



January 9, 2012

Re: recent media coverage of CFIA Charges

As you are aware, Maple Lodge Farms stands charged with causing undue suffering to chickens during transport, by reason of exposure to inclement weather, under section 143 of the Health of Animals regulations. These counts involve two loads, one transported on December 30 and 31, 2008 and the other on February 23, 2009.

We are distressed and concerned that these incidents occurred. To have birds perish during transportation represents a deeply regrettable situation. We are unable to comment specifically about issues being discussed in the court while the proceedings are ongoing, however, be assured that Maple Lodge Farms is committed to the respectful, humane treatment of chickens.

It is our position that we complied with industry guidelines and took all reasonable measures within our capacity to protect the chickens in question from inappropriate exposure to inclement weather and attendant suffering. Maple Lodge Farms strictly adheres to the Codes of Practice for the Care and Handling of Poultry, a series of industry guidelines developed by a committee of representatives including farm groups, animal welfare groups, veterinarians, animal scientists, federal and provincial governments, related agricultural sectors and other interested parties.

Safer transportation of poultry is an industry-wide issue. As the largest processor in Canada, we recognize the critical need to identify improved transportation solutions; a goal we know is shared by all in the industry. In the past three years, working with industry experts and in cooperation with the CFIA, Maple Lodge Farms has invested over \$35 million to improve transportation equipment, facilities and processes aimed at reducing stress to chickens during the transportation process. As a result, the company will be the first processor in North America to institute a modular transportation system for hens that will vastly improve conditions during the handling process.

Over the years, Maple Lodge Farms' continued focus on the issue resulted in the company financing transportation studies and continuing its participation in industry committees focused on improving the conditions for chickens during transportation. Industry efforts continue to work towards updating the section of the Health of Animals Act pertaining to animal transportation in order to ensure that standards are based on the best available current research.

Maple Lodge Farms has and will continue to invest in verified improvements to equipment and processes in order to improve animal welfare during all phases of production, including transportation, and fulfill our commitment to the respectful and humane treatment of chickens.