

CPRC Update – April 2012

CPRC held its Annual General Meeting March 23, 2012 and this is a good time to provide an update on some of our activities, programs and initiatives over the past year.

Presentations to Government

CPRC made a presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture in November 2011 during their hearings on the Research and Innovation section of the *Growing Forward 2 Program* that takes effect in April 2013. We emphasized the value of research to the poultry industry and the importance of the participation of the Government of Canada in those activities. The federal government provides research funding through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), Natural Science and Engineering Research Council and other government agencies, but they also have highly-qualified, professional researchers on staff who conduct poultry research projects. Five of the 12 projects in the present Poultry Research Cluster (see below) are conducted by scientists with AAFC and Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The federal government also has a significant communications system that can disseminate research and innovation information to the poultry industry.

CPRC made a presentation to the Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture and Forestry in February 2012 on the importance of research and innovation to agriculture. We included much of the information from the presentation to the House Standing Committee on the value of research but also provided examples of some CPRC research projects that have had real impacts on the sector. Of the 22 completed projects to date, some have moved on to further research directed toward adoption by industry stakeholders, while the results of eight projects have been, or are being, adopted by farmers, processors and input suppliers.

Poultry Research Cluster

The poultry research cluster, co-funded with AAFC, PIC and provincial governments and funding organizations, has entered its final year and preliminary results have already benefited the industry. The cluster approach does not replace single projects but it does have some positive characteristics that make it a strong research tool. A cluster is a science strategy that brings together multidisciplinary teams, or “clusters” of scientists, to solve complex problems and to create synergies in research efforts. It is a way to make the most of available resources and supports a strong business case for investing in Canadian poultry research.

The present Poultry Research Cluster consists of 12 projects bringing together seven different universities and research organizations and 28 scientists. Research focus for the cluster has been on Food Safety and Quality (e.g.: vaccine development, avian influenza, *necrotic enteritis*) and Poultry Welfare and Behaviour (leg and bone structure, toe-clipping of turkeys, feeding strategies for breeders). Preliminary results for some projects have been featured in previous updates and are available on our website in the Research Results section.

National Poultry Research Strategy

The draft National Poultry Research Strategy is presently being reviewed and discussed by the poultry production sector, after which it will be made available to other industry stakeholders for comment. This document is very important to both our industry and CPRC as it identifies the issues that are important to poultry producers and their industry partners and it will establish CPRC’s agenda for the next several years.

CPRC Evaluation Project

CPRC has been in existence for just over a decade and approved its first research funding in 2003. The CPRC Board decided that it was a good time to review CPRC’s research funding and processes to try and determine our level of effectiveness and efficiency. The information on the eight projects that have been, or are being, adopted by industry that were included in the Senate Standing Committee presentation was from the preliminary information generated during the review of research funding.

Some other preliminary information from the evaluation includes:

- Since 2005, when the present system was refined, Letters of Intent have been reviewed, assessed and funding approved within 3 months of the deadline for receiving them from researchers. More than half have been approved within two months. However, the time needed to complete the review and approval has lengthened in recent years, partly because of the increasing number of proposals received.
- Of the 22 completed projects to date, 14 percent were completed on or before the target completion date established by the funding agreement. Half the completed projects were completed within three months of the target date and almost three-quarters within six months of target date. Research project timelines frequently change as challenges develop in processes and gathering data. CPRC has a system in place to identify delayed project completion so we can react accordingly.

More information on the results of CPRC's evaluation will be available in coming months.

The membership of the CPRC consists of Chicken Farmers of Canada, Canadian Hatching Egg Producers, Turkey Farmers of Canada, Egg Farmers of Canada and the Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors' Council. CPRC's mission is to address its members' needs through dynamic leadership in the creation and implementation of programs for poultry research in Canada, which may also include societal concerns. CPRC's contact information is available at www.cp-rc.ca.