

BRITISH COLUMBIA FARM INDUSTRY REVIEW BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF THE *NATURAL PRODUCTS MARKETING (BC) ACT* AND

THE PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA CHICKEN MARKETING
BOARD'S DECISION TO
REMOVE THE CATCHING COST FROM THE BC LIVE PRICE

January 10, 2025

British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board
BC Chicken Marketing Board Prior Approval Request on Removal of Catching Cost
January 10, 2025

Decision

1. Having conducted its own submission process and analysis, the BC Farm Industry Review Board (“BCFIRB”) does not approve the BC Chicken Marketing Board’s (“Chicken Board”) request to remove the catching cost from the BC live price for pricing period A-194¹.
2. BCFIRB directs the Chicken Board to:
 - a. Continue to implement the long-term pricing formula in accordance with the Decision², and
 - b. Continue to meet the monitoring and reporting obligations in paragraph 104 of the Decision³.

Introduction

3. On May 22, 2024, the BCFIRB supervisory panel⁴ issued its decision (“Decision”) following a supervisory review process (“Supervisory Review”) conducted pursuant to s. 7.1 of the *Natural Products Marketing (BC) Act* (“NPMA”) to address whether to prior approve the Chicken Board’s long-term chicken pricing recommendation (“Recommendation”).
4. In brief, on October 30, 2023, and after completing a lengthy chicken sector Supervisory Review that commenced in April of 2020, the Chicken Board recommended to BCFIRB that mainstream chicken be priced using a BC-made cost of production-based (“COP”) live price formula to account for reasonable returns to an efficient grower. Relying on factors like density, feed conversion rate updates, and annual volume adjustments, the formula aimed to encourage efficient chicken production in BC, which in turn would contribute to processor competitiveness. The Chicken Board proposed a six-period transition to allow stakeholders to adjust their operations and the Chicken Board to monitor impacts related to the new formula.
5. With respect to chicken catching costs, the Recommendation noted that BC and the Western provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba) historically included catching costs in their live price formulae whereas Ontario did not. The Recommendation acknowledged that the western chicken boards (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and British Columbia) had been engaging with processor associations over several years and had issued a November 14, 2022 letter informing them of an intention to remove catching costs from the live price formula by February 2025. That letter indicated the Chicken Board could not make a decision due to the ongoing Supervisory Review and would revisit the initiative upon completion of the Supervisory Review. A further January 2024 letter from the Western chicken boards noted that while the Chicken Board would not make a decision on catching costs due to the ongoing Supervisory Review, it was supportive of its removal in principle.

¹ A-194 commences on February 9, 2025.

² [2024 May 22. BCFIRB. In the Matter of the Natural Products Marketing \(BC\) Act and BC Chicken Marketing Board Final-Long Term Pricing Recommendation.](#)

³ [2024 May 22. BCFIRB. In the Matter of the Natural Products Marketing \(BC\) Act and BC Chicken Marketing Board Final-Long Term Pricing Recommendation.](#)

⁴ The supervisory panel was comprised of Al Sakalauskas, BCFIRB Vice Chair and Peter Donkers, BCFIRB Chair.

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6. The impact of removal of catching costs from the live price formula was not identified as an issue by BCFIRB in its Supervisory Review and the parties did not address the potential impact of removing catching costs in their submissions before BCFIRB.
7. In its Decision, the supervisory panel approved the Chicken Board's Recommendation and directed the transition to the new long-term formula commencing in period A-190⁵ with incremental increases to close the gap between the existing interim pricing formula and the COP-based live price formula. In effect, the Chicken Board would adjust the interim price by a percentage each period (16.67%, 33.33%, 50.00%, 66.67%, 83.33%, 100%) so that by period A-195⁶, it would be pricing at 100% of the new long-term formula.
8. On July 22, 2024, the Primary Poultry Processors Association ("PPPABC") filed a petition for judicial review of the Decision. That application has not yet been heard.
9. On October 11, 2024, the Chicken Board requested that BCFIRB prior approve its decision to remove the catching cost component from the live price formula (the "Request") effective period A-194 (February 9, 2025) stating in part:

The removal of catching costs from the live price reflects the consensus across Western provinces to align with the rest of Canada, where processors directly pay for catching and live haul services and is not included in the farmgate live price of chicken. This change, as supported by the Chicken Board and the Western Boards, ensures a cost-neutral transition that more accurately reflects farmgate prices, eliminates inconsistencies in live price comparisons, and clarifies the responsibility for contracting and paying catching crews directly with the processors which already exists.

