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# Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

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Chair: Mr. Kody Blois





## Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

• (1100)  
[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.)):** I call the meeting to order.

Colleagues, we're going to get started.

Welcome to meeting number 97 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

I'll start with a few reminders.

This committee meeting is taking place in a hybrid format. The proceedings will be made available via the House of Commons website. As you know, the webcast will always show the person speaking, rather than the entirety of the committee, and screenshots are not permitted.

Colleagues, pursuant to the order of reference of Wednesday, January 31, 2024, and the motion adopted by the committee on Thursday, February 8, 2024, the committee is resuming its consideration of Bill C-355, an act to prohibit the export by air of horses for slaughter and to make related amendments to certain acts.

We have four witnesses on today's panel, so I am going to be moving quickly, colleagues, and I will be very tight on the time. Usually I'm quite liberal, but I'll be a little conservative today, I guess.

From the Air Line Pilots Association, International, appearing by video conference, we have Captain Tim Perry. Thank you for being here, Mr. Perry.

From the Canadian Horse Defence Coalition, we have Sinikka Crosland, who is the president. Welcome.

From the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, we have Dr. Trevor Lawson. I believe he's a constituent of mine as well, so it's great to see you, Dr. Lawson.

From the Humane Society International/Canada, we have Ewa Demianowicz. We look forward to having your testimony.

You're joined by Dr. Nicholas Dodman, professor emeritus at Tufts University. He's joining us by video conference.

As you can see, colleagues, there are lots of witnesses and there will be great testimony here today.

I'd like to welcome Mr. MacDonald from Avalon, who's subbing in today on behalf of Mr. Drouin. We also have Mr. Dalton on behalf of Mr. Barlow.

Without further ado, I'm going to get right to it. We'll have five-minute opening remarks from each organization or witness.

Mr. Perry, from the Air Line Pilots Association, you have up to five minutes. It's over to you.

**Captain Tim Perry (President, ALPA Canada, Air Line Pilots Association, International):** Thank you very much, Chair.

Good morning. My name is Tim Perry. I am a professional pilot and have been for over 21 years. I'm a 737 captain at WestJet Airlines. I am currently the president of ALPA Canada, which is the Canadian division of the Air Line Pilots Association, International.

I am pleased to appear before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food today on behalf of our members in Canada regarding Bill C-355.

By way of a brief introduction, the Air Line Pilots Association is the world's largest airline pilot union and non-governmental safety organization. ALPA Canada represents 90% of the professional pilot workforce in Canada. They are employed by 22 airlines across the country.

ALPA provides critical services to its members, including airline safety, security, pilot assistance and labour representation.

I'd like to begin by stating that the primary responsibility of the pilot in command of an aircraft is the safe operation of that aircraft before takeoff, in flight and after landing.

ALPA Canada believes that Bill C-355 does not recognize this. As a result, it will negatively impact our members by putting an unnecessary and redundant obligation on them, which is accompanied by excessive penalties if in contravention of the proposed legislation.

Further, we maintain that it is improper to place any additional responsibilities on a pilot when the pilots' responsibilities are already clearly defined in the Canadian aviation regulations and the Aeronautics Act.

We also believe that all responsibilities relating to the required written declaration in the proposed legislation should be the sole responsibility of the chief officer of customs of the airport, as identified in the bill.

For the reasons stated above, ALPA Canada suggests that Bill C-355 be amended in the following ways.

In clause 4, under “Prohibitions” and “Copy of declaration”, we request that paragraph 4(2)(a), which states, “the pilot in command or the operator of the aircraft”, be removed in its entirety.

In subclause 4(3), “No departure without declaration”, paragraph 4(3)(b), which states, “for a person in charge of the aircraft to take the aircraft on its flight”, should also be removed.

We are happy to provide these comments to the clerk.

We maintain that paragraphs 4(2)(a) and 4(3)(b) are unnecessary and put additional responsibilities on the pilot, who should remain focused solely on the safety and the operation of the flight, and this should remain the case.

Before I conclude my remarks, I would also like to take the opportunity to state that it is always our expectation that when legislation or regulations are being considered specifically with respect to the aviation industry, our members and potentially to aviation safety, there should be outreach or consultation with our association. In this case, that did not occur.

Thank you very much. I'm happy to take your questions.

• (1105)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Captain Perry.

We'll now turn to the Canadian Horse Defence Coalition and Ms. Crosland. It's over to you for up to five minutes.

**Ms. Sinikka Crosland (President, Canadian Horse Defence Coalition):** Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the committee, for inviting me to appear before you today on behalf of the Canadian Horse Defence Coalition.

Horse welfare is a topic of great interest to me. I thank MP Tim Louis for introducing Bill C-355 to end the export of live horses by air for slaughter.

My own involvement with horses spans a period of 35 years, during which time my family and I have resided in rural areas of B.C. Currently, we own a hobby farm and sell our produce locally.

I have raised foals from the age of three months to seniorhood. Having conducted numerous horse rescues, I've gained experience in working with unhandled horses. I am fully acquainted with the flighty, sensitive nature of horses and their tendency to panic in unfamiliar situations. I also have knowledge of their predisposition to life-threatening health emergencies, such as colic, when there are disruptions to feeding routines or a lack of access to water.

CHDC was formed in 2004 and is a federally registered non-profit organization. I am CHDC's president and a founding director. Our mandate is to end the slaughter of horses in Canada as well as their export to other countries for the same purpose.

Live export by air for slaughter has been our main focus since we became aware of its existence in 2012. Many CHDC supporters and volunteers, as well as most of our board members, are horse owners with years of experience in handling and caring for horses.

Over the past decade, polls and petitions have convinced us that many Canadians are as appalled as we are by the treatment of horses in the course of air export for slaughter. We have studied ATIP

documents that detail deaths and injuries that have occurred to horses being air-shipped to slaughter.

One particularly egregious 2014 example involved a suffering horse breaking through a wooden crate and kicking a hole into the fuselage of the plane. The horse was dead on arrival.

On its website, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency states that it is aware of five horse deaths associated with live exports since 2013. If we go back one more year, we discover from ATIP documents that six horses died in 2012 and three in 2011. Numerous injuries associated with these horse exports have been documented over the years.

The live horse export industry must abide by International Air Transport Association—IATA—requirements. Of note is that these requirements were amended to suit the industry in 2019, as were the health of animals regulations, which effectively removed protections that the exported horses had.

We have heard an industry representative speaking against Bill C-355. Jennifer Woods is a past president and a current board member of IATA. She is also on the World Organisation for Animal Health's transport committee and is actively updating transport chapters there to better align with the industry's needs. Any protections the exported horses may have had through that organization, such as water having to be provided after six hours of travel, will likely cease to exist after the updates are finished.

This raises the question of what the fox is doing guarding the henhouse.

ATIP documents regarding a January 16, 2024, flight out of Edmonton show that flights are not always compliant with IATA live animal regulations. After loading, it was discovered that one of the crates was 264 kilograms overweight, but the horses were shipped in spite of the weight violation.

Horses destined for human consumption are often overfed to the point of obesity. They are not likely to be administered medications in the event of illness or injury. Drugs prohibited from entering the food chain include a common anti-inflammatory, phenylbutazone. This drug and numerous others are flagged by the CFIA and Japanese officials as prohibited in food animals. Therefore, horses selected for export may not receive the benefit of pain-relieving medications when they need them.

I'd like to touch briefly on speculation about horses running rampant in Canada if live air exports to slaughter are ended.

Similar claims occurred in the U.S. when the government defunded inspections of horse slaughter plants, with widespread stories of horse abandonment. I can tell you that the vast majority of these claims were debunked. I have evidence in the form of letters and documents in my files for anyone interested in viewing them. It's not impossible at all for Canada to absorb 12 to 13 draft horses into the horse community.

As a horse owner, I know that horses are grazers. Grazing is the natural way for them to consume the nutrients they need during the course of the day. In fact, a horse can easily spend 10 to 17 hours per day grazing. Draft horses can drink up to 20 gallons of water per day.

The sport horse industry recognizes the unique needs of horses and accommodates these requirements by providing them with hay and fluids during transport. This kind of care reduces the risk of painful and deadly colic and other ailments due to food and water deprivation.

Further, a racing industry brief posted online states, "We consider the practice of exporting horses by air for slaughter to be abhorrent".

The industry that transports horses overseas for slaughter ignores the well-being, safety and comfort of these animals. Their suffering is overlooked for the sake of profit. It's time to raise the bar for horses and to bring their welfare into line with what Canadians expect.

• (1110)

I thank you again and I look forward to your questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We'll now turn to Dr. Lawson for up to five minutes. It's over to you, please.

**Dr. Trevor Lawson (President, Canadian Veterinary Medical Association):** Good morning.

I'm Dr. Trevor Lawson, the president of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. I thank you for the invitation to appear here today at the committee.

The CVMA represents over 25,000 veterinarians and registered veterinary technicians across Canada who are devoted to caring for both small and large animal species. As animal health professionals, we review all the animal health and welfare issues by focusing on evidence-based criteria, without specie or animal use biases.

Following an evidence-based review and consultation with subject matter experts and experienced observers of the entire farm-to-market process, it is the view of the CVMA that the horses referred to in Bill C-355 have a good quality of life on their farms of origin. Horses purpose-bred for this market are bred and raised naturally in a herd environment and are provided with all of the essentials for a good life.

