

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE CARE AND HANDLING OF LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY: TRANSPORTATION

Report on Findings: Scope and Structure of Code of Practice for the
Transportation of Livestock and Poultry

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Abstract

This report summarizes the results of work undertaken as part of *Phase One* of the update to the 2001 Transportation Code of Practice as it relates to stakeholder consultations. The primary objective of this phase of the project is to establish a starting point or foundation for the updated Transportation Code of Practice as it relates to the Code scope, structure, format, and development process. Feedback from stakeholders, including the NFACC board as well as livestock and poultry transporter representatives, was utilized to establish the framework that will guide the Code development process in *Phase Two*.

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Part 1: Phase One of an Update to the Transportation Code of Practice

a. PROJECT BACKGROUND

To assist with defining *Phase Two* project resource needs and identifying a solid starting point from which the update of the Transportation Code of Practice can commence, [Phase One of an Update to the Transportation Code of Practice](#) was initiated in October, 2016.

b. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objective of this project is to initiate the updating of the Transportation Code using the NFACC Code Development Process. *Phase One* includes:

- A scientific review of animal welfare research on transport needed to inform the Code's development;
- A jurisdictional review of the roles/interactions between different authorities in the transport process, along with an Environmental Scan of initiatives that need to align with the Transportation Code; and
- Consultations with stakeholders to establish a manageable structure for engaging the diversity of stakeholders involved across species, industries and interest groups.

This report focuses on the third objective of stakeholder consultations, and summarizes discussions and recommendations from both NFACC board members and focus group participants on the scope, structure, format, and development process for the updated Transportation Code.

Part 2: Codes of Practice Background

a. CODES OF PRACTICE IN CANADA

The National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) is responsible for the development and maintenance of Codes of Practice, which are nationally-developed consensus-based and science-informed guidelines for the care and handling of farm animals. NFACC has developed a collaborative and transparent approach that adheres to a series of steps that result in the development of Codes that are scientifically informed, practical, and reflect societal expectations for responsible farm animal care. Codes of Practice are intended to promote sound management and welfare practices through recommendations and requirements in key animal husbandry practices. Codes serve as educational tools, reference materials for regulations, and the foundation for animal care assessment programs.

To date, 12 Codes have been completed using the NFACC [Code Development Process](#). Codes developed thus far are for use on-farm, and as such, target producers as the primary audience. Each Code includes a section that covers transportation which is limited to those actions and decisions that are within the control of producers. Essentially, the working rule during the development of commodity-specific Codes was that once the vehicle leaves the farm gate, it then falls under the control of the Transportation Code. Examples of section headings under *Transportation* in on-farm Codes include: Pre-Transport Planning; Fitness for Transport; Handling and Loading/Catching (for poultry); Unloading/Receiving Animals; and Facilities Design and Maintenance.

b. CODE OF PRACTICE: TRANSPORTATION

In addition to the Codes that have been updated using NFACC's process, there are some Codes still in existence that were developed under the lead of the Canadian Agri-Food Research Council (CARC). One such Code is the [*Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals: Transportation*](#), which was released in 2001. The Transportation Code has been identified by NFACC and several other stakeholders as being in need of a review and update.

Given that farm animal transport encompasses several types of livestock and poultry, the development of a Code of Practice is a complex undertaking that requires the experience and expertise of multiple stakeholders including transporters, researchers, commodity-specific producers and veterinarians, animal transport enforcement personnel, as well as representatives at transitional sites (e.g., auctions, assembly yards) and final destinations (e.g., feedlots, slaughter plants). Moreover, transportation encompasses a myriad of industries that extends beyond the "normal" reach of NFACC members (i.e., farmed animal agriculture) such as the livestock trucking and marketing sectors.

Part 3: Phase One Progress

Phase One of the project is nearing completion. Progress relative to the key objectives is provided below.

a. SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

A key component of the NFACC Code Development Process is the creation of a Scientific Committee (SC), which is tasked with locating and synthesizing existing research on priority welfare issues as identified by SC members along with other relevant stakeholders (e.g., Code Development Committee). For the Transportation Code, the SC was confirmed in November 2016, and the priority welfare issues were identified by a group of stakeholders at a meeting in December, 2016:

Transportation Code Priority Welfare Issues:

What is the effect of: transport duration, time off feed and water, rest intervals (where appropriate by species), environmental conditions, and loading density, as single factors or in combination, on animal welfare? Include measures to mitigate the impact of environmental conditions (Cattle; Pigs; Sheep; Equine; Poultry (Broilers, Turkeys, Spent Hens)).