This policy change has been under consultation since 2018, with industry stakeholders, including processors, growers, and the public having an opportunity to provide feedback. All Western Boards have given sufficient notice to their processors (letters sent November 2022 with a reminder in January 2024), and the implementation date of February 9, 2025, ensures that processors have time to make the necessary operational and pricing adjustments. The benefits of the removal of catching from the live price include the following:

- a. The Chicken Board has been requested to set the price of catching including several price increases over the last two years. In these cases, the Chicken Board was not privy to negotiations nor any transparent and verifiable data. This change supports the principle that pricing decisions should be based on transparent, verifiable, and defensible data, in line with the regulatory authority of the BCCMB under the British Columbia Chicken Marketing Scheme (1961). Absent that, having received no verifiable and transparent data on catching price, the Board should not set the catching price based on anecdote or partial information.
- b. Removal of catching from the live price will provide better comparison of live prices across the country without additional calculations.
- c. Catching services are already organised and paid for by the processors, and this further clarifies the existing relationships.

The Chicken Board had an open consultation period from September 13, 2024 to October 3, 2024. While the majority of feedback was positive, it was noted the PPPABC did not support the initiative, citing financial uncertainty and cost disadvantages, further risk on processors, and concern with respect to animal welfare. The Chicken Board notes there is no change at this time to the General Orders around transfer of care, and

⁵ Period A-190 commenced June 28, 2024.

⁶ Period A-195 commences April 6, 2025.

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all rules around animal care remain intact. Simply removing the catching price from the live price has no change to a grower's responsibility around animal care.

10. On December 13, 2024, BCFIRB received a letter from the Chicken Board, requesting BCFIRB to hold the decision on its Request in abeyance until further notice to accommodate a meeting between the PPPABC and the Chicken Board on January 7, 2025 to discuss the removal of the catching costs. PPPABC confirmed with BCFIRB on the same day that they were supportive of this request.
11. The Chicken Board indicated that following the January 7, 2025 meeting, the Chicken Board would advise BCFIRB whether its request for prior approval stands, is withdrawn, or is to be amended.
12. On December 19, 2024, BCFIRB issued a letter agreeing to the abeyance of my decision until after January 10, 2025. The letter also outlined as my appointment as Chair of BCFIRB was scheduled to end on December 31, 2024, that in my role as Chair I would remain seized of this matter, unless the Chicken Board withdraws its request.
13. On January 9, 2025, the Chicken Board notified BCFIRB that they had met with PPPABC, and that the Chicken Board considered the proposal provided by PPPABC. The Chicken Board notes they will discuss PPPABC's proposal with the Pricing and Production Advisory Committee (PPAC) for growers' awareness. However, the Chicken Board requested that BCFIRB proceed with releasing its decision on the Request.

Legal Framework

14. Under section 7.1(1) of the Natural Products Marketing (BC) Act (NPMA), BCFIRB has general supervision over all marketing boards or commissions established under this Act.
15. Under section 7.1(2) of the NPMA, BCFIRB may exercise its powers under this section at any time, with or without a hearing, and in the manner it considers appropriate to the circumstances.

BCFIRB's Procedural History

16. In response to the Chicken Board's Request, and by letter dated November 6, 2024, BCFIRB established an industry submission process to support the evaluation of the Request. This process invited those organisations that participated in the Chicken Board's process; namely, the PPPABC and the BC Chicken Growers Association ("BCCGA"), to provide written submissions by November 20, 2024, and gave an opportunity for the Chicken Board to reply by November 27, 2024 on these two issues:
 - 1) What, if any, concerns are there with regards to the process followed by the Chicken Board in determining that the catching cost should be removed from the live price by A-194?
 - 2) What is the net effect of the removal of the catching cost from the live price, and does that accord with sound marketing policy?

