

BC SPCA leads the way to certify humanely raised farm animals

Certified farms are inspected annually and 30 per cent of them are randomly audited each year to ensure program standards are met. Food produced on qualified farms bears a special label identifying it as SPCA certified.

The SPCA program was inspired by Britain's Freedom Food venture and aims to promote the humane treatment of farm animals. Participation in the program is voluntary.

The SPCA Certified labeling program has so far established standards for the treatment of pigs, chickens, beef and dairy cattle. Sheep and turkeys will be added to the list at some future date.

Under the program, the raising of animals must be done in accordance with principles known around the world as the Five Freedoms: Freedom from hunger and thirst; Freedom from discomfort; Freedom from pain injury or disease; Freedom from distress; and Freedom to express behaviours that promote well-being.

The latter half of 2004 saw significant progress for the SPCA Certified Program with the completion of revisions to our Operations Manual, the development of a policy for Parallel Production, and the appointment of an independent Review Panel. Positive changes to the BC specialty chicken licensing program are also in motion.

In 2005, we plan to increase our presence considerably at the retail level. We will be designing "shelf-talkers" to be displayed beside SPCA Certified products. These displays will draw attention to our products and inform shoppers about the meaning of SPCA Certified. We also plan to hold several in-store food demonstrations that will showcase the SPCA Certified products sold in prominent retail outlets.

In 2005 the BC SPCA plans to devote more resources to marketing; please let us know where you would like to see SPCA Certified advertised.

If you would like to support the Farm Animal Welfare work of the BC SPCA, please contact Geoff Urton, Farm Animal Coordinator at the BC SPCA Administration Centre:

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