





Animal welfare



*Thinking about tomorrow
means seeing to the
proper care and health
of farm animals to ensure
the sustainability of
the agrifood business
and protect public health.*





Animal welfare

For Olymel, the humane treatment of animals is a fundamental value. As part of our Policy on Animal Welfare adopted in 2012, we require that our employees and suppliers treat farm animals in a manner consistent with the latest codes of practice. The health and welfare of animals, which is directly related to human health and the strength of the agrifood business, includes the prevention and management of disease, the adoption of appropriate methods of farming and the prevention of suffering.

Priority one: Improve practices related to the care and handling of animals, from the farm to the slaughtering facility.

JUDICIOUS USE OF ANTIBIOTICS

Olymel's mission is to offer consumers high-quality, healthy products. With this view, the health of farm animals assumes tremendous importance. We recognize the need to resort to the use of antibiotics to prevent or treat disease, but we advocate their judicious use as recommended by leading experts. This is why we've committed to an undertaking whose long-term goal is to restrict the use of antibiotics to therapeutic uses only.

Research. We take part in different research projects with the Université de Montréal's Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Saint-Hyacinthe on the reduction or elimination of antibiotics in the raising of livestock, while ensuring food safety and maintaining affordability for consumers. We're also partners with the NSERC Industrial Research Chair in metabolic activity and the functionality of bioprotective lactic cultures (METABIOLAC), whose work may lead to solutions other than the use of antibiotics in animal production.

Limiting the use of antibiotics. Our responsible supply initiative aims to prohibit antibiotics as a means of promoting growth and to limit their use in disease prevention. In 2016, we took a position against the use of antibiotics to promote growth and continued to seek the end of the use of Category 1 antibiotics in both preventive and therapeutic uses, as these antibiotics are classified as critical in human medicine.

Antibiotic-free animal husbandry. Since the summer of 2016, we've been able to offer consumers poultry products coming from chickens and turkeys that were raised without the use of antibiotics.

FREE STALLS FOR GESTATING SOWS

Over the past few years, the confinement of gestating sows in stalls has become a serious subject of debate. Since 2012, we've committed ourselves to the use of stalls that allow free movement of sows. However, since the replacement of cages with a housing system that

allows sows free movement entails major changes, we've established a 10-year period ending in 2022 by which time 100% of the hogs slaughtered in our facilities will be born in open-housing facilities.

Supplier follow-up. We're in constant communication with all Olymel suppliers to keep apprised of their situation and plans for converting their farms to open-housing installations.

Fermes Boréales. In 2016, Olymel inaugurated its first group sow barn at Fugèreville in Témiscamingue, kicking off a piglet production model that meets the latest standards for animal welfare. Concentrated in the Témiscamingue region, this project will ultimately involve three complexes with five buildings each containing 2,360 sows in open housing.

PREVENTION OF SUFFERING

A leader in the slaughter of hogs and poultry, Olymel does everything in its power to improve animal comfort and reduce stress during transportation and handling.

CO₂ anaesthetization. In 2011, the Unidindon plant at Saint-Jean-Baptiste transformed its slaughtering facilities with the installation of equipment that anaesthetizes turkeys using CO₂ gas prior to hanging, which reduces bruising and stress in animals. During the 2012-2016 period, we evaluated the impact and cost of this method in order to extend it to all of our hog and poultry slaughtering facilities. This commitment will require an investment of \$20 million.

Notable improvements. Over the past five years, we've put a number of measures in place to help reduce injuries and improve animal comfort. Some of these initiatives have also contributed to an improvement in staff working conditions and the safety of the catching teams.

- Installation of devices to help facilitate the transfer of birds into trailers (wider doors, decks and safety rings)
- Installation of retractable roofs on trailers to protect animals from rain and wind and the addition of temperature and ventilation sensors to help reduce temperature fluctuations
- Training on the reception and handling of animals upon their arrival at the plant
- Addition of doors and heating systems to holding areas in poultry slaughtering facilities
- Development of trailers with hydraulic floors to reduce stress in piglets during transport (Fermes Boréales)

ACTION PLAN

- Progressively reduce the use of antibiotics for preventive purposes by limiting this activity to Category III and IV antimicrobial agents only.
- Increase our supply of hogs and poultry raised without the use of antibiotics.
- Secure a supply of hogs that originates exclusively from open-housing facilities by 2022.
- Open four other group sow barns by 2019.
- Introduce CO₂ anaesthetization in hog slaughtering facilities by 2019 and poultry slaughtering facilities by 2020. As well, implement a transportation system suited to this method.
- Begin trials for new stress-reducing trailers for piglets and the conversion of the OlySky fleet.





Priority two: Ensure that producers, suppliers and staff comply with codes governing best practices.

FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION

In 2015, we regrouped all of our animal welfare resources under a single structure headed by a veterinarian reporting to the Vice-President, Food Safety and Technical Services, who is also a veterinarian. The consolidation of this team, whose members include six veterinarians and four PAACO-certified employees, enables improved supervision of animal treatment and ensures the uniform application of practices in all of our operations, whether on the farm, in transit or in our slaughtering facilities.

CERTIFICATION

For a long time, we've required our producers to abide by the established regulations and codes of practice in their industry. To ensure that our suppliers and staff members also follow strict requirements, we obligate them to acquire recognized certification in animal welfare.

TQA and CLT certification. In 2016, all transporters were required to be certified through the TQA (Transport Quality Assurance) program in the pork sector or the CLT (Canadian Livestock Transport) program in the poultry sector.

Furthermore, following the acquisition of pig farms in Western Canada in 2013, we've implemented TQA certification programs supplementary to CQA-ACA certification by the Canadian Pork Council. By the end of 2016, the majority of our personnel had taken the training and the process continues among newly hired staff.

AUDITS

Any act that may adversely affect animal welfare or inflict unnecessary suffering is subject to a zero-tolerance policy. That's why we're working to bolster monitoring on farms and in slaughtering facilities.

"See it, Stop it" program for hogs. Since 2015, we've been organizing awareness-raising activities and training sessions to help pork producers implement this program. This Center for Food Integrity initiative helps staff understand their role in protecting animals and lets them know what to do if they witness abuse, negligence, mistreatment or incorrect handling.

Poultry regulations. Over the past few years, we've pursued our collaboration with national associations for poultry production and processing so that national regulations can be updated and frequent external verification, accompanied by corrective measures, is implemented among producers.

Monitoring in slaughtering facilities. In order to observe handling activities and support training, surveillance cameras were installed in all poultry slaughtering facilities in 2015.

Also in 2015, we launched a third-party video monitoring pilot project in our Red Deer and Vallée-Jonction hog slaughtering facilities. If it proves effective, this continuous surveillance, which allows immediate intervention in cases of mistreatment, should be extended to all our hog slaughtering facilities.

ACTION PLAN

- Develop and implement a structured audit program for producers and transporters.
- Periodically renew CQA-ACA certification for our hog-producing farms.
- Introduce third-party video surveillance in our slaughtering facilities.