The preliminary findings of the Scientific Committee were presented to the NFACC board in December, 2017, and a peer review of the SC Report commenced soon after. The final SC Report will be completed by March 31, 2018.

b. ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF REGULATORY AND OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The [*Environmental Scan of Regulatory and Operational Considerations*](#) report was commissioned to provide a common background and context for the Transportation Code Development Committee (CDC) and other participants. Completed in the spring of 2017, the report contains an overview of regulatory requirements, operational background, and considerations relative to the scope of the Transportation Code of Practice. The report was presented to the NFACC board in June, 2017. In part, the Environmental Scan covered:

- Estimates of Livestock and Poultry Movements in Canada;
- Road Transportation Regulatory Requirements affecting Livestock and Poultry Transportation;
- Conveyance and Container Design;

- Other Regulatory Requirements and Policies affecting Livestock/Poultry Transportation;
- Regulatory Oversight of International Livestock/Poultry Transport;
- Industry-Imposed Expectations and Initiatives; and
- Considerations relative to the Scope of the Transportation Code.

The *Environmental Scan* report was shared with the NFACC board and other industry members, and was used to generate discussions amongst stakeholders in an effort to define a starting point for the Transportation Code in terms of scope, structure, layout, and approach.

The report is current to June of 2017 and is expected to be updated as needed prior to the initiation of a Transportation Code update. In particular, the *Environmental Scan* Report includes a section (Part 10) that lists requirements from *Transportation* sections of existing species-specific Codes of Practice to further assist Code development participants when reviewing the Code. This section will be updated to include requirements from recently published Codes.

c. **STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS**

Stakeholder consultations were conducted through two primary means: NFACC board meetings, and a focus group session that consisted of livestock and poultry transporter representatives, along with others involved in the transportation continuum. The focus group was regarded as an essential component in helping to establish the Code scope and structure due to the fact that significant livestock and poultry transportation representation is lacking on the NFACC board. The focus group session was also seen as an opportunity to engage transporters in the process, and to identify potential Code development participants.

This report summarizes the feedback and input from stakeholders, and will be used to establish the foundation for the Transportation Code scope, structure, format, and development process for NFACC, the Code Development Committee, and other participants.

Part 4: NFACC Board and Focus Group Consultations

a. **NFACC BOARD INPUT**

The process of identifying and determining a starting point for the Transportation Code was one that utilized a collaborative approach that started with presenting the *Environmental Scan* report to the NFACC board in June, 2017. The report was used to generate discussion from which general direction for key elements of the Code emerged. This direction was referenced in a subsequent industry focus group session that was held in September, 2017. Input from the focus group session was then shared with and affirmed by the NFACC board in December, 2017.

b. **FOCUS GROUP SESSION**

A focus group session of transporters, trainers, marketers, and other livestock/poultry stakeholders was held in Toronto on September 20, 2017. A key objective of the session was to collect feedback on important elements of the Code such as scope, Code sections and format, the Code review/development process, and usability of the Code by transporters. Participants were provided with a relatively high level overview of NFACC and the Code Process prior to the feedback portion of the session.

c. FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Focus group participants included those who had previously participated in NFACC species-specific Code Development Committees, as well as transporters and transporter group representatives who are regarded as industry leaders:

Transporter Representatives (On-Farm Codes)	Other Groups/Companies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dairy Cattle Code (NFACC, 2009)• Beef Cattle Code (NFACC, 2013)• Sheep Code (NFACC, 2013)• Pig Code (NFACC, 2014)• Hatching Eggs, Chickens, Turkeys, and Breeders (NFACC, 2016)• Pullets and Laying Hens (NFACC, 2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canadian Hatchery Federation (CHF)• Poultry Service Association (PSA)• Ontario Livestock Transporters’ Alliance (OLTA)• Canadian Livestock Transport (CLT)• Livestock Market Association of Canada (LMAC)• Luckhart Transport Limited (Sebringville, ON)

Focus group participants offered diverse expertise and experiences relative to livestock and poultry transportation. Collectively on the livestock side, transporters move purebred cattle (dairy and beef), beef/market cattle, veal calves/cattle, horses/meat horses, sheep and lambs, pigs/newly weaned piglets, and bison.