Regarding the transport in question, it was determined that these animals did not experience worse welfare or outcomes than any other food animal. In fact, the available data suggests better outcomes in general.

With respect to all modes of transport, the federal health of animals regulations amendments to part XII, "Transport of Animals", were updated and enacted in February 2020. These amended regulations have several added protections for these horses in question, including floor and head space requirements and strict container requirements, as per the International Air Transport Association's live animals regulations, which are the global standard on the best practices regarding air transport of animals.

Canada has high standards for the on-farm care of horses, mandated by provincial legislation and the National Farm Animal Care Council equine code of practice. Transport-related protections are embedded in the federal health of animals regulations. Canada is one of the countries where animals destined for the export market can live good lives on their farms of origin and receive the necessary care and protections during transport.

Regarding the current proposed bill, Bill C-355, the CVMA is cognizant of and is concerned that the potential for disruptions to the current supply of Canadian horses for this market could lead to unintended negative consequences. These include the significantly decreased value of the horses in the supply chain and the concomitant potential decrease in incentivized high welfare standards.

As well, animal welfare would be at risk due to the current lack of slaughter capacity to process these horses and the resultant uncertain final disposition of these animals.

Furthermore, the cessation of this market in Canada could result in the sourcing of horses from countries where on-farm welfare and transportation are not prioritized as they are in Canada. As such, this could lead to significant harm to these horses.

The CVMA holds that food animals be treated humanely throughout their lives, from birth to death, including during transport. According to our evidence-based review, it is the position of the CVMA that the horses transported for this market are not at any greater welfare risk than any other transported animals. In fact, there may be a higher standard of care overall, due to their high value.

The CVMA holds that while there is no immediate welfare risk to these horses, improvements to the existing transport process, as well as publicly funded support for animal transport-related research and innovations, will improve animal welfare in this and all food animal transports.

In order to address potential risks, the CVMA encourages the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to dedicate the resources needed to ensure adequate inspection and enforcement of all regulatory requirements to mitigate animal transport welfare-related risks during transport and at destination.

To conclude, the CVMA does not support Bill C-355 as written, as the current transport conditions do not lead to noteworthy animal welfare concerns. The bill would lead to unintended negative animal welfare consequences that have not been fully considered. The CVMA supports continued research, improvements and innovations in all areas related to food animal transport.

Thank you.

• (1115)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Dr. Lawson.

We'll now turn to our final witness, Ms. Demianowicz, from Humane Society International/Canada.

We'll go over to you for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Ewa Demianowicz (Senior Campaign Manager, Humane Society International/Canada):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning. My name is Ewa Demianowicz, and I'm the campaign manager for Humane Society International/Canada. I would have liked to speak to you in French today, but since most members of this committee understand English, I'll continue my presentation in that language.

[*English*]

Humane Society International is a leading animal protection group with offices around the world. We represent supporters across the country who are opposed to the live export of horses by air for slaughter. Nearly 50,000 people have responded to our action alert on this issue. Just yesterday, new poll results show that seven out of 10 Canadians oppose the export of live horses by air for slaughter. Canadians and people around the world are watching and supporting Bill C-355.

Transportation is one of the most stressful experiences that animals are forced to endure. Limiting its duration and committing to the highest animal welfare standards possible during transport should be the objective of any country that takes the issue of animal welfare seriously. The best available scientific evidence shows that animals should not be transported for more than eight hours without a break, as is the case in the European Union for many species, including horses.

Currently, total time of this complex journey to Japan is significantly above this duration. Once the horses leave the country, the clock is reset, and Canadian authority no longer applies. At the destination in Japan, Canada has no authority on how these horses are treated. This is an extremely long and exhausting journey for them without food, water or rest. The stressful conditions in which these horses are transported have caused injury and death. Flying these highly sensitive and easily agitated animals in small wooden crates, with multiple horses per crate, without a veterinary equine expert

on board, without access to food and water and without rest is inhumane.

Approximately 47,000 horses have already endured this horrible journey to Japan in the exhausting and difficult conditions that have been described in front of this committee, only to be served as a luxury dish.

We have the opportunity to put an end to this practice and prevent the suffering of thousands more horses by passing Bill C-355.

I will now let my colleague, Dr. Nicholas Dodman from the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association, speak to you.

**Dr. Nicholas Dodman (Professor Emeritus, Tufts University, Humane Society International/Canada):** My name is Dr. Nicholas Dodman. I'm a veterinarian, board-certified in veterinary anaesthesia and as a behaviourist. I'm experienced in equine anaesthesia, analgesia and behaviour. I've worked with thousands of horses over the course of my career. I retired from Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine in 2016 as professor emeritus after 25 years on the faculty.

I'm here today to shed light on a practice that has remained largely in the shadows of our consciousness: the shipping of horses by air for slaughter in remote locations such as Japan. As a veterinarian and animal behaviourist, it's my solemn duty to bring attention to the inherent disadvantages and ethical concerns surrounding the long-distance air transportation of horses.

The issues with such stressful transportations are multiple horses housed together in a single crate; horses with no training or prior experience of air travel; horses not accompanied en route or monitored by, preferably, an equine specialist; plus 24 hours or more of transport without food, water, or rest.

First, let us acknowledge the innate nature of the horse. These magnificent creatures are not merely commodities; they are sentient beings with complex emotional and physical needs. Placing them in a confined and stressful environment in an aircraft goes against their very essence. That is why measures must be taken to ensure their safety and well-being.

The transportation we are discussing today ignores the principal needs of horses. To confine them in a crate and subject them to the noise, vibration and turbulence of air travel is to inflict upon them a level of stress and discomfort that is both unnecessary and inhumane. Moreover, the logistics of shipping horses by air pose significant risks to their health and well-being. Unlike other livestock, horses are inherently flighty and easily scared.

The stress of the plane's motion and the noise inside the aircraft can lead to shipping fever and colic. Shipping fever causes respiratory distress, fever and dehydration. Furthermore, the close proximity of multiple horses in a confined space, four to a crate, increases the risk of injury. Unfamiliar horses may not be compatible and should not travel together in close contact, with three to four horses in a single crate that has no divisions. Extreme care must be taken when flying horses by air, which is not the case with the type of transportation we are discussing today.

In conclusion, the practice of shipping horses by air for slaughter from Canada to Japan is not only ethically questionable, but is also fraught with practical concerns. As stewards of the animal kingdom, it is incumbent upon us to seek alternatives that prioritize the health, safety and dignity of horses, ensuring a future in which they are treated with the respect and compassion they so rightly deserve.

Thank you.

• (1120)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Dr. Dodman.

We'll now move to questions, colleagues.

I'm going to start with Mr. Steinley. I will be tight on time, so you have up to six minutes and no more, please.

**Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Thank you very much.

Captain Perry, you gave a bit of your argument about why the airline pilots are against this piece of legislation at the end of your comments. Could you verify that there were no consultations with the Air Line Pilots Association by the sponsor of this bill? When did you first hear about this bill? Could you please expand on that?

**Capt Tim Perry:** I'd have to look at exactly when we were first notified. I can let you know in writing, sir. However, I can confirm that the airline pilots were not consulted for this bill. I think this aspect of the bill reflects that.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Thank you very much. If you could respond in writing, I would appreciate that, and the committee would appreciate that information.

I'll move on to the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association.

How many veterinarians do you represent? As you said, you do not support this bill as written. Do most people in your membership support this position? I'm assuming they do, as you're the representative for the veterinarians.

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association represents the interests of 15,000 veterinarians across Canada and internationally.

As to how we represent our membership, we rely strictly on the science behind the subject at hand. What that indicates to us is that the welfare of horses shipped by air is often superior to what we see with other food animals, so it does not represent a pressing inherent risk at this point.

We're certainly also representing the fact that animal welfare is a standard that doesn't stand still, so we would suggest there is al-

ways work to do on improving transport of farm animals, and that work is something we very much support.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Thank you very much.

We heard here again the false claim that horses transported by air for slaughter are significantly worse off than horses that travel by air for other reasons. Can you either confirm or deny this claim, please?

• (1125)

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** I'm not able to confirm that this is the case. I think the data speaks for itself, which is that horses that are shipped for export for food have a very good standard. There have been very few reports. I think some older data was addressed by other testimony.

I would suggest that the fact that the older data does not stand true today is suggestive that we've made improvements over time to ensure the welfare of animals that are being exported. That would be consistent with the health of animals regulations, which were updated in February 2020.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Of the 8,000 veterinarians you represent, many would be large-animal specialists. We have had a few small-animal experts claim—one even worked at an aquarium for several years—that the horses are being mistreated. As you represent very many large-animal veterinarians, could you please expand on the fact that although this legislation, as written, is not going to increase the safety of air transportation for horses and that although the regulations in place could be made better, the regulations as they are now are probably some of the best regulations for air travel for horses in the world?

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** Yes, I think I've tried to address that in my testimony.

If we look at the standards that are laid out in the health of animals regulations, we see that air transport for these horses is well within the standards and in fact very much below the maximum allowable duration of 28 hours, with typical trips being between 10 and 12 hours. That is quite common.

I believe that the ultimate reality is that the horses, from the time they're born on farm, have a very good quality of life. We haven't seen data that would suggest that these horses are any worse off than any horse travelling by air.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** I'd like to get into that next.

