

A&W Takes Leadership Position to Elevate Broiler Chicken Welfare

Vancouver, March 10, 2017 -- A&W Food Services of Canada Inc. (A&W), a leader in animal welfare in Canada, today committed to the adoption of even higher animal welfare standards for farm-raised broiler chickens.

These changes are based on the company's philosophy of continuous improvement and ongoing evaluation of the humane treatment of animals. A&W works with farmers, industry and animal welfare experts to ensure animals are treated humanely throughout their lives. The company's animal welfare standards consistently exceed industry guidelines.

A&W is the only fast food restaurant in Canada that serves chicken raised without the use of antibiotics and fed a grain based diet without animal by-products. Chickens in Canada are not raised with hormones or steroids. Raising chicken without antibiotics means that all of A&W's farmers have to ensure they employ the very best practices in managing every aspect of care for their chickens.

"We want to continuously raise the bar in animal welfare to ensure animals are treated with respect. Today, we have elevated our standards to include some new ones. It all adds up to a better life," says Susan Senecal, President and Chief Operating Officer at A&W Canada.

Enriched Environments

Today, A&W works with farmers to ensure chickens are humanely raised in large barns with ample access to fresh air, food and water. Lighting, air quality and cleanliness are monitored and clean litter is provided for every flock.

New requirements beginning now:

- Introduction of physical enhancements that best allow for natural bird behaviour, while preserving an antibiotic-free environment.
- Ensure a minimum of six hours of darkness in the barn so chickens can rest better at night.

Flock Health

A flock health care plan and qualified veterinary care is currently required at each of A&W's supplier farms to maintain flock health, which is actively monitored.

A&W uses breeds of birds that can thrive in the barns with optimal health. These birds are raised to a weight best for maintaining mobility and leg and foot health. The company understands that the University of Guelph is undertaking a study to determine whether there may be breeds of chickens better suited for Canadian farms. A&W looks forward to the results of this study.

Room to Roam

Today, all of A&W's farmers work to ensure that the birds have ample room to roam, with the majority of barns operating at a density well below the industry requirement, providing lots of space to range.

New requirement beginning now:

A&W will ensure that all farmers maintain barn density levels that meet or exceed the standard set out in the Global Animal Partnership Step Level 2.

Humane Euthanasia

A&W currently has stringent standards for the humane handling of birds for euthanasia and has already begun working with its suppliers to adopt Controlled Atmosphere Stunning. This process reduces the individual handling of the birds. The company has committed to a complete conversion to this enhanced method as quickly as possible and no later than the end of 2022.

Third Party Verification

All A&W suppliers are currently required to have annual third party audits by qualified Professional Animal Auditors to ensure compliance to A&W's standards.

About A&W

A&W Food Services of Canada Inc., home of Canada's best-tasting burger[†], is 100 per cent Canadian owned and is one of the strongest brand names in the Canadian foodservice industry. A&W is the nation's second largest hamburger restaurant company with more than 860 locations coast-to-coast. A&W Restaurants feature famous trade-marked menu items such as The Burger Family[®], Chubby Chicken[®], and A&W Root Beer[®].

©2016 A&W Trade Marks Limited Partnership

[†] 2016 BrandSpark International Best Restaurant Awards