Submissions Received

PPPABC

17. With respect to the Chicken Board's process, the PPPABC agrees it has attended many meetings over the years but maintains that removing catching costs from the long-term pricing formula exposes its members to financial risk and provides no material benefit to the industry. Its position has not changed and has been repeatedly dismissed by the Chicken Board. It argues the Chicken Board has lost its objectivity with respect to processor issues and the voice of processors is completely lost on the current Board given its structure. It says historically, there were processor members on the Chicken Board and those "processor representatives" met frequently with processors to gain a better understanding of the issues and represented the processor sector at the Board level. For the last three or more years, there has been no processor representation and, on that basis, argues the process is flawed.
18. On the substantive issue, PPPABC says the Chicken Board's request is misleading when it suggests the four Western provinces are aligned on this initiative as one province has recently committed to maintaining the catching cost in the live price in A-194 as discussions continue.
19. PPPABC also argues that processors have long standing contracts with several large customers that are tied to the regulated live price, which result in the price paid to processors fluctuating with the live price. Removing catching costs from the regulated price effectively lowers the regulated price that these contracts price off and would result in customers paying less while processor costs remain unchanged as they will be paying the catching cost directly. The PPPABC anticipates significant pushback from their customers on efforts to renegotiate these contracts due to the removal of catching costs from the regulated price.
20. PPPABC observes that the processing sector is under considerable financial strain due to inflation, federal pressure on grocers to keep prices down, and the recent increases to the BC live price resulting from the new long-term formula approved by BCFIRB. They suggest the Chicken Board is "hiding" behind the argument that it should not set catching costs without verifiable data, as various components of the new COP formula are based on models that do not contain real/actual data; PPPABC suggests there are options for developing an acceptable pricing mechanism. Further, PPPABC says the removal of the catching costs will not make live prices comparable across the country as suggested by the Chicken Board as there are various other differences (i.e., Avian Influenza (AI) insurance, modular loading levies). In summary, the Chicken Board's prioritizing of housekeeping benefits ahead of processor finances does not meet the criteria of sound marketing policy and does not balance the interests of industry stakeholders.

BCCGA

21. The BCCGA agrees the Chicken Board conducted a transparent, inclusive, and well-communicated process with all stakeholders. The industry consultation from September 13 to October 3, 2024, was fair and appropriate; the PPPABC and BCCGA participated and discussed dissenting views. Further, industry stakeholders had over two years notice to make market adjustments.
22. On the substantive issue of sound marketing policy, the BCCGA agrees the removal of catching costs from the long-term pricing formula enhances price comparability across provinces, clarifies processor responsibility for catching (while still noting the

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responsibilities of all parties for animal welfare), and ensures the Chicken Board focuses on setting prices it can regulate with transparency. The removal of catching costs from the formula aligns with the Western provinces 2022 agreement and incentivizes processors to optimize catching arrangements to enhance efficiency in the supply chain.

Chicken Board Reply Submission

23. In response to the PPPABC's process concerns, the Chicken Board clarifies that, pursuant to section 3 of the British Columbia Chicken Marketing Scheme ("Scheme"), the five-member Chicken Board is comprised of three Order-in-Council appointed members who are independent, knowledgeable about the industry and serve in the public interest, in addition to two elected producer members. The Chicken Board disputes that it has ever assigned a board member to advocate specifically for processor interests as board members do not represent segments of the value chain. On pricing decisions, the full board is involved to ensure a unified perspective.
24. The Chicken Board also points to the creation of its Joint Working Group within the Supervisory Review process⁷ which further ensured processor voices were heard on pricing issues. Further, it says the Western chicken boards have held multiple joint meetings with processors before the Chicken Board decided to remove the catching cost from the long-term pricing formula.
25. On the substantive issues, the Chicken Board acknowledges that since submitting their Request to BCFIRB on October 11, 2024, Saskatchewan has advised it intends to delay removing the catching cost from its pricing formula beyond A-194, but the Chicken Board's understanding is that Saskatchewan plans to proceed in due course with the implementation. Manitoba has already signed an agreement to proceed, and Alberta has indicated its intent to do so. Given the foregoing, the Chicken Board argues BC would be the only province with the catching cost included in the live price formula if this Request is not approved.
26. With respect to the argument that removal of the catching cost will expose PPPABC members to financial risk, the Chicken Board acknowledges the risk faced across the value chain, but notes the absence of transparent, verifiable data to support PPPABC's assertions. Furthermore, it argues Eastern provinces have long operated without catching costs in their live price, and many BC processors operate nationally (and in these same markets with the same customers). Given customer acceptance of a regulated live price without catching costs in Eastern and Central Canada, the Chicken Board argues PPPABC's claim that their Western customers will not recognize catching costs if they are not part of the regulated price is unrealistic. Further, it says the PPPABC has been given more than two years notice to initiate discussions with its customers, but it has failed to do so. The Chicken Board also notes an additional transition period was suggested at the September PPAC meeting and was dismissed by the processor representatives in attendance.
27. Finally, the Chicken Board says the suggestion that it has been setting catching costs in the BC live price for decades without verifiable data is incorrect. Historically, grower and processor members of PPAC negotiated multi-period pricing agreements which included provisions for chick servicing and catching costs.