These horses do actually have a good quality of life. We had someone who raises these horses come to the committee and testify about how much they care for these horses on-farm and how they are well taken care of. We continue to hear false claims from other witnesses about the mistreatment of these horses on-farm and to their final destination.

As a veterinarian, like probably many veterinarians within the 8,000, you've been on the farms to see how well these horses are treated and how they're cared for. Do you think there's any difference between how horses are treated for transportation to their final destination in Japan and how other horses have been treated on farms? I think one of the false bases that people are presenting here time and again is that these horses are treated differently while they're being raised on their farms.

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** Thank you for the question.

Personally, I cannot speak to how the horses are cared for in Japan, although I believe Jennifer Woods has testified to committee regarding that aspect, having first-hand experience. What I can offer is that I have 20 years of working with horses and cattle in the food animals sector and with horses on the pleasure horse side.

I also had the opportunity to tour feed yards in Alberta a number of years ago, where these horses were being purpose-bred and were being raised for export to Japan. I can tell you that during my time there, I saw very little that was concerning from an animal welfare perspective. I would suggest that many of the horses were receiving exceptional care, care that would be comparable to the normal standard that I would apply to client horses.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Thank you very much, and thank you for your first-hand experience in your evidence-based presentation.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Steinley.

We will now move to Mr. Carr for up to six minutes.

**Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Lawson, can you please provide for us in detail your understanding of the protocols that are in place to ensure the welfare of a horse, beginning at the stage with which it arrives in Japan to the point at which it is slaughtered in Japan? Can you provide for us in detail your understanding of the protocols in place to ensure horse welfare at those stages of the transportation process?

Thank you.

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** As I've stated, I have not visited Japan to see the handling facilities. I've received second-hand information from individuals who have been there. It is described to be at a very high level.

I think we would understand that culturally, the Japanese have a—

**Mr. Ben Carr:** I'm sorry to interject, Mr. Lawson. Can you please elaborate? You say at a "high level" and "second-hand" knowledge. What does that look like? What have you heard from people about that protocol in Japan?

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** Well, only, I think, in very broad strokes, that the animals are well cared for and that the farms where they're held are quite close to the airport, so there's a very limited transport distance following their arrival in Japan.

• (1130)

**Mr. Ben Carr:** Is the proximity of the horse to the airport in Japan the basis through which you feel comfortable establishing

that the welfare of the horse is taken into due consideration once arriving in Japan?

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** I believe it's part of the picture. There's not a long transport after a long trip, so that is very helpful.

The conditions that have been described and shared with us regarding the Japanese experience would be, I think, very equivalent to, or better than, what we're seeing here on Canadian soil.

**Mr. Ben Carr:** Mr. Lawson, what are those conditions beyond the proximity of the airport?

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** Basically, being well fed and having spacious pens and the ability to move. It's satisfying the five freedoms of animal welfare. I think that's the basis of the judgment that we don't believe there's a decline in care upon arrival in Japan.

**Mr. Ben Carr:** Do you have any evidence that you could submit to the committee that establishes that?

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** No, but I believe Jennifer Woods would be able to offer testimony or offer additional input to that, as she has travelled on these trips and witnessed the space.

**Mr. Ben Carr:** I understand that, Dr. Lawson, but you are here as the president of the CVMA, representing 8,000 vets, and you're telling us confidently, if I understand your position correctly, that you believe the welfare of horses is looked after in Japan, but you've come to this committee testimony without any evidence that you can provide to support that position.

I want to move on to the next question.

Are you here today, Dr. Lawson, stating the official position of vets in Canada in relation to Bill C-355?

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** I'm here to state the official position of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association that we cannot support this bill as written in its current form.

**Mr. Ben Carr:** Can I ask you this, Dr. Lawson? The CVMA states that it represents 8,000 vets across Canada. Your website very clearly states the process by which you conclude an official position. Your website, the organization you represent, states that it can take "months of work" and multiple iterations before a draft position is reached. Your approval process references that "All feedback on the draft position is taken into account when preparing a final draft...for CVMA Council's approval. Final draft versions of positions are reviewed by Council, and approved position statements are then posted on the CVMA website."

I don't see a position on the website. Can you tell us the internal process whereby you concluded that the CVMA, in that rigorous consultation process that you abide by, as listed on your website, took into consideration the views and perspectives of at least some of those 8,000?

I'll repeat that: What was the process by which you consulted your membership to derive the position that you've brought forward today?



**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** As stated in my testimony, we have done an evidence-based review and we have consulted with subject matter experts, including those on our animal welfare committee, to form this opinion.

**Mr. Ben Carr:** What was the process through which the 8,000 vets represented by your organization had an opportunity to provide input on the policy position that you've reached? Was that policy position drafted with respect to the overarching protocols and procedures that you have listed on your website? Was this months' worth of development and consultation, as you describe on the website?

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** I believe there's a little confusion regarding the position statement development and our testimony here today.

The position statement development that you have quoted from our website very much involves stakeholders on a regular basis, including membership. We have worked on this testimony here today exclusively through subject matter experts, our animal welfare committee and those with first-hand experience—including me—in visiting the feed yards in Alberta and seeing that part of the process.

**Mr. Ben Carr:** Dr. Lawson, can you speak to us about any of the animal welfare positions that have been taken by some of the 8,000 vets you represent?

Some of my colleagues across the way tried to diminish the legitimacy of those views by virtue of how often they're working with certain types of animals. However, you have heard, no doubt, some in your organization who have taken an opposing view. Can you share with us what some of the opposing viewpoints would be?

In other words, what are some of the reasons that you're hearing are of concern to vets in that group of 8,000 that are different from the position you've taken today?

**The Chair:** We're at time, but I'm going to give Dr. Lawson the opportunity to quickly reply in 30 to 45 seconds.

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think the concerns we've heard are often raised based on emotion and on the high value of a horse in our society. I think those concerns are fair and well understood, speaking especially as someone who practices with horses on a daily basis.

With that said, I do not believe that allows us to have our judgment of the facts to be skewed based on emotion. The position we have brought forward to committee today is based on the facts and on consultation with subject matter experts.

Thank you for your time.

• (1135)

**Mr. Ben Carr:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Dr. Lawson.

Thank you, Mr. Carr.

[Translation]

Mr. Perron, over to you for six minutes.

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

Mr. Chair, I want to start by apologizing to my colleagues and to the witnesses. At our last meeting, on Thursday, March 21, 2024, we ran out of time to finish adopting a motion I had given notice for. I checked with my colleagues before today's meeting, and, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion, after which we can continue the round of questions with the witnesses. Thank you.

That, given the lack of any response from Loblaw's and Walmart since we last communicated, and given that the negotiated adoption of the code of conduct seems seriously compromised, it is agreed that the committee will summon the members of the interim board of directors of the code of conduct, and the members of the steering committee for the negotiations on the code of conduct, to testify before the committee on the status of the situation, with a view to providing accurate information on the situation and better guiding the committee's potential recommendations to the government.

[English]

**The Chair:** We'll see.

Colleagues, I think Mr. Perron is referencing this motion that I think was distributed and shared. Do we have unanimous consent to adopt the motion that Mr. Perron has brought forward?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** There you go, Mr. Perron.

You have four and a half minutes left.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Demianowicz, I apologize again for the interruption.

I would like to hear your comments on animal transportation regulations. Several witnesses who appeared before the committee mentioned the poor conditions in which horses are transported for slaughter. However, we have heard conflicting testimony from veterinarians and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency indicating that transportation conditions are relatively decent. Of course, each of us must make up our own mind. Both sides have also shared images.

Do you think that stricter animal transportation regulations could be an alternative to Bill C-355?

**Ms. Ewa Demianowicz:** I don't think regulations are the way to go; that's been explored already. Consultations were held and amendments were made to the live animals regulations just a few years ago. Absolutely nothing has changed since then with regard to the transportation of horses to Japan for slaughter. On the contrary, as was mentioned earlier, it appears some regulatory requirements have been removed so the industry can continue to carry out this type of transportation without breaking the law.

Since this type of transportation began in the past decade, there have been clear violations of the regulations regarding separation of horses and head clearance in crates. Those two provisions were removed. We wonder why that is. The only reason appears to be that it helps the industry.

I don't think changing the regulations will improve conditions. We've already tried that, and it didn't work. Instead, transportation of horses should cease. That is the only way to improve the welfare of these horses.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Thank you very much.

Canada has several types of livestock operations that export live animals, and some people are concerned that ending this type of transportation for horses would set a precedent that would extend to the transportation of other animals. People have also suggested that this has more to do with the social status of the horse than with the actual transportation of the animals.

Could you comment on that?

**Ms. Ewa Demianowicz:** We hear that argument anytime new animal welfare legislation is on the table, so this is nothing new.

In the past, bills on similar issues have not made it to the committee stage. The reason Bill C-355 has made it this far is that it seeks only one thing: to end a specific practice. I don't see how this bill could allow anything else to be done. If other provisions are proposed in the future, they'll have to go through the same stages as Bill C-355 and may not make it this far.

Let's not avoid passing an important piece of legislation that will save horses' lives just because people are afraid that other legislative measures will be put forward in the future. I don't think that's how we function as a society.

• (1140)

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Some people are concerned that, once we set a precedent protecting horses specifically, the next step may be to ban the slaughter of horses.

Culturally, many people in the country value this animal more than other animals, but that doesn't mean people don't care about other animals. However, there are also cultural differences. For example, I know that people in French Canada, especially in Quebec, consume more horsemeat than people elsewhere, although it is consumed everywhere.

