



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION No.: **421-02036**

BY: **MR. ERSKINE-SMITH (BEACHES-EAST YORK)**

DATE: **FEBRUARY 7, 2018**

Print Name of Signatory: **The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, PC, MP**

Response by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Cruelty to animals

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

The Government of Canada takes the humane treatment of animals seriously. This petition asks about animal welfare on-farm, during transport and at slaughter.

The primary regulatory responsibility for animals on-farm rests with provincial governments. Each of the provinces has laws in place relating to animal welfare requirements, as well as the authority for enforcement. All those involved in raising and handling farmed animals have a duty to ensure that the animals in their care are treated humanely.

The federal government enforces humane transport regulations across Canada as well as regulations pertaining to the humane slaughter of animals in federally inspected plants.

The Government is responding to long-standing requests to strengthen the animal transport provisions in Part XII of the *Health of Animals Regulations*. The proposed amendments, which were published in the *Canada Gazette*, Part I, are the product of ten years of consultation with industry, advocacy groups, and the public, aimed at improving animal welfare

and reducing the risk of animal suffering during transportation. The proposal seeks to establish clear, science-based requirements that better reflect the needs of animals.

The public comment phase for these amendments ended on February 16, 2017. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is compiling, reviewing, and considering all comments received through this process prior to publication of the final amendments to the Regulations in the *Canada Gazette*, Part II.

In planning its inspection activities related to animal transport, the CFIA takes into account risk, compliance data, and other factors, in order to efficiently identify non-compliance. While reviewing video records of animals being transported is not generally used by the CFIA to identify non-compliance, the approach can be considered in specific situations.

With regard to slaughter, the CFIA verifies that animals slaughtered for human consumption are treated humanely during this process.

The emphasis in Canada's approach is to design slaughter facilities to prevent animal welfare concerns and to enable humane unloading, handling, housing, stunning, and bleeding of the animals. Each of these activities must be done in a way that minimizes distress and pain, and they must be directly monitored by plant employees.

The CFIA provides operators of federally registered slaughter establishments with clear guidance, which specifies that they must have a formal written animal welfare plan.

CFIA inspectors conduct hands-on, on-site inspection to verify that regulatory requirements for humane handling and slaughter are met, on an on-going basis. The inspectors can intervene if there are infractions and they can issue requests for corrective actions. In response to severe or repeated infractions, they can suspend or cancel an operator's licence to produce meat for human consumption.

The CFIA considers video surveillance to be complementary to the live, on-site monitoring that is currently required and carried out by trained employees as a part of the operator's animal welfare control program and verified by on-site CFIA inspection staff.

The Government of Canada's approach to humane treatment of animals is developed and determined using science and evidence, striking a balance between the results of available research, the needs of the animals, consumer demands, international expectations, and current industry practices.

The federal government also invests resources and works proactively with industry and other stakeholders to promote the humane care of farmed animals. The Government continues to support research and innovation, and has supported the development of Codes of Practice since 1980. The Codes are a critical part of Canada's efforts, as they are referenced in provincial regulations, are used by enforcement officers, and may also be used as a resource by the courts. The Codes also form the basis for development of on-farm assessment programs for various species in Canada. These efforts are being coordinated by the National Farm Animal Care Council.