⁷ The Chicken Board transitioned to its Joint Working Group in March 2023.

Discussion

Request Process

28. Had the Chicken Board made its decision to remove catching costs from the long-term pricing formula in the ordinary course, I find the process it followed was appropriate to the nature of the decision being made. Prior to making its decision, the Chicken Board gave ample notice of its intention to support its Western counterparts in removing catching costs from their respective live-price formulae, consistent with Central and Eastern Canada. The Western boards engaged with their processor associations through joint meetings and more recently, the Chicken Board engaged in a series of meetings with the PPPABC and BCCGA to allow for opposing views to be discussed.
29. The PPPABC's response seems to be in the nature of an allegation of bias on the part of the Chicken Board and its appointed members by saying the Chicken Board has lost its objectivity on processor issues and no longer has a "processor representative" on the Board.
30. In my view, the PPPABC's submissions about the Chicken Board's structure generally, which were not directed at the conduct of any appointed member specifically, fall well short of the evidentiary foundation necessary to support a reasonable apprehension of bias allegation. The composition of the Chicken Board is established by the Scheme. The Lieutenant Governor in Council is responsible for appointing independent members to the Chicken Board following a merit-based process.
31. Further, the Chicken Board has explained its rationale for removing catching costs was in part to manage catching costs consistently with Central and Eastern Canada. Given that some BC processors are national and participate in these same markets and have successfully negotiated contracts without catching costs being part of the regulated live price, the Chicken Board was not persuaded by the PPPABC's arguments that there would be challenges negotiating with customers. The fact that the Chicken Board was not persuaded by the PPPABC's arguments does not mean the Chicken Board was biased against processor interests.
32. However, the reality remains that the Chicken Board's Request falls during the transition period directed in BCFIRB's Decision as part of the creation of new long-term pricing formula. I discuss the significance of the timing of the Request below.

Analysis

33. The Chicken Board argues that removing catching costs from the long-term pricing formula accords with sound marketing policy for several reasons. The new long-term pricing formula reflects the principle that pricing decisions should be based on transparent, verifiable, and defensible data, in line with the regulatory authority of the Chicken Board under the Scheme. However, the Chicken Board states that it has been requested to set the catching costs component in the formula without being privy to negotiations or any transparent and verifiable data to support those costs. The Chicken Board maintains that having received no verifiable and transparent data on catching costs, it should not set the catching cost based on anecdotal or partial information. The Chicken Board says that removing catching costs from the live price provides better comparison of live prices across the country without the need for additional calculations and reflects the reality that processors organise and pay for catching services.

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34. The PPPABC points to the financial risk associated with removing catching costs from the regulated price which effectively lowers the regulated price that some of their customers' contracts price off. They anticipate significant pushback on efforts to renegotiate these contracts, which will only exacerbate the current strain on the processing sector due to inflation, federal pressure on grocery prices, and the recent price increases due to the new long-term pricing formula. They dismiss the suggestion that the Chicken Board should not set price without verifiable data, as various components of the COP formula are in fact based on models, not actual data and suggest an acceptable pricing mechanism could be developed. Further, the removal of the catching costs will also not make live prices comparable across the country as other differences exist. In addition, there is no unanimity among Western provinces as Saskatchewan has indicated it will be delaying its decision on catching costs until after A-194.
35. In my view and in principle, removal of catching costs from the long-term pricing formula accords with sound marketing policy. Catching is organised by processors who either employ or enter contracts with catching crews. As such, processors are privy to the actual costs associated with catching and are in a position to maximize efficiencies to the benefit of the whole supply chain. Historically, processors have simplified catching costs to a number (currently \$0.0500/kg) which the Chicken Board would incorporate into the posted price per kilogram live weight chicken. The Chicken Board says, in the absence of verifiable data, it has no way of knowing whether the catching cost submitted is accurate.
36. The PPPABC's primary argument to this change is the anticipated pushback from its customers whose contracts price off the regulated live price (which includes the catching cost component) and their anticipated unwillingness to acknowledge catching costs as a direct cost incurred by processors. I note the PPPABC did not respond to the Chicken Board's observation that, BC processors operating in Central and Eastern Canada already negotiate contracts based on live price formulae that do not incorporate catching costs and did not offer any evidence of its efforts to engage with customers or explain how things are different in BC.
37. PPPABC's suggestion that the Chicken Board is hiding behind the need for "verifiable data", pointing to the current long-term pricing formula which it says is based on models that do not use verifiable data, is unhelpful and contradicts the supervisory panel's finding at paragraph 97 of the Decision:

The Chicken Board's COP formula is based on structured producer surveys and third-party verification and uses transparent and verifiable mechanisms to provide a reasonable return to chicken growers, while accounting for processor competitiveness.
38. PPPABC also suggests the removal of catching costs will not promote consistency with the rest of Canada given the various other differences in how other provinces address such costs as AI insurance and modular loading levies. In my view, the fact that differences exist among provincial counterparts does not mean that where possible, efforts should not be made to ensure that long-term pricing formulae are consistent and based on transparent, verifiable data. Further, while PPPABC's suggests that options exist for developing an acceptable pricing mechanism for catching costs, I note that no such options were identified by PPPABC in this process. It is also unclear why a pricing mechanism would be necessary given that processors are privy to the actual costs of catching.

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39. Finally, I note that it is my understanding that in Saskatchewan and Alberta an agreement between the regulator and the processors has been reached on the removal of catching costs from their live prices at pricing periods in future but not at this time. This development appears to recognize that despite the perceived benefits associated with removing catching costs from live prices, challenges exist around the timing of this change.

Timing of Request

40. BCFIRB has most recently been engaged with the BC chicken industry on pricing related matters since 2019 when a BCFIRB appeal panel directed the Chicken Board to implement its long-term pricing formula by period A-161.⁸ Former BCFIRB Vice Chair Al Sakalauskas and I participated in that appeal and when the Chicken Board was not able to deliver its long-term pricing formula on the timeline contemplated, BCFIRB transferred the chicken pricing related issues to its supervisory jurisdiction. Mr. Sakalauskas and I presided over the multi-year Supervisory Review culminating in the release of the Decision.⁹
41. In coming to our Decision, one of our concerns was being satisfied that the long-term pricing formula was based on verifiable and transparent data. At paragraph 72, we concluded:
72. The Panel is satisfied that the data determined through the Chicken Board's COP development process, which included review by both Serecon and MNP, as well as CRMC and JWG consultation, is transparent and verifiable. PPPABC's criticisms, which are not supported by verifiable data, about numbers being overstated or outdated are insufficient to rebut the validity and defensibility of the Chicken Board's approach or warrant further delay in implementation. Further, and understanding that processors own a significant portion of broiler quota in BC, the Panel finds that PPPABC had ample opportunities to provide their own verifiable grower data and analysis to support their view that numbers were in fact overstated.
42. In the Chicken Board moving to a new long-term pricing formula, we were also concerned that there be an appropriate transition period to allow for monitoring and reporting on the impacts of the new formula. The Decision stated:
90. As demonstrated by the effectiveness of the gradual implementation of the Commission's long-term pricing formula, the Panel is of the view that a phased in implementation approach is in the best interest of all stakeholders. An appropriate adjustment period and transition will allow the Chicken Board to monitor the impacts of its new COP formula and resolve issues if and when they arise.
91. However, the Panel does not agree with the Chicken Board's proposed condensed phase-in of 100% COP by A-192 (essentially a three-period phase in) to account for the time that has passed since the Chicken Board made its Recommendation in October 2023. The Panel's view remains that it is both strategic and effective to provide a six-allocation period phase-in of the COP, as originally recommended by the Chicken Board,

⁸ Period A-161 commenced January 19, 2020.

⁹ BCFIRB Member Harveen Thauli participated in the Supervisory Review until the end of her term in July 2023.

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to ensure industry stability and to give stakeholders time to adjust to the new pricing formula.