On the poultry side, focus group transporters are actively engaged in the movement of broilers, breeders (broiler and leghorn), laying hens, turkeys, and spent fowl. In addition, the movement of chicks and poults was represented by the Canadian Hatchery Federation, and poultry catching was represented by the Poultry Service Association.

The role that livestock markets and auctions play during the livestock transportation continuum was represented by the Livestock Market Association of Canada. Through a former OMAFRA employee, insights from the provincial animal welfare enforcement perspective were shared. In addition, driver training for the transportation of livestock and poultry was represented through Canadian Livestock Transport.

Part 5: Transportation Code of Practice

a. CODE SCOPE

As noted above, species-specific Codes of Practice, which reflect those aspects over which producers have control and/or responsibility, typically target producers as the primary users. As such, on-farm Codes exclude care of animals:

- while in transit;
- at auctions, sales yards and other intermediate points; and
- at processing/slaughter plants.

Given that the transport continuum is complex, it is important that the scope of the Transportation Code is clearly defined. While the NFACC board meetings and the focus group session were instrumental in advancing more clarity with respect to what will be included in the Code, there was an understanding that

more scope-related discussion may be warranted by the CDC. However, the decisions made during this phase of the project will provide strong direction to CDC members.

i. Transport Modes

In recognition that road is the primary mode of transport for agriculture animals in Canada and throughout North America, the NFACC board agreed at its meeting in June 2017 that the Transportation Code developed through NFACC will apply exclusively to animals that move on public roads and highways (as opposed to on-farm movements that may involve typical “road” vehicles, or animals moved by other modes of transport, such as rail or air). This approach is consistent with the existing Transportation Code of Practice (CARC, 2001), in which the *Introduction* explicitly states that the Code only covers transport of animals by road.

ii. Species

The Transportation Code of Practice will be limited to species of animals for which a national Code of Practice for on-farm Care and Handling exists, as follows:

National Codes of Practice for On-Farm Care		
• Beef Cattle	• Farmed Fox	• Pigs
• Bison	• Farmed Mink	• Pullets and Layers
• Dairy Cattle	• Goats	• Rabbits
• Equine	• Hatching Eggs, Breeders,	• Sheep
• Farmed Deer	Chickens, and Turkeys	• Veal Cattle

In addition, there was clear consensus by both NFACC board members and focus group participants that the Transportation Code will apply regardless of whether animals are transported for commercial or non-commercial purposes.

iii. Vehicle Size/Type

The NFACC board and the focus group participants discussed options regarding if and how the scope of the Transportation Code should be defined by the size of vehicles used to transport animals. On the recommendation of the focus group, it was agreed that any farm animal covered by an on-farm Code that is transported on a public road or highway, regardless of the size or type of vehicle used, will fall within the scope of the Transportation Code. Rationale for this rests with the fact that the Code is about humane transportation of animals, so the type of vehicle that they move in is irrelevant. However, there is a general understanding that the CDC will also have input and may elect to refine the Code’s scope regarding vehicle size/type as discussions unfold.

iv. Intermediary/Transitional Points

Both the NFACC board and focus group participants felt strongly that intermediary or transitional points (i.e., points where animals are unloaded from vehicles and held for relatively short periods of time) must be included in the Transportation Code. In particular, animals off-loaded *on a temporary basis* at: assembly points/yards; auctions and sales yards; and feed, water, and rest stations are considered to be part of the transportation continuum. As a result, the Transportation Code will include a section that specifically covers care of livestock at intermediary or transitional points.

v. *Specialized Transport: Hatcheries*

Both the NFACC board and the focus group agreed that the movement of chicks and poults, which is primarily conducted by hatcheries, would be included in the Transportation Code. This approach was also supported by the Canadian Hatchery Federation. While drafting the Transportation Code, the CDC will have to be reminded that the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of [Hatching Eggs, Breeders, Chickens, and Turkeys](#)* (NFACC: 2016) explicitly states that the condition of chicks and poults during transport falls within the scope of that Code (which includes a section on *Hatcheries*). However, that statement followed one that referenced the current Transportation Code (CARC: 2001), which does not cover the transportation of chicks/poults by hatcheries. The requirements under section 2.6 (*Holding, Loading, and Transporting Chicks and Poults*) from NFACC's Meat Bird Code will be added to the *Environmental Scan Report* when it is updated in *Phase Two*.

