led by a 12-person Code committee comprised of rabbit producers, animal welfare and enforcement representatives, researchers, veterinarians, and government representatives. Aiding in their work was a three-person Scientific Committee that included research and veterinary expertise in rabbit behaviour, health, and welfare. A public comment period was held in early 2017 to allow the public and all stakeholders to provide input.

Canada's Codes of Practice are a powerful tool for meeting rising consumer, marketplace and societal expectations relative to farm animal welfare. Codes support responsible animal care practices and keep everyone involved in farm animal care and handling on the same page.

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New Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Rabbits

“A significant milestone has been achieved in releasing Canada’s first Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Rabbits,” said Meghann Cant, who represents the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (CFHS) on the Code Committee. “This Code is an important tool for promoting responsible animal care standards for farmed rabbits in Canada.”

The Rabbit Code is the twelfth Code of Practice developed through NFACC’s Code development process. For more information on the Codes of Practice and NFACC’s Code development process visit www.nfacc.ca. The new Rabbit Code is available online at www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/rabbits.

Funding for this project has been provided through the AgriMarketing Program under Growing Forward 2, a federal–provincial–territorial initiative.

About the National Farm Animal Care Council

NFACC is a collaborative partnership of diverse stakeholders created in 2005 to share information and work together on farm animal care and welfare. It is the national lead for farm animal care issues in Canada. NFACC would like to acknowledge the Canadian Animal Health Coalition (CAHC) for their role in securing funding for this project. For more information on NFACC visit www.nfacc.ca.

About the Syndicat des producteurs de lapins du Québec

The Syndicat des producteurs de lapins du Québec (SPLQ) is a non-governmental and not-for-profit organization representing Québec’s rabbit producers. The SPLQ was founded in 1979 by and for farmers involved in rabbit production. The provincial organization, which is affiliated with the [Union des producteurs agricoles \(UPA\)](http://www.upa.qc.ca), has its headquarters in Longueuil. For further information on the SPLQ, visit www.lapinduquebec.qc.ca.

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