How would you respond to those concerns?

**Ms. Ewa Demianowicz:** I can assure you that, even in Quebec, the majority of Quebecers are opposed to the transportation of horses for slaughter in Japan.

One of the most common arguments the experts have made is that it isn't the symbolism of the horse that's at issue here, but the very specific nature of the horse, since they are prey animals. Horses are prone to panic and get agitated very easily. I think any objective expert can agree with that. Horses have very specific physiological and psychological needs. This is about the nature of the horse and the fact that it's different from other animals.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you both very much.

Mr. MacGregor, you now have the floor for six minutes.

[English]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Thank you very much, Chair.

I'd like to thank all of the witnesses for helping to guide this committee through our study of Bill C-355.

Captain Perry, I'd like to start with you.

I appreciate how clear you are with the amendments. You specifically mentioned the sections you would like to see removed.

Is it your position that if the committee follows through with those amendments, your organization is relatively ambivalent about the status of the bill? Do you support or oppose the bill if we proceed with the amendments?

**Capt Tim Perry:** I will remain silent on the merits of the bill, simply because I'm not personally an expert, nor is our organization.

However, our comments as presented in my testimony are very specific, and if those changes were made, we would have no further objections specific to the bill, notwithstanding what I just said about not being an organizational or personal expert.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you. I want to personally express thanks. I think that hearing from our airline pilots is very important. I think your testimony today is going to be very valuable to this committee in its consideration of the bill.

One thing I'm curious about is the aircraft type that is most often used for the transport of horses.

**Capt Tim Perry:** It's a wide range of aircraft, but the aircraft that are most commonly configured for cargo configuration in Canada that could accept live animals are Boeing 767 aircraft and Boeing 757 aircraft. There are others, but those are the aircraft that are most commonly used in Canada for the purposes of air cargo.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** For a flight, say, that's originating in Winnipeg, given that Winnipeg is a major source of the horses, on a typical trip from Winnipeg to Japan, is it usually a direct flight, or can there be a layover as well?

**Capt Tim Perry:** It would depend on how the flight was planned. It is possible to connect those two destinations with a direct flight, but I would have to look to how any particular flights in question were planned and operated. I would be happy to do so, but at this time I would be speculating as to which city pairs were being utilized for this particular purpose.

• (1145)

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Do you have a rough ballpark figure as to how much fuel would be consumed on a flight carrying live horses from Winnipeg to Japan?

**Capt Tim Perry:** It really does depend, sir, on the type of aircraft and the load that was being carried. It varies drastically based on what the total cargo weight is.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Could you provide me with typical number? I'm just looking for a ballpark figure.

**Capt Tim Perry:** Again, I would really like to preface my answer with the fact that this is not the type of aircraft that I am personally trained on.

It's something in the neighbourhood of 50,000 to 70,000 kilograms, or something like that.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** I appreciate that. Thank you very much.

Dr. Lawson, I'd like to turn to you. You seemed to leave yourself and your organization a little bit of an escape route, because you said that you can't support the bill as written.

What does that mean? Does it mean that if it was written in a different way or if there were amendments made, you could find your way to supporting it? Could you clarify those remarks for this committee, please?

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** As it's written, we see that it's problematic in that it's choosing one type of horse and is not necessarily based on animal welfare. The purpose of this bill is based on the idea that it is inhumane to ship horses by air for export. That's simply not something that we've seen the data support.

What I would say is that the CVMA is happy to be a partner in looking more closely at the legislation and offering insight in a detailed manner. You do have our submission as well, and I think that goes through a number of the points that we've raised to date.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you for that.

Finally, in the last little time I have, Professor Dodman, I did pick up in your opening remarks that you have experience with equines, and I would like to hear your reaction to the official position of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, because you have a lot of experience in this field.

**Dr. Nicholas Dodman:** I'd like to say first of all that I am partly speaking on behalf of my organization as well as the international organization.

Mine is the Humane Society of Veterinary Medical Association of the United States and North America, really. We have 7,000 members, and I am speaking for all of them. They aren't all equine specialists, but every single person is trained not to a single species. They're trained about horse medicine and horse practices as well as on cattle, swine, dogs and cats, and birds. Our group is really 100% behind banning this practice, and there's a weight of evidence there.

I'm sorry; what's the rest of your question?

**The Chair:** Well, unfortunately, Mr. MacGregor jammed us in the last 15 seconds. He's a good man, but we're going to have to leave it at that.

We did hear the response from Dr. Dodman that they're in support of the bill.

Mr. Barlow, you have five minutes.

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I guess my first question is for Dr. Lawson.

Thank you for your letter, your submission and your testimony here today.

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association represents 8,000 veterinarians in Canada who do not all support this bill because it is not based on sound science and evidence. The science and evidence clearly do not support the allegations of this bill.

Knowing your membership and how important your opinion would be on this legislation, did the sponsor of this bill approach your organization or you personally, Dr. Lawson, for your insights in developing this legislation before it was tabled?

• (1150)

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** No, not to my knowledge. That has not occurred.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Thank you.

My colleague across the way is trying to insinuate that there's this black hole of animal welfare when the plane lands in Japan. It's my understanding that my colleague was even invited to go and see the feedlots in Japan and declined that opportunity. Most of those whose testimony we've had, those who are supporting this bill, have not actually travelled on the planes with the horses or toured the facilities in Japan.

We have a letter here. I'm going to ask you, Dr. Lawson, if this is something that you would agree with. We have a letter from the Japanese embassy here in Ottawa, and it is outlining their animal husbandry guidelines specifically for horses when they land in Japan. I want to read into the record a couple of statements that come from this letter. Again, this specifically from the Embassy of Japan:

Japanese importers, in cooperation with Canadian exporters, comply with the transportation regulations established by the Canadian government, thus ensuring adequate animal welfare during international transportation.

...Japan is consistent with the relevant international standard, namely, the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) Code. These guidelines outline specific measures to be taken to ensure that horses are adequately transported in a manner that meets international standards. [The Japanese ag association] ensures the compliance of these guidelines by the industry through various measures, such as organizing information sessions for relevant stakeholders.

Would that statement, Dr. Lawson, jibe with your understanding of the process and the regulations that are in place from when that horse is transported from Canada to Japan and through the feedlot process before slaughter?

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** I believe it would.

I would also reiterate that Canada's health of animals regulations take into account the farm of origin, the transport and the arrival at destination. That is covered within our own framework.

Knowing colleagues in Japan, I would suggest that this sounds quite legitimate.

**Mr. John Barlow:** I'm going to move now to Captain Perry.

Thanks again for your presentation here today.

I want to make sure that it is crystal clear what the bill is potentially asking Canadian airline pilots to take on in terms of responsibilities. Is there any other commodity, any other product or any other cargo that a Canadian airline cargo pilot would be carrying that is asking the pilot to be responsible for the end use of that commodity, product or cargo?

**Capt Tim Perry:** No, sir, not to my knowledge.

For instance, with the shipping of dangerous goods, which is something that we undertake regularly, there is a paperwork component to the job; however, the responsibility lies with the shipper and regulator to ensure completion and compliance.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Thank you very much.

This is an extraordinary responsibility and a cumbersome step that airline pilots are going to be asked to take on if this legislation is passed in its current form. Would that be fair to say?

**Capt Tim Perry:** I think it is fair to say that it is unique, and I guess in that sense extraordinary. Yes, sir.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Thank you.

To go back to you, Dr. Lawson, you stated in your letter from your organization that this legislation “could lead to unintended negative animal welfare consequences”. Could you expand on that and maybe give us a couple of examples? I believe you were talking about biosecurity specifically.

**The Chair:** You have about 30 seconds, Dr. Lawson. Thanks.

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** Thank you.

Yes, there were concerns regarding what happens to the high-value animals that are already in the supply chain. We may very well see a reduced animal welfare standard for those animals.

The other concern CVMA has is that eliminating Canadian horses—which I think we have established have a very high standard of welfare—from this supply chain may ultimately, potentially, push the supply of these horses into domains that do not have standards as high as Canada's. There are a number of countries that would fall into that category.

I think we should be proud of our animal welfare standards and our accomplishments on transport to date, and continue to work to improve them.

• (1155)

**The Chair:** Ms. Taylor Roy, you're up for five minutes.

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses here today.

I want to start by saying this to you, Mr. Perry: I'm not going to be asking you questions, but I appreciate your input on how this bill could be improved to ensure we deal with the concerns of the airline industry. However, I don't think that's the crux of the bill.

I think we know that the majority of Canadians—including in Quebec, as Mr. Perron pointed out, where horsemeat is enjoyed more than in other regions of Canada—are strongly opposed to the continued practice of exporting live horses for slaughter. We've heard a number of different opinions.

I want to start by clarifying one thing, Mr. Lawson.

In your response to questions from Mr. Carr, you indicated that the position of your organization is based on evidence and a few veterinarians who were involved in your animal welfare committee. Mr. Barlow just stated that the 8,000 veterinarians you represent are all opposed to this bill.

Could you please confirm that all 8,000 veterinarians you represent are opposed to this bill?

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** No, I think that would be incorrect. We have a very diverse membership. Obviously, we have members serving the companion animal community as well as those serving the food animal community. I think we would be close to getting as many opinions as we have members.