b. CODE STRUCTURE

i. *On-Farm Codes*

The NFACC Code Development Process includes strong guidance for CDCs and Code Managers for on-farm Codes. In particular, the topics that must be covered in Codes are clearly spelled out and for the most part consistent between all on-farm Codes. With respect to transportation, each on-farm Code includes elements over which producers have control and/or responsibility; however, the actual on-road transportation of animals is considered to be out of scope in on-farm Codes. The existing structure used for on-farm Codes does not lend itself well to Codes that cover care of animals off-farm.

ii. *Transportation Code Structure and Layout*

The Transportation Code covers the care of animals during the transportation continuum rendering the existing NFACC Code Development Process for on-farm Codes somewhat lacking in terms of specific guidance. Consequently, both the structure (e.g., content; layout) of the Transportation Code, as well as a compatible development process were discussed by stakeholders during *Phase One* consultations. During this process, concepts relative to the number of Codes that need to be produced were deliberated in recognition that animal transport varies by species and/or category of species. As examples, the idea of developing two Codes that differentiated between livestock and poultry was contemplated, as was the thought of developing two Codes that differentiated between whether animals “walked on” the conveyance, or whether they were “carried on” in containers.

Ultimately, stakeholders agreed that a modular approach in one Code would better serve the industry. The focus group spent a considerable amount of time discussing the format of the Code in conjunction with how it may be used by industry, and in so doing, were able to build on concepts that were suggested at the session. The focus group recommended that the Code open with a section on *Common Elements* that apply to all species covered in the Code. That would be followed by a modular approach that splits the Code into three distinct categories:

- A. Livestock that walk onto conveyances;
- B. Livestock that is carried onto conveyances, typically in containers; and
- C. Poultry.

Each module would include species-specific topics, relevant appendices, and possibly references cited in each module. This would allow transporters and other users to *pull out* and/or print those sections of the Code that are important or relevant to their operations. Figure 1 illustrates the starting point for the structure for the Transportation Code. The CDC may elect to modify the structure as the process unfolds. However, this was seen to be a solid foundation by both focus group participants and NFACC board members on which to build.