92. The Chicken Board indicates it initially intends to do survey updates for the COP formula inputs every three years and then move to every five years to align with the Commission's COP formula updates. The Chicken Board will start with an update in 2025 using data from 2024, and continue to update the following COP inputs every allocation period: chick cost, feed price, utilities, fuel and oil, repairs and maintenance, bedding, insurance, depreciation of equipment, taxes, depreciation and investment of barns, investment cost for land, labour, administrative and office costs, and operating interest costs. The Chicken Board will update the feed conversion rate annually.
93. The Panel agrees that the updates proposed by the Chicken Board to the COP formula are extensive and sufficient. These updates and adjustments enhance the accuracy, flexibility, and ability of the formula to adapt to changing costs. This approach accords with sound marketing policy by having a dynamic model that is transparent and fair...
43. I review these passages not so much for what was said but rather for what was not said. Despite the Chicken Board's position in its Request that catching costs are not supported by verifiable data, catching costs did not form part of the discussion in the Supervisory Review even though its purpose was to consider, scrutinize and refine all manner of inputs to ensure the new pricing formula delivered a reasonable return to growers while accounting for processor competitiveness. It is not clear to me based on the submissions received in the Supervisory Review, why the impact of removing catching costs was not more of an issue in that process especially considering the 2022 notice to processors.
44. However, after a four-year Supervisory Review, the conclusion of which resulted in a Decision to approve a long-term pricing formula and included a transition period to that new regime, I question whether the timing of this Request should be addressed during a transition period to the long-term formula, even though the issue was well known to the parties at the time.
45. I find the current situation similar to 2020, when the supervisory panel was faced with requests to change the interim formula given the extended nature of the Supervisory Review. In response, the supervisory panel imposed a moratorium on any pricing formula changes without prior approval to support industry stability and orderly marketing while the longer-term discussions were underway and to address the uncertainty of how long a resolution would take.¹⁰
46. This same reasoning is applicable where after four years of Supervisory Review, BCFIRB determined that a new long-term pricing formula rolled out over six periods and supported by ongoing monitoring, accorded with sound marketing policy. Upon making that Decision, my expectation was that, to ensure industry stability and to give stakeholders time to adjust to the new pricing formula, any adjustments to factors of the long-term formula would happen at the end of the transition period and would be responsive to issues raised by the Chicken Board's ongoing monitoring. It was not my expectation, having determined that the new long-term pricing formula accorded with sound marketing policy, that in short order we would be asked to change factors of that formula to address an issue which all

¹⁰ British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board, Chicken Sector Interim Pricing Decision July 3, 2020 at para. 43.

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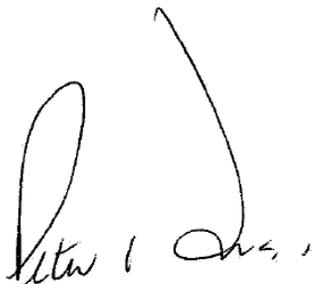
parties were aware of during the Supervisory Review, but for reasons known only to them, did not address.

47. For the above reasons, and despite the merits of the decision to remove catching costs from the long-term pricing formula which I discussed above, the Decision needs to be respected. I do not agree that it is consistent with sound marketing policy to change the long-term pricing formula during the currency of the transition period and before the monitoring and reporting obligations contemplated in paragraph 104 of the Decision have been fulfilled.
48. BCFIRB's expectation is that the Chicken Board will continue to implement the long-term pricing formula in accordance with the Decision. The Chicken Board must meet the monitoring and reporting obligations in paragraph 104 of the Decision, following which it will need to consider whether there is a need to amend the formula on the grounds articulated in this Request or some other grounds. If the Chicken Board decides that the formula needs to be amended beyond the implementation period, it will need to follow a process appropriate to the nature of the decision being made at that time.

Decision

49. Having conducted its own submission process and analysis, BCFIRB does not approve the Chicken Board's request to remove the catching cost from the BC live price for pricing period A-194¹¹.
50. BCFIRB directs the Chicken Board to:
 - a. Continue to implement the long-term pricing formula in accordance with the Decision, and
 - b. Continue to meet the monitoring and reporting obligations in paragraph 104 of the Decision.

Dated at Victoria, British Columbia, this 10th day of January, 2025.



Peter Donkers, Chair and Presiding Member

¹¹ A-194 commences on February 9, 2025.