



TURKEY FARMERS OF ONTARIO

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Turkey Farmers of Ontario Changes Policy to Accommodate Organic Turkey Farmer Certification

November 19, 2009, Kitchener -- The Turkey Farmers of Ontario (The TFO) today announced they have made policy changes to ensure organic turkey farmers can achieve organic certification while maintaining high standards that provide for high quality, safe and tasty Ontario turkey.

A condition related to outdoor access has been accommodated for organic turkey farmers in the province to ensure compliance with the Canadian Organic Standards. In May 2008, and at the request of industry stakeholders, the TFO implemented a policy which required turkeys to be grown under a solid roof and have walls of either solid or mesh construction. This policy was put in place to mitigate the risk of the spread of Avian Influenza being transferred through the wild bird population. The outdoor access standards set by the Canadian Organic Standards were inconsistent with this policy.

The Organic Council of Ontario approached the Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to request the TFO policy be changed. TFO met with the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission, the Ministry and other stakeholders and agreed to create a policy specific to organic turkey production similar to those of the Chicken Farmers of Canada and other provincial policies. There have been criteria put in place that will be required for organically-farmed turkeys. This will ensure high quality safety and health standards are met, consistent with the outcomes that are delivered when turkeys are raised free range indoors in biosecure barns.

“The TFO is supportive of all Ontario turkey production and the marketing of those products to consumers,” says Ingrid DeVisser, Chair of the TFO. “Our emphasis is to work with our members to ensure we produce safe and healthy turkey for our consumers.”

Turkey Farmers of Ontario is a farmer run organization consisting of 191 turkey farmers and representing approximately 40% of Canadian production.

For further information, please contact:

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