Ultimately, what I can attest to is that our members have a unified desire to see animal welfare improvements, regardless of the species, without bias, and that—

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** Okay, thank you. I don't have much time, Mr. Lawson.

Could you give me an estimate? Since you represent the entire organization, do you have any sense of how many of your members are opposed to or in favour of the bill?

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** No, we do not have polling data. We don't have that done.

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** Okay. Therefore, you can't represent that the majority of your members are opposed to this bill.

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** Certainly not. No.

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** Thank you. I wanted to clarify that.

We've also heard, over the course of testimony on this very important bill, that there are different conclusions being drawn by people regarding animal welfare and the impact the transport of horses has on animal welfare.

I'd like to point out that there is evidence, and then there are conclusions. Conclusions drawn by certain people are no more valid than conclusions drawn by other people, other than the fact that they may have expertise.

Dr. Dodman, I'm very glad to see you here today, given that you're a behaviourist and you've worked with thousands of horses. I'm wondering if you could comment on some of the conclusions that have been drawn by other witnesses, who have said that the quality of life of these horses is good and that transport is not detrimental to them or threatens them in any way.

Perhaps you could comment on that for me from your perspective of 25 years of experience and teaching in this field.

**Dr. Nicholas Dodman:** It's more like 50.

I think it's the same with the issue of horse slaughter. For reasons I think I understand, most veterinary organizations, such as the AVMA and the American Association of Equine Practitioners, come out against the sensible and humane solution, and now, I hear, the Canadian group. Somehow these organizations, working hand in glove with industry....

The veterinarians' motto is to first do the right thing by society, which is generating food, as opposed to thinking of the animal. I think that's the reason they come to these conclusions. It's just that their perspective is entirely different. They will interpret things in a rosy light, when in fact we know, for example, in air transport, that there have been a number of deaths and injuries, and that these are only the tip of the iceberg. Death is a pretty serious result of transportation.

While it may be improving, it doesn't seem to be improving that much. I think it is like beauty: It's in the eye of the beholder. When I look at it, I think it's inhumane, and so does my group.

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** Right. You've represented that all 7,000 veterinarians who are part of your group are opposed to this bill. Is that correct?

**Dr. Nicholas Dodman:** That's correct. I spoke yesterday to the leader of the group. I told her that I would like to make that statement and asked if that was accurate. She said yes.

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** Okay. Thank you.

You mentioned that you think many of the veterinarians who work with the industry are inclined to support this continued practice because it has to do with the provision of food. The majority of the horses that are transported to Japan are for food purposes. It's providing something called *basashi*, which is a very high-end, very gourmet type of product that is valued greatly.

Do you feel that this purpose or this commitment to ensuring that food is provided is consistent with the overall philosophy that we're transporting animals to feed the masses?

• (1200)

**The Chair:** Ms. Taylor Roy, we're way over time.

Dr. Dodman, be very quick, if you could. Go ahead. I try to be gracious, but we're very tight for time.

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** Thank you.

**Dr. Nicholas Dodman:** I think the end product is for a niche, for 1% of Japan. It's not that you're feeding the masses, as you say.

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** I'll go now to Yves and then Alistair.

You guys were both a little bit over time, so I'll ask you to keep it tight, please, with a 45-second question and a 45-second response.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Demianowicz, what do you think of the amendments proposed by Mr. Perry, specifically, the removal of restrictions on pilots and the possibility of placing fewer administrative burdens on them so they can focus more on flight safety than on animal welfare? That's not really part of their job, after all.

**Ms. Ewa Demianowicz:** In my opinion, it's certainly possible to make this process very easy and less complicated. There's no need for additional burdens. For pilots and people who provide that kind of transportation, there are certainly a lot of documents to fill out for international flights. The idea here is simply to add a declaration to what is probably already part of the process. I would hope that request could be integrated very easily.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** So, if we find a way to amend the wording of the bill without changing its fundamental nature, you'd be okay with that. Is that correct?

**Ms. Ewa Demianowicz:** Yes. For us, the important thing is that the ban on this type of transportation has been effective. As to how it will be implemented or made possible afterwards, we're open to various solutions.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Lawson, would these amendments allow you to adjust your views on the bill or not? I would appreciate a quick answer.

[English]

**Dr. Trevor Lawson:** As I think we've stated, there are certainly ways in which this bill could be improved. As it is currently written, there are challenges with it that mean we would not be able to support it.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

I'll now give the floor to Mr. MacGregor.

[English]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Demianowicz, I'd like to turn to you.

Of course, this bill is not the first attempt of Parliament to address this issue. Since 2010, three NDP private members' bills have tried to do the same. I want to give a shout-out to former MP Alex Atamanenko, who represented British Columbia Southern Interior. He was very passionate about this issue and certainly fought for it.

Earlier in this Parliament, I tabled a petition, e-4190, and over 36,000 Canadians signed it. You mentioned in your opening remarks that seven out of 10 Canadians support this initiative. If I were to judge the flood of emails coming in to my inbox as the agriculture critic, it's definitely a top issue for many people.

How has your organization kept tally on the level of support for this initiative? Has it remained consistent over the years, after other private members' bills and so on? I'm wondering if you can provide the committee with a bit more of a deep dive into those figures.

**Ms. Ewa Demianowicz:** I would just like to point out that the NDP private members' bills of Alex Atamanenko were addressing the horse slaughter issue. We are here about the live exports. The question is really about welfare during the transport.

I've been involved with HSI Canada for the past decade. I've been working on this issue practically full time for a decade. There is tremendous support, of course, on horse slaughter, but even more, I would say, on live exports of horses for slaughter. The polls that I was citing came out at the beginning of the week, so they are very recent. Yes, an overwhelming majority of Canadians all across the country are in support of these exports. We are not surprised, because we hear from them on a daily basis. We have engagement and interactions with the public, and we're here to represent all of these Canadians who are in support of this bill.

I hope that answers your question.

• (1205)

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you.

There you go, Mr. Chair. It came in under.

**The Chair:** Well, I'm going to just take 30 seconds. I have a quick question for Dr. Dodman.

I'll tell you what I struggle with, Dr. Dodman. It's hearing some of the compelling testimony on either side. Is there an ability, in your view, to transport horses by air at all? Is there an ethical way to do that?

**Dr. Nicholas Dodman:** Yes. Sport horses and show horses are transported by air on a regular basis.

I'm sure they have some acclimatization experience and travel with a trainer or other equine experts. I'm sure they travel in special containers. I'm sure there might be two together, but not four together with no partitions.

There might be some ways it could be improved, but one of the big problems is the length of the journey. Lots of the horses flying from the United States to Europe, or flying around in the United States, have journeys of only five or six hours, which is reasonable, especially if they're in those accommodations that are appropriate for a horse, and with proper supervision.

With what's happening at the moment—flying from Canada to Japan with these four horses in the same partition for this hugely long period of time, with no water and no food—and you addressed each one of these issues one by one, it would probably be uneconomical financially and not a deal for the \$20-million-a-year industry.

However, that would be the way that it could be made acceptable.

**The Chair:** Okay. I appreciate that insight.

Colleagues, thank you. Let me, on your behalf, thank all of the witnesses for being here today and for taking the time to give their testimony to us.

We are going to suspend briefly and turn to our next panel of witnesses. We are going to be quick, because we want to make sure we can get this done by one o'clock.

I'll suspend.

• (1207)

(Pause)

• (1211)

• (1210)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, we're going to get started, because we're pressed for time. I would like the folks who are having conversations to either take those outside or not have them.

Today, from Farm Credit Canada, we have Don Anderson, senior vice-president, credit risk management.

From Humane Canada, we have Barbara Cartwright, who is the chief executive officer and is here in person. It's great to see you, Ms. Cartwright.

We also have Brittany Semeniuk, animal welfare specialist, from the Winnipeg Humane Society.

From the Montreal SPCA, we have Erin Martellani, campaign manager for animal advocacy.

Colleagues, you know the deal. We're going to do five minutes for opening remarks from each organization and then go over to questions.

I'm going to start with Farm Credit Canada for up to five minutes.

It's over to you.

**Mr. Don Anderson (Senior Vice-President, Credit Risk Management, Farm Credit Canada):** Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and members of the committee.

As noted, I am very pleased to join here today. I'm Don Anderson, senior vice-president of credit risk management at Farm Credit Canada.

As many of you are aware, FCC is a federal Crown corporation, and we're fully committed to the Canadian agriculture and the overall food industry. Through our time, we've served over 102,000 customers across the country from our 103 offices. We provide a full range of financial services, advisory services, software management and knowledge sharing to the entire industry.

FCC provides broad support to customers in the equine industry. As of December 31, 2023, we had approximately 536 customers within our portfolio that had, at that time, a total amount owing to Farm Credit Canada of \$198.9 million.

I am fully open and happy to answer questions that you have during this period to the best of my ability. I appreciate your time.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Anderson. Thank you for being here today.

From Humane Canada, we have Ms. Cartwright. It's over to you for up to five minutes.

**Ms. Barbara Cartwright (Chief Executive Officer, Humane Canada):** We represent humane societies and SPCAs in every province and two territories and in very rural and very urban locations, many of which enforce animal protection laws. We are proud to share our time with our members—Winnipeg Humane Society and Montreal SPCA.

Humane Canada works collaboratively with industry to improve the standards of care for farmed animals. Farmed animals must be protected from physical and psychological suffering from birth to death.

