1. **Why do we need a Code of Practice?**

All industries have standard practices which provide at a basic level, a social contract with customers. In animal agriculture, it’s critical to have a common understanding of acceptable animal care practices on Canadian farms. It is one way farmers demonstrate their commitment to the welfare of their animals.

A Code of Practice provides a means for farmers to be involved in setting a common set of standards, rather than have other players dictate production practices such as government, processors, retailers or others.

A Code of Practice provides a public rationale for why farmers do the things they do. Codes serve as a response for our customers.

2. **Why did the CPC request a revision now?**

A revision to the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals: Pigs* was long overdue. The first Code of Practice was finalized in 1984 and the second revision - our current Code - was completed in 1993. Codes are to be reviewed every five years and revised at a minimum of every 10 years. The current Code is 20 years old and at least 10 years past due for revision.

This revision was requested by the Canadian Pork Council’s Board of Directors in May 2009 and the process was underway late in 2010. Regular reviews and revisions ensure that the most recent research on welfare and animal care is reflected in the Code of Practice and they also help keep Codes current with industry practices and policies.

3. **Why is it not just producers that participate in the development process?**

A multi-stakeholder approach to developing Codes of Practice has a long history in Canada. It allows for a wide range of perspectives to be included, ensures reasoned and scientifically-informed debate and lends credibility to the process and the outcome throughout the value chain.

4. **What are the legal implications of the Code’s requirements and recommendations?**

Once finalized, it is likely that the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) Code of Practice will be viewed as the industry standard for the care and management of pigs. In any legal proceeding, industry standards - and therefore the Code - would be considered relevant. This question, however, is best answered in specific context by legal counsel.
5. **Why are there both requirements and recommendations?**

Requirements reflect a regulatory requirement or an industry-imposed expectation which outlines acceptable and unacceptable practices. Recommendations support the Code’s requirements, promote producer education, encourage continuous improvement and generally enhance welfare outcomes.

Using both requirements and recommendations makes the Codes clearer in terms of what must be done and what is put forward for consideration.

6. **How does the new Code link with the Animal Care Assessment (ACA)? Will the new Code requirements become part of CQA?**

The current animal care assessment is based on the 1993 Code. It is expected that once a new Code is published, the ACA will be revised to reflect the new requirements. The ACA will continue to be an integral component of the CQA program.

7. **Why force expensive changes on the industry now?**

The existing Code of Practice was long overdue for revision. Updating the Code is part of the industry’s due diligence to remain current and continue the commitment the industry has for animal welfare. The Code Development Committee considered the financial implications and in some cases phase-in periods to recognize the significant financial challenges producers face. It will also be critical to find means through the value chain and governments to assist in the adoption of the Code.

8. **Will we have to meet the requirements of the new Code?**

Producers are expected to meet the Code requirements.

9. **This seems to be driven more by activists than by producers. Are we allowing activists to set the agenda?**

The Canadian Pork Council (CPC) requested the Code of Practice be updated. The development of the Code is based on the most recent research on welfare, animal care and what is practically achievable - all within the context of a multi-stakeholder process, including producers. Following a multi-stakeholder approach to developing the Code provides for credibility of the final outcome. While a Code of Practice can serve effectively as a defense for industry practices, they are not created in response to challenges by activists.

10. **Who will pay for the cost of adopting the Code? Farmers have no money to make any changes so why do this now?**

Several key requirements in the proposed Code include phase-in periods to recognize the financial burden of implementation. But this will not be enough. Provincial and national hog producer associations will need to aggressively work with other segments of the value chain and government to find ways to help fund the adoption of the Code. Some of this work has already begun.
11. Why not let the market decide the sow stall issue?
Many producers remember when sow stalls were introduced to allow for reduced aggression between animals, better health and welfare. Many still promote having a choice for the future and where the market demands change, the market can pay for it.

On the other hand, sow stalls have been criticized for many years due to restriction of movement. Even the 1993 Code describes sow stalls as a contentious welfare issue.

We know from the science report that well-managed group housing can result in the same productive outcome as stalls and provide the benefit of freedom of movement.

Including the move to group sow housing in the proposed Code was driven by the recognition that freedom of movement is an important piece of the welfare puzzle.

12. We export more than 70% of Canadian production, a large proportion to countries that are mainly concerned about feeding themselves and animal welfare is a much lower priority. Why would we change all of our production to meet the demands of a relatively small proportion of our market?

Codes of Practice are developed based on what is good for the animals, achievable by producers and meets public expectations. The destination of the end product is not a consideration in Code of Practice development.

13. What’s the cost of conversion to open housing?
We know that to build new facilities with group housing costs less than or about the same as building a barn using sow stalls for all gestating animals. Conversion, however, is much more complicated. It will depend on the combination of systems that are chosen for group housing (floor type, group size, feeding system, etc.). Cost of conversion will vary widely.

14. What’s the benefit of keeping stalls for 35 days – why not eliminate them completely?
Research shows that stalls give sows time to recover their body condition after farrowing, allow for heat detection and pregnancy checking. Many vets also believe it is important to ensure implantation of the embryo before mixing sows in groups of animals. Mixing sows into groups at greater than or equal to 35 days after breeding results in less aggressive behaviour, lower eating order and more time spent resting compared to mixing in the week after breeding.

15. Why is such a long time line provided in the Code for elimination of sow stalls?
There are two reasons. First, to recognize that it is a significant financial undertaking for an industry already financially stressed, the phase-in period allows for appropriate financial planning. Secondly, many producers have limited experience with group housing. This timeline allows for appropriate decision making on the right combination of elements, learning and training.
16. Why are there requirements for minimum space allowances?
Producers have the best information on how space influences productivity – not academic researchers.

The experience of producers is important. So is current animal care research. That's why a multi-stakeholder approach to Code development is used. Research shows that performance of nursery, growing and finishing pigs starts to be negatively affected at space less than \( k=0.034 \). The Code includes tolerances to provide some flexibility to manage pig flow - an example of how producer input plays an important role in Code development.

17. What is the cost of pain control?

We do not have a firm number on the cost, but the potential range discussed by the Code Development Committee was considered modest.

18. Who can submit comments on the proposed Code?

Anyone interested in participating in the public comment period can submit their comments at www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/pigs.

19. What is the process for submitting comments?

The Canadian Pork Council and its members are encouraging anyone interested in the Code to submit comments. We are particularly encouraging producers to carefully review the text and submit comments. Please go to the National Farm Animal Care Council website (www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/pigs) anytime from June 1 - August 3, 2013. You will be asked to identify yourself and then each section of the Code will appear, with a comment box for your comments.

Comments will be reviewed by the Code Development Committee beginning in August and decisions taken on modifications to the Code.