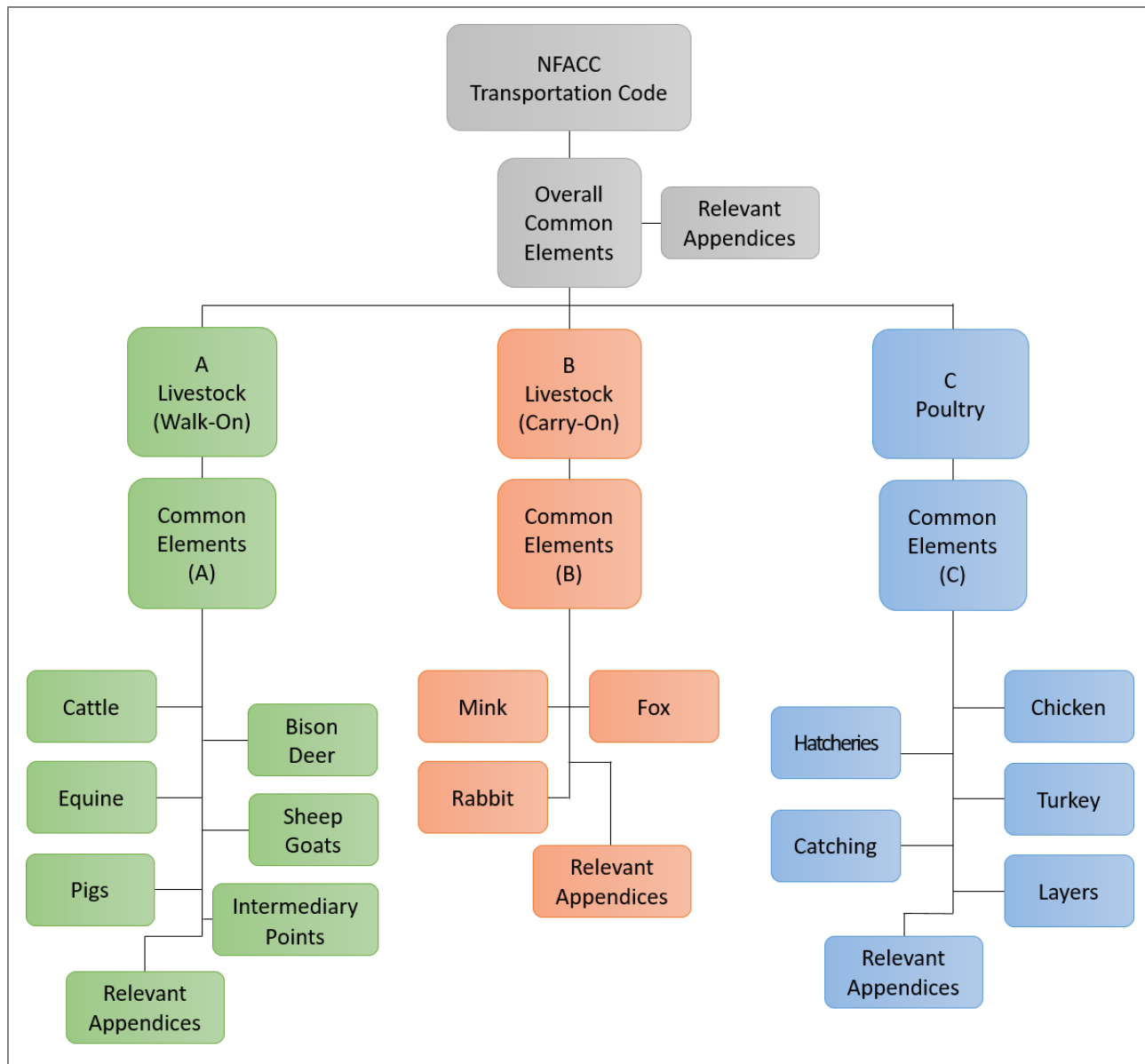


Figure 1: Structure of Transportation Code

iii. Common Elements

Both the focus group participants and NFACC board members agreed that a section in the Code that covers elements common to all species is warranted. The following list outlines the topics that should be covered under *Common Elements* (all species) with the understanding that the CDC may make changes during the development process.

Common Elements (All Species)

- Training/Competency of Drivers
 - Vehicles and Equipment
 - Cleanliness, Sanitation
 - Driving Practices
 - Care of Animals during Transport
 - Biosecurity for Carriers (Reference existing resources, as is done in On-Farm Codes)
 - Transfer of Responsibility at Loading and Unloading
 - On-Road Emergencies
-

In addition to a section that covers *Common Elements* for all species, stakeholders agreed that each *module* should include a section that covers common elements for animals in each of the specific Code categories (i.e., livestock (walk-on); livestock (carry-on); poultry). This was seen as a way of avoiding unnecessary duplication throughout each of the modules.

Topics for each of the module-specific common elements were not identified by the NFACC board or focus group participants, as it is expected that this will occur during the Code development process.

iv. *Species-Specific Elements*

Under the Code model that was advanced by stakeholders, there was agreement that each species-specific module include topics that were deemed important for animal welfare in the transportation continuum. The following list outlines the topics that should be covered under *Species-Specific* sections for each species with the understanding that the CDC may refine Code sections during the development process.

Species-Specific Elements

- Animal Behaviour
 - Loading Procedures/Equipment
 - Unloading Procedures/Equipment
 - Loading Densities
 - Conveyances and Containers (Condition; Maintenance)
 - Species-Specific Vulnerabilities (e.g., young, cull, or lactating animals)
 - Understanding *Fitness for Transport* requirements (Decision Trees)
 - Indications of Compromised/Unfit Condition (during transit)
 - Feed, Water, and Rest during Transport
 - Vehicle and/or Container Ventilation
 - Protection from Environmental Conditions
 - Care and Protection during Cold Weather
 - Care and Protection during Hot and/or Humid Weather
 - Care of Animals at Intermediary Points
 - Sub-Section under Livestock (Walk-On) Module
 - Transportation of Chicks and Poults from Hatcheries
 - Sub-Section under Poultry Module
 - Catching
 - Sub-Section under Poultry Module
-

c. **APPROACH AND PROCESS**

Given that the Transportation Code structure varies significantly from the typical structure used in on-farm Codes, the process needed to develop the Code will have to change, as well. The NFACC board and focus group participants reviewed Code development options once the Code structure was established. The process that was ultimately agreed to represents a significant departure from the process used to develop on-farm Codes in that there is a heavier up-front reliance on working groups (WG).