A humane death is not only when animals are killed in such a manner that they die instantly without panic or pain or are rendered unconscious until death occurs; it is also when the handling methods, equipment and facilities used leading up to that moment are such that they reduce the levels of fear, anxiety and pain in the animals and these are kept to an absolute minimum prior to and during killing. Of course, this includes transportation to slaughter.

The methods in the process of shipping live horses via air for slaughter overseas raise many animal welfare concerns on which the committee has already received ample testimony. This means that the practice cannot meet the above-mentioned requirements for a humane death and therefore should be banned.

I want to take my brief time today to speak to the testimony that the committee has heard regarding the current standards and systems in place.

Canada's codes of practice have been referred to, even today, as some of the highest animal welfare standards. As the founder of these codes more than 40 years ago, as well as a founder of the national farm animal welfare council that required our participation in all codes, including equine, I would say more accurately that the codes are the result of years of negotiation between many different parties, all with conflicting views and interests, and that the codes often represent the minimum, not the highest, standards of care. In addition, they are not legally binding across most of the country.

With regard to transport regulations, while recent amendments do mark a vast improvement, they do not reflect the gold standard of animal welfare, nor were they developed in a vacuum, free from external pressures. We saw a 2017 ATIP request reveal that concerns from the meat industry about negative economic impacts pressured the CFIA to shift from an animal welfare science position, in which shorter transport times of between eight to 12 hours were ideal for the animals, to an economic decision of significantly increasing allowable transport times for most livestock species.

Humane Canada is not calling for a ban on horsemeat or an end to the industry in Canada. We do not support the assertion that this bill is the slippery slope that's going to try to end the meat industry, as some over-emotional arguments claim.

More than 800 million animals are slaughtered every year in Canada. We're discussing approximately 25 horses whose welfare is at risk because they are uniquely shipped by air to the other side of the world to be killed, which does not ensure that the animals'

fear, anxiety and pain are kept to an absolute minimum prior to that killing.

Thank you.

• (1215)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We'll now turn to the Montreal SPCA.

**Ms. Barbara Cartwright:** I'm sorry, Mr. Blois. It goes over to Winnipeg Humane Society.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. You have about a minute and a half left.

We'll go over to the Winnipeg Humane Society.

**Ms. Brittany Semeniuk (Animal Welfare Specialist, Winnipeg Humane Society, Humane Canada):** Thank you.

I speak today as a veterinary technologist and as an animal welfare specialist for the Winnipeg Humane Society.

This committee has heard much testimony on research published globally in veterinary literature about horses experiencing negative states of welfare. Testimony has been presented by expert professionals on the different shipping methods when moving valuable performance horses. Some witnesses have claimed that the live horse export industry should have its regulations enhanced in lieu of total prohibition. I suggest that such an approach will not work. Reducing health and welfare risks associated with shipping large quantities of horses overseas would require a total overhaul of the transportation process to an extent that the industry would cease to be feasible or profitable.

Such costly improvements would include enhanced padding and head clearance for horses, multiple veterinarian attendants per shipment, reduced numbers of horses per shipment, intervention capabilities, alternate handling techniques during loading processes and auditory distress mitigation. The slippery slope argument that putting an end to live horse exports will lead to ending other animal agricultural industries is nothing more than repetitive fearmongering.

What we are doing is a great disservice to the Canadian public—who elect politicians to office—by ignoring contemporary societal values towards animals in the law-making process, especially in relation to draft horses, which were relied upon so heavily to build the infrastructure of what is now known as Canada.

Decisions, including position statements established by the CV-MA, are influenced as much by societal values and ethics as they are by scientific inquiry. We also see this with animal agricultural industries that revise standard practices based not solely on science but on demands from a more humane and conscientious public. It is not the only factor, but it is a factor that horses do hold a different status for Canadian constituents when compared to other livestock.

Thank you. I am happy to answer any questions that the committee may have.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, and I am sorry for the confusion.

We'll now head to the Montreal SPCA, please.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Erin Martellani (Campaign Manager, Animal Advocacy, Montreal SPCA):** Thank you very much for giving the Montreal SPCA, Canada's very first animal welfare organization, the opportunity to speak to this very important issue today.

The SPCA is the most active and influential animal protection organization in Quebec, and it strongly opposes the export of horses from Canada for slaughter. We fully support Bill C-355, as do 18,000 of our supporters in Quebec who have also told their MPs they support this legislative initiative.

Attitudes have changed in Quebec in recent years. Nowadays, horses are considered noble animals, true companions. As of February 10, 2024, they're protected by brand-new provincial safety and welfare regulations that also apply to pets. The practice we're discussing today goes against Quebec society's progressive values and severely undermines progress Quebec has made with respect to horses and other animals. Ever since 2015, the Quebec Civil Code has recognized animals as sentient beings. It's high time that the practices approved by the federal government reflect the values of Quebecers in this regard.

During the study of this bill, a number of MPs and committee members have asked whether the solution to this practice might be to improve regulations governing the conditions under which horses are transported, rather than simply putting an end to the export of horses for slaughter. However, scientific evidence indicates that, due to the physiological peculiarities that make horses very ill-suited to this type of transport, they endure anxiety, pain, fear, exhaustion, thirst, hunger and panic during their long journey by cargo plane from Canada to Japan. As a result, the SPCA believes that it's impossible to export them for slaughter without causing them pain. The practice is irremediable and must be banned.

Some MPs have criticized the fact that Bill C-355 targets only horses. It's completely understandable that they're also concerned about the conditions under which all animals are transported. However, supporting a ban on the export of horses for slaughter does not preclude these members calling on the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to improve current regulations for all animals transported domestically and exported abroad. We would welcome such an initiative, of course. In fact, a previous witness, animal transport auditor Jennifer Woods, even conceded that current transportation standards could be improved. However, Bill C-355 gives us an opportunity in the near future to at least help these horses, thousands of which continue to suffer during arduous trips overseas.

I was supposed to be accompanied today by Dr. Louis Kamus, a veterinarian who has unfortunately been called to perform surgery, but I was told that I could read part of his speech. He is an equine veterinarian and assistant professor of equine surgery in the faculty of veterinary medicine at the Université de Montréal and has been working with horses for over 10 years.

In his speech, he said that he was initially surprised because he wasn't aware of the Canadian industry that exports horses to Asia for slaughter. He raised the matter with several equine veterinary colleagues in Quebec, both in the field and at the hospital, and many of them expressed surprise and outrage when they found out about the export of live horses for slaughter.

Horses are unique among domestic animals. They are fragile creatures of habit that adapt poorly to changes in their environment and in their herd. Any change in their routine causes stress that impacts their health and welfare in various ways. Dr. Kamus and his colleagues often observe this phenomenon in horses that are transported to and hospitalized at the faculty, and they always take it into account in their treatment plans. In addition, a large proportion of hospital emergencies, such as digestive problems and trauma, are associated with stress.

Because of these characteristics, horses are ill-suited for transportation, especially long-distance transportation. They need to be trained and have special requirements to ensure proper transport. Long-distance transportation has also been associated with the development of severe dehydration, pleuropneumonia, and colic. That's why sport horses are subjected to shorter journeys with rest periods under conditions that are completely different from those under which horses for slaughter are currently transported. No effort is spared to mitigate the impact of transportation on sport horses.

Overseas transport of live horses for slaughter from Canadian farms causes significant stress and impacts horses' health and welfare. Therefore, it is not ethically possible to continue this practice.

• (1220)

I would be happy to answer any questions the members may have.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

[*English*]

We're going to do that right away.

I'm going to start with Mr. Steinley. You have up to six minutes.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I have some questions for FCC.

Mr. Anderson, you started talking about how much money is out there right now when it comes to the horse industry. Am I correct in saying that there's \$198 million outstanding in loans to the horse industry in Canada?

**Mr. Don Anderson:** Within FCC's portfolio, that is the correct amount in the entire equine industry that we finance.



**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Is there any way to take out how much of that would be attributed to people raising horses that are shipped either overseas or even to the United States for meat?

• (1225)

**Mr. Don Anderson:** Within our portfolio, we do not track what the sales channels are for our customers, so there's no way that we can break it down to that level.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Would we be able to say that there's a substantial amount of money in loans to people who raise horses for that particular destination?

**Mr. Don Anderson:** I can't provide certainty on that.

What I can share is that within our entire portfolio, as I stated earlier, is that \$198.9 million that FCC finances is outstanding within the entire equine industry.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Was FCC consulted at all by the sponsor of the bill before this bill was brought forward to the House of Commons and to this committee?

**Mr. Don Anderson:** FCC is not involved in policy development. We interpret policy and we work within policy. We feel that is our role within the industry.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** FCC recently wrote that indigenous agriculture opportunities could boost GDP by \$1.5 billion. We've heard that about 40% of horses being exported are from indigenous breeders and that 25% of producers are indigenous. We've also heard from a Métis producer that this legislation would destroy their livelihood.

Is it not within the FCC mandate to increase indigenous participation in agriculture across the whole country?

**Mr. Don Anderson:** Absolutely. We are focused on growing the impact of the indigenous community, not just in agriculture but for the full spectrum of the industry and not specifically in the equine area.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Would horse breeding not be within the agriculture industry? Would this piece of legislation not be contrary to the FCC's mandate as given by this government?

