



September 2, 2022

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

RE: Avian Flu and Hunter-Harvested Waterfowl Entering the USA

Dear Minister Steven Guilbeault:

The Canadian Federation of Outfitter Associations (CFOA) would like to take this opportunity to express its deep concern regarding the unclear and impractical border restrictions implemented by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Agency (APHIS) in an attempt to address the spread of avian flu.

The APHIS Import Alerts point to the Primary Control Zones (PCZ) established by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). PCZs reflect a radius around select farms that are actively being decontaminated for avian flu outbreaks. The PCZs will continue to change as farms are decontaminated and new outbreaks are identified. In the most recent APHIS Import Alert dated August 24, 2022, three Canadian PCZs are identified.

Despite the wording of the APHIS Import Alerts, which are specific to the PCZs, APHIS has indicated that their intent is to restrict all *unprocessed* hunter-harvested waterfowl from import into the United States (US). APHIS' definition of "processed" means cooked to an internal temperature of 74C or having a "thoroughly cooked appearance." However, APHIS's requirements conflict with the standards of the United States Fish and Wildlife Services' (USFWS) under the *Migratory Birds Treaty Act*, which requires that all hunter-harvested migratory birds entering the United States have a fully feathered wing attached. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) has indicated that, given the confusion between the various US agencies, all hunter-harvested waterfowl will be denied importation at the border.

While we understand the concern regarding avian flu for domestic livestock and the impacts to public safety, the attention on hunter-harvested waterfowl is misplaced: these birds are migratory and entering the US from Canada throughout the fall and congregating in flocks of thousands on their southern migrations. The impacts of imported hunter-harvested waterfowl destined for personal consumption is insignificant in comparison.

The APHIS measures also ignore the fact that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) already has robust measures in place to limit all birds and associated products/byproducts from exiting PCZs. These small and ever-changing control areas should not shut down the entire Canadian waterfowl outfitting industry and its annual contribution of millions of dollars to the Canadian economy.

While this could be viewed as a matter of US policy affecting US residents, the impacts to Canadian businesses will be significant in the form of cancelled business and revenue, which adds new industry impacts after two years of COVID-19 border restrictions. We are also concerned that the confusion

around the requirements will lead to unnecessary wastage of meat that could have been easily avoided with clearer and more practical policies.

The CFOA urges the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) to engage with its counterparts in the US government and oppose the APHIS restrictions, asking the US for logical processes that mirror the existing Canadian requirements for US hunter-harvested birds entering Canada.

If you have any questions, please call 418-877-5191 or email ddugre@fpq.com.

Sincerely,

Dominic Dugre
President, Canadian Federation of Outfitter Associations

cc. Gudie Hutchings, Minister of Rural Economic Development
Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture
Martha Williams, Director U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Chris Magnus, Commissioner, US Customs and Border Protection