In addition, the use of an *Editing and Review Committee* was formalized and was tasked with reviewing WG content and compiling all of the sections into one draft Code prior to being reviewed by the CDC. Figure 2 illustrates the process for developing the Transportation Code, which is explained in more detail in the following sections.

i. *Working Groups*

As noted above, the working groups will be tasked with much of the up-front work of drafting Code content. It is expected that there will be a WG established for each species. In addition, working groups will have to be established for each of the *Common Element* sections in the Code, as well as other specialized sections such as *Care of Animals at Intermediary Points* and *Transportation of Chicks and Poults from Hatcheries*, as examples. The following list outlines the Working Groups that, at a minimum, will have to be established:

Species-Specific Working Groups		Common Elements Working Groups	Other Working Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cattle • Equine • Pigs • Sheep/Goats • Bison/Deer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mink/Fox/Rabbit • Chicken • Turkey • Layers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall (all species) • Livestock Walk-On • Livestock Carry-On • Poultry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermediary/Markets • Hatchery Transport (Chicks & Poults) • Catching (Poultry)

It is possible that there may be some overlap between WG memberships that may help with both resource management/allocation and meeting schedules.

While the bulk of the WG work will be done early in the process, the CDC may deem it necessary to form additional working groups later on (e.g., Glossary/Terminology). It is also conceivable that the CDC may elect to reconvene some of the original working groups later in the process to discuss concerns raised at the CDC table for which further work is necessary. Neither of these cases would likely require that the working groups meet face-to face, as these WG discussions can be handled by conference calls/virtual meetings.

Given the diverse list of topics that working groups are tasked with addressing, it is not possible to establish a template for WG membership. At this point it would seem that at a minimum each WG has to include at least one transporter representative. In addition, most if not all working groups should include Animal Welfare organization (e.g., CFHS) or Animal Welfare protection/enforcement representation (e.g., SPCA, provincial government).

Depending on the WG subject matter, other members may be warranted from organizations that represent researchers (SC), veterinarians (CVMA), Processors (CMC, CPEPC), or producers. Specific technical expertise may be added as needed, as well. For specialized working groups (see *Other Working Groups* above), participation would have to include representation from relevant groups (e.g., livestock markets, catchers, hatcheries). It is also expected that the federal government, either through CFIA or AAFC, would participate in working groups for most species.

Working group membership will be targeted to between five and seven members, with a cap of 10.