**Mr. Don Anderson:** I'm not sure how to respond.

At the end of the day, we're supporting indigenous agriculture across the country and we'll continue to do that. It's a focused area as we go forward. I can't specifically say how much of the play would be to the equine industry within that.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** We know there's \$198 million outstanding to FCC in loans from the horse industry. Would you say that this piece of legislation could affect the finances of FCC?

**Mr. Don Anderson:** This would not have material impact on FCC's overall portfolio.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** How would those loans be repaid if these people don't have livelihoods to repay the loans?

**Mr. Don Anderson:** It's part of financing.

We look at any customers who are impacted by aspects outside of their control. FCC proactively works with those customers to find the best resolution to their situation. We'll offer up any means possible, including payment relief, deferrals, counselling, advice

and our knowledge services—whatever it is—to support these customers in transition.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** I appreciate that answer, Mr. Anderson. Thank you very much.

If these loans cannot be repaid by the industry that took them out, who then would pay back the loan, or who would then be responsible for those outstanding monies?

**Mr. Don Anderson:** Ultimately, the customer is responsible for their obligations to FCC, but FCC will work with those customers to find the best optimal resolution for each specific situation.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Thank you.

If these loans are unable to be paid, Mr. Chair, I'd say that ultimately the taxpayer would be responsible for these loans, based on this legislation.

Private members' bills cannot influence government spending or have monies attached to them. I'd ask the chair to make a ruling that if FCC is out money because of this piece of legislation, it affects the taxpayers' dollars, and taxpayers are on the hook to pay the monies to FCC.

Does this piece of legislation have a royal recommendation attached to it?

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll look into that, because I'm not in a position to be able to make that decision today. You know that, Mr. Steinley, but we will work that up the line to see whether or not there is precedent on that, or whether or not FCC, as an agency of the Crown, is close enough.

I'll now turn to Mr. Louis. You have up to six minutes.

Mr. Steinley, just so the record shows it, we will investigate, and I will report back. Thank you.

**Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses here, in person and online.

Just to step back for a second, in having full understanding of this bill it's important to highlight what this legislation does not do. I propose that this is a stand-alone bill for a specific purpose, which is to ban the export of live horses for slaughter by air.

I have been assuring our hard-working farmers and ranchers, and I will continue to assure them, that Bill C-355 is specifically aimed at banning the export of live horses for slaughter and is not affecting any other sector. Our farmers continue to put food on Canadians' tables, and I'll continue to support them.

In my riding of Kitchener—Conestoga and here in Ottawa, as I did as recently as a few hours ago, I hear from agriculture stakeholders on a regular basis. All Canadians appreciate their contributions to our nation's food security.

To Ms. Cartwright, thank you again for being here from Humane Canada.

You mentioned that you are a founding member of the National Farm Animal Care Council. Their goal it is to implement a comprehensive and strategic approach to farm animal care in Canada. You work together with industry and also give direct input on agricultural policy to federal, provincial and territorial levels, so I appreciate that.

Some other organizations that I believe are on the care council are the Canadian Cattle Association, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Canadian Meat Council, the Canadian Pork Council, the Canadian Sheep Federation, the Chicken Farmers of Canada, the Turkey Farmers of Canada and Equestrian Canada, among others.

Can you let Canadians know what our committee has heard time and time again about how working together throughout the agriculture sector with organizations like yours at all levels of government can benefit Canada's food supply?

Can you tell me how you collaborate with the organizations I mentioned previously to help shape those policies and share best practices?

• (1230)

**Ms. Barbara Cartwright:** That's a big question. I'll do my best.

Yes, we are the founder of Canada's codes of practice with regard to on-farm animal welfare, and my organization is a founder, one of many, that founded the National Farm Animal Care Council. I was not with the organization at the time; however, I have been very involved with the National Farm Animal Care Council, because we are one of two animal welfare organizations that sit on the National Farm Animal Care Council. Until mid-2015 we were the only one, so we have to sit at every single code negotiation table. It's a lot of work, but we think it's very important because of what you just mentioned, which is that many voices come to that table, and we all negotiate. It really is a negotiation.

Unfortunately, animal welfare has one seat, so we don't have as much of a voice, but I will say that we do try to come to consensus. However, that consensus is usually what can we all live with. One of the ongoing jokes is that if everybody is unhappy, then we probably came to something decent.

That is why I think it's important to stress that the codes are not the highest animal welfare codes of practice because of that, and because industry has a very strong voice there.

We continue to collaborate in other ways with industry, because we believe that they are in control of hundreds of millions of farmed animals and their welfare and we want to be in partnership to advance animal welfare in Canada.

**Mr. Tim Louis:** Thank you, and thank you for the work you're doing in collaboration.

You've heard the first hour of testimony and you've seen other testimony, I'm sure. There are those who are still in support of exporting horses live by air for slaughter. They claim that the bill to ban this practice is based solely on emotion and not science. Their claim denies that the horses that are shipped live for slaughter experience suffering in various forms, including anxiety, pain, fear, exhaustion, thirst, hunger and panic, yet we've heard testimony from

experts, including veterinarians, that highlight strong scientific evidence regarding the risks posed by these conditions in which horses are exported overseas for slaughter.

I want to give you some time to expand on the differences in the treatment of these horses versus, let's say, sports horses or racehorses. Would there be any way that those could be misconstrued?

**Ms. Barbara Cartwright:** No, I don't believe there's any way they can be misconstrued with the way that sport horses are flown, as the committee has heard multiple times. What I hear often in the testimony is the conflation of that with how animals are being shipped for slaughter overseas. We heard that today too. They were talking about all horses moving on transport truck, so it is important that the committee stay focused on air transport.

At the end of the day, I personally believe that horses were not made to fly. We've heard ample testimony. I did hear this morning from the CVMA that they believe the horses are able to have their five freedoms. I will just remind everyone of what those are. I'm going to read them off here.

The five freedoms, which have been in place since the sixties as a way to measure whether an animal is experiencing a high level of welfare, include freedom from thirst or hunger—we know that's not happening, because they're not getting access—freedom from pain, freedom from injury, freedom from fear or discomfort, and freedom to express their normal behaviour.

Clearly horses that are being put on an aircraft are not able to express their normal behaviour. For us, that's the red line right there. It goes back to what humane slaughter is, and this cannot meet a "humane slaughter" definition because it does not minimize fear and anxiety.

• (1235)

**Mr. Tim Louis:** This is my last minute.

We heard that seven out of 10 Canadians are against this practice. We've heard many people reaching out to us to say that this practice shouldn't happen. Can you tell me and all parliamentarians your thoughts on what you've heard in terms of Canadians' reactions when they have heard about this?

**Ms. Barbara Cartwright:** Absolutely. Canadians are shocked that it's going on, that we would be shipping live horses overseas for a delicacy does not align with Canadian values.

I would also like to speak about my members—humane societies and SPCAs across this country, from the smallest volunteer-run rural organizations in Happy Valley-Goose Bay all the way up to the largest on the continent, the BC SPCA. All of them agree 100% that this practice needs to be banned. We are all aligned.

**Mr. Tim Louis:** Thank you for your time.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Cartwright.

Thank you, Mr. Louis.

[*Translation*]

I'll now give Mr. Perron the floor for six minutes.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

Ms. Martellani, you said that horses have unique physiological characteristics. However, horses are transported for reasons other than slaughter. I wanted to ask you why transportation should be prohibited only for horses intended for slaughter, which you touched on earlier when you said they're not treated the same way. So here's the question I often ask: Can we solve this by requiring better transportation conditions for horses for slaughter?

**Ms. Erin Martellani:** Thank you for the question.

As mentioned earlier, we tried to improve overall transportation regulations in 2019. That only made things worse for horses exported for slaughter, except that transit time is now slightly shorter. However, as I was saying, horses' physiology is unique. They're ill-suited to air transportation in particular because of their high centre of gravity and their sound sensitivity, which is well known. We believe that there is no way to improve this practice and that it should be banned. However, that does not prevent anyone from improving all other modes of transportation.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Okay, thank you for that.

You say there's no way to improve the standards. Other witnesses have told us the opposite. People have provided us with images of transportation conditions that don't really seem adequate and others that seem much more reasonable and appropriate. A lot depends on the sensitivity of the people seeing the images. We've been told that the transportation standards for sport horses and horses being sold elsewhere are higher than the minimum standards, so wouldn't raising the standards do the trick?

**Ms. Erin Martellani:** I think the standards are the same for everyone; it's just that the standards applied to sport horses are higher. Personally, I don't think it would be cost-effective to apply those same standards to horses transported for slaughter. We've heard that from other witnesses as well. A hundred or so horses are transported for slaughter at once. I don't think it would be feasible to take care of them as well as sport horses are taken care of.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Okay.

If I understand correctly, you consider the transportation of animals destined for a purpose other than slaughter, such as competition, to be mistreatment. Am I right or am I misunderstanding you?

People representing the industries targeted by Bill C-355 came to tell us that they were afraid it would destroy their industry and pre-

vent them from transporting their animals, which they say they take great care of.

• (1240)

**Ms. Erin Martellani:** It's well documented that companies that transport sport horses take great care of their animals. The situation is completely different for them, especially since those horses are used to being transported, as we've heard repeatedly.

I think it's very clear that the only horses covered by Bill C-355 are those that are exported for slaughter. Horses exported for other reasons are not affected.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Okay.

So you think it's impossible to treat animals intended for slaughter with the same care as sport animals. Is that correct?