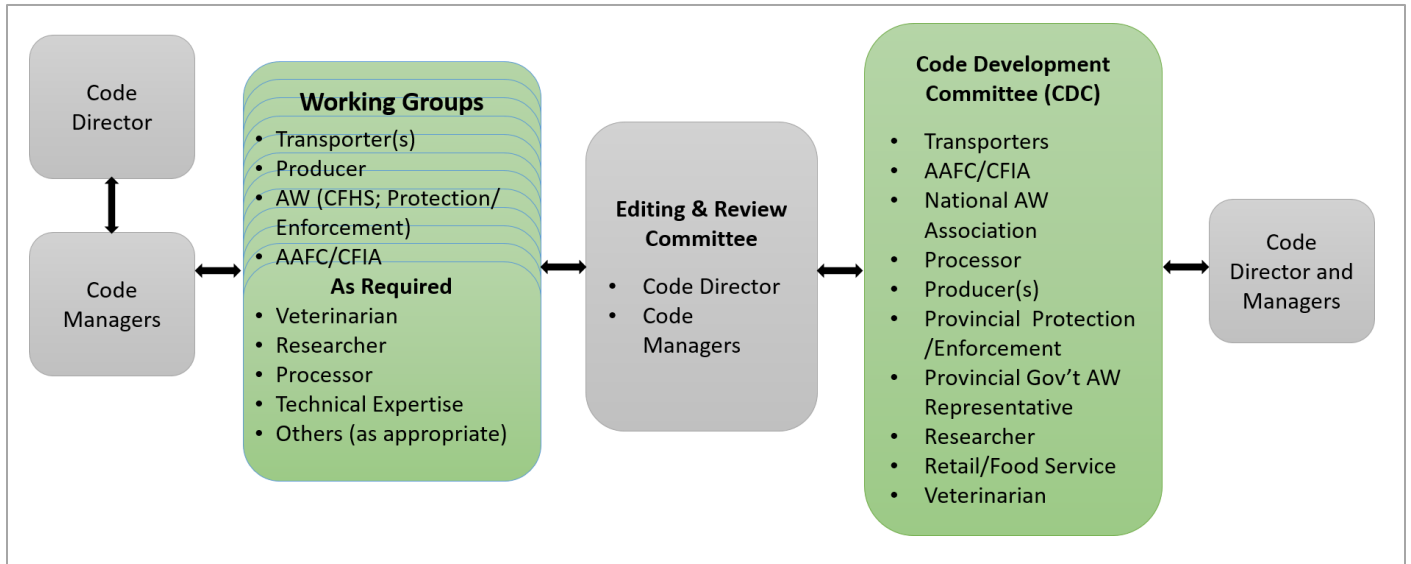


Figure 2: Transportation Code Development Process

ii. Code Development Committee

The Code Development Committee (CDC) will be comprised of a combination of members from working groups, national groups, and other stakeholder groups. The following list outlines the requisite participation on the CDC:

Participation on Code Development Committee	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transporters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multiple Species ▪ Varied Operations ▪ Varied Equipment and/or Containers • Intermediaries • Producer(s) • Veterinarian(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processor(s) • Researcher(s) • National AW Association(s) • Provincial Protection/Enforcement • Provincial Gov't AW Representative • AAFC/CFIA • Retail/Food Service

To balance resource needs between WG and CDC participation, NFACC will encourage each national group (e.g., CFHS, CVMA) to appoint one representative to the CDC, and have the CDC representative oversee and coordinate efforts by other individuals on the working groups. While more difficult to organize and manage, a similar approach may be warranted for producers so that the size of the CDC remains manageable, effective, and efficient. Focus group participants suggested that a national commodity group or perhaps the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) may be able to assume this role.

There may be a need for up to four transporters on the CDC (which is similar to the number of producers on most on-farm CDCs). Ultimately the goal will be to ensure that transporters are regionally diverse, and collectively have the requisite experience/knowledge on transporting all species covered in the Transportation Code, as well as various types of operations (e.g., livestock; poultry; short-haul; long-haul, international). As with all other Codes of Practice, the CDC will be tasked with final decisions on the Transportation Code using NFACC's consensus-driven and collaborative model.

iii. *Editing and Review Committee*

As noted above, an *Editing and Review Committee* (E&R Committee) will be established to serve as a conduit between the working groups and the CDC. *The E&R Committee* is tasked with sorting and compiling the WG input into a useable and orderly format for review by the CDC. This includes flagging inconsistencies or issues that require further review either by working groups or the CDC, as well as ensuring consistency in terminology, prose, syntax, and overall approach. The committee does not have the authority to change intent or meaning, or to make content-based decisions. The E&R Committee will be comprised of the *Code Director* and *Code Managers* (see below).

iv. *Code Director and Code Managers*

Given that there will likely be several working groups, there was also agreement that the scope of work is likely more than one Code Manager could handle effectively. As a result, it was agreed that multiple Code Managers would be needed, and that a *Code Director* would also be contracted to oversee and work with Code Managers. It is expected that Code Managers will provide support for working groups and will participate on the *E&R Committee* in addition to attending CDC meetings. The Code Director will support Code Managers, participate on the *E&R Committee*, and provide primary support for the CDC.

d. USING AND ACCESSING THE CODE

The focus group session proved particularly helpful in ascertaining how the final Transportation Code would be used and accessed.

i. *Code Distribution*

The focus group confirmed that the primary audiences for the Transportation Code are livestock and poultry transporters. The Code is viewed as a resource for management as opposed to drivers, and as such, it is likely that livestock and poultry transporters (i.e., carriers) would keep copies of the Transportation Code at all operational locations. It was deemed unlikely that the Code would be provided to all drivers, or kept in cabs of vehicles. However, focus group participants highlighted the need for elements of the Code to be re-packaged and used as extension resources.

CLT trainers indicated that they currently provide hard copies of the existing (CARC) Code of Practice to all trainees, and would like to continue to do so with the Transportation Code.

ii. *Code Publishing Format Options*

The focus group participants indicated that electronic and downloadable versions of the NFACC Transportation Code and extension materials was preferred over hard copies. The electronic versions need to include tools that allow users to search for key words along with hyperlinks from the Table of Contents. In addition, hyperlinks to other sections in the document (e.g., tables, appendices, Code sections, glossary, etc.) would also be helpful.

While production in hard-copy format is less of a priority, the group recognized that there will be a need for hard copies to be available for livestock and poultry transporters (management), intermediaries, driver trainers, and enforcement personnel. Producers were identified as secondary users who may be interested in obtaining hard copies of the Transportation Code.