**Ms. Erin Martellani:** I don't think it would be feasible or cost-effective.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Thank you very much.

What do you think of the amendments that Captain Perry proposed earlier in this meeting, such as reducing the responsibilities that Bill C-355 imposes on airline pilots? He's concerned that the administrative burden and paperwork will increase, as will the severe fines that would be imposed directly on pilots.

If we were to find a way to amend the bill, would you see it as watered down?

**Ms. Erin Martellani:** No, that wouldn't water the bill down at all, and we would support those amendments. We believe the objective would be the same.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Okay, thank you very much.

Ms. Cartwright, I would like to use my final minute to ask you for a few comments on the same subject. Do you think it would be a viable option to make the care provided during the transportation of animals for slaughter equivalent to that provided to animals transported for other purposes?

[*English*]

**Ms. Barbara Cartwright:** Certainly, we could. However, the question is whether the industry would continue. Because of the high cost, it would not be a profitable industry anymore. It would be impossible to continue the industry.

**The Chair:** Mr. MacGregor, it's over to you.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Anderson, from Farm Credit Canada, I'd like to direct my first question to you.

You are in charge of credit risk management, and you did outline to this committee the millions of dollars held in loans by various equine producers and that it's a very wide spectrum.

I fully understand that Farm Credit Canada is not responsible for the development of policy, but I do believe that your office has to look at trends and hints of policy that might be changed. When the ministerial mandate letter came out—and it's now three years old—there was a specific line item from the Prime Minister to the former minister of agriculture that said, “Ban the live export of horses for slaughter.”

I'd like to know, from your perspective and that of your department within Farm Credit Canada, how your department reacted to that instruction from the Prime Minister. Did that do anything in terms of how you assessed credit risk for producers that were breeding horses for the sole purpose of exporting them to another country for slaughter?

**Mr. Don Anderson:** The position that FCC takes is that until the law has changed and we have a clear path forward with regard to what the customers are experiencing, we work with the status quo. We are cognizant of potential changes that are on the horizon, but at this point in time, until those changes happen, we work with the customers as they execute their business plans and move forward.

That's the best we can do in this situation.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Would you have made mention of it to your customers as a caution? Would that have been appropriate for your agency to do?

**Mr. Don Anderson:** The customers in question are well versed about their situation, so FCC does not feel that it is our position to provide that counsel to these customers.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you for clarifying that.

Ms. Cartwright, thank you for appearing before our committee to help guide us through this.

In my time as a member of Parliament, I've come to understand the role as a bit of a mix of being a trustee and a delegate. We are, of course, the direct democratic conduit of our constituents, but I think there's an understanding and expectation that in some of the day-to-day stuff, there's a lot of trust placed on our shoulders to try to make those decisions on our constituents' behalf, and we of course are held accountable for that.

From our perspective as members of this committee and members of the House of Commons, with respect to this bill in particular, we have been subjected to a wide variety of conflicting opinions from experts on both sides of this issue. It has been mentioned that in Canadians' opinions, roughly seven out of 10 Canadians find that they support this initiative.

In light of those facts, what would your message be to parliamentarians when we're trying to consider all of these big factors? Do you have a message that you would like summarize in that respect?

● (1245)

**Ms. Barbara Cartwright:** Yes.

As I said in my opening statement, more than 800 million animals are slaughtered every year here in Canada. We're talking about

2,500 horses that are sent—again, in an unnatural system—overseas to be slaughtered. To me, it's a clear decision, and one that I hope Parliament will make. It isn't a slippery slope.

There are always varying types of animal welfare science. We do see that at the National Farm Animal Care Council. However, when you look at the testimony that focuses on the experience of the animals and not on the experience of the farmer or the agriculture business, you will see very clearly that the experience of the animal, which is what should be considered here, is a lot of tension, anxiety, fear and pain, all the way up to death.

I would implore Parliament to look at the horse, not the farmer.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** As a segue from that, you mentioned the “five freedoms”. If our air transport for these horses truly respected those five freedoms, would this still be a viable industry?

**Ms. Barbara Cartwright:** No, it would not.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Okay. Thank you for that.

I will leave it at that, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**The Chair:** You're a good man. You're keeping us moving quickly.

We're going to Mr. Barlow for up to five minutes.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to use my time to put forward a motion.

All of us on this committee have received a number of letters over the last week or so. They were from the Ontario Minister of Agriculture; the Agriculture Alliance; the Vegetable Growers of Canada; Mushrooms Canada; the Western Stock Growers' Association; the Grain Farmers of Ontario, which represents 28,000 farm families; the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities and the Wheat Growers Association. These letters are asking for a couple of specific things on the impact the carbon tax is having on Canadian agriculture with the hike of 23% on April 1.

That said, I'm going to ask the committee on this motion. It is:

Given that:

- a) The committee received numerous letters from agricultural stakeholders regarding their opposition to the carbon tax hike on April 1, including from the Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities;
- b) Seven Provincial Premiers and 70% of Canadians opposed the government's 23% increase in the carbon tax hike on April 1;
- c) The Premiers of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have issued public letters calling on the government to provide a carbon tax carve-out for farmers and pass Bill C-234 in its original form;
- d) The carbon tax currently costs greenhouse operators in Canada \$22 million a year and will pay between \$82 million and \$100 million by 2030 when the carbon tax quadruples;
- e) 44% of fresh fruit and vegetable growers are already selling at a loss and 77% can't offset production cost increase;
- f) The carbon tax increase this year will cost mushroom farms \$7.4 million, and by 2030 it'll be more than \$16 million;

g) A sample of 50 farm operations across Canada paid a total of \$329,644 in carbon taxes in one month last year, with the increase this year it'll cost those same farms \$431,544 and nearly triple over the next seven years to \$893,944;

h) The Parliamentary Budget Officer has stated the carbon tax will cost farmers nearly \$1 billion by 2030;

i) The 2030 Food Price Report estimates the carbon tax will cost a typical 5,000-acre farm \$153,000 by 2030; and

j) The Food Professor recommends pausing the carbon tax for the entire food supply chain,

I ask for unanimous consent for the committee to report the letters it received from agriculture stakeholders, the Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities regarding the 23% increase on the carbon tax on April 1, to the House for its consideration in debate on Bill C-234

Chair, these letters we have here represent tens of thousands of farmers who are asking for their voices to be heard.

• (1250)

**The Chair:** One thing I'll note, Mr. Barlow, is that I did receive letters as well, because of course people reach out to me as the chair, not knowing necessarily how procedure works in terms of having all members on board. I know I'm working on getting responses back to some of the stakeholders who have written to explain to them that we do have a study coming down the line.

I take notice that this is not what you're moving right now. It's just to explain to them that they would be welcome witnesses before this committee on a study that we've already adopted. To those stakeholders who might be listening, those letters are coming.

Colleagues, the way in which this works is that Mr. Barlow has moved this particular motion without notice, requesting UC to not only table the letters in the House but also on whether or not you want to actually debate the merits of the motion. If you want to debate this motion now, we can, or we can hold the debate on the motion and make a decision on whether or not to ultimately support what Mr. Barlow is saying at a later time, given that we have witnesses before us.

I see Mr. MacGregor's hand.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thanks, Chair.

I would like to reserve the right to put some amendments into the preamble. My position and the position of the NDP is quite clear, and I want to make sure that it's on the record that we do support Bill C-234 in its original form. We will be voting to reject the Senate amendment, so I want to make sure, for everyone who's listening, that this is very clear.

I also want to put into the record that I think there's a real disservice in this whole debate, because while my Conservative colleagues focus all of their attention on what amounted to an increase of three cents per litre in my region, they were completely silent when the cost of fuel in my region jumped by 30¢ a litre from February to March.

I would like to reserve the right to make some reference to the ridiculous profiteering that is going on in the oil and gas sector. We can always see their publicly reported figures, but for us to completely ignore the role that corporate profits in oil and gas in particular are having on our farm sector is really missing the entire point.

I think my position on Bill C-234 is quite clear, but I would like to reserve the right to amend some of the preamble. I'll just leave it at that.

**The Chair:** What I'm hearing, Mr. Barlow, is not an outright rejection of what you're moving, but we have witnesses here on a particular study. Mr. MacGregor has said he would like to be able to take up this conversation moving forward.

We're not rejecting the idea of what you're putting forward, but Mr. MacGregor wants the opportunity to potentially move amendments. You didn't provide notice to this committee about moving this motion today—as you know, because you're a seasoned member of this committee. We will make sure that we give proper time for MPs to consider this motion and we can come back to it at a later date.

Thank you, colleagues. We're going to continue.

That is your time, Mr. Barlow.

I'm going to move to Mr. Carr for up to five minutes.

**Mr. Ben Carr:** Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

My question first is to Ms. Semeniuk.

We heard the president of the CVMA a few moments ago in testimony talk about the expertise of certain veterinary medical professionals as being derived from emotion and not expertise.

As a member of the Winnipeg Humane Society and somebody who advocates consistently for animal welfare, can you speak to what reaction there may be in Winnipeg from veterinary medical professionals you've spoken with in relation to this argument that their expertise should be diminished and cast aside as simply emotional?

I would then ask Madam Cartwright to respond to that same question.

Thank you.

**Ms. Brittany Semeniuk:** Thank you for your question.

I think a large majority of veterinarians, and not just in Manitoba, feel that their expertise in the science behind welfare is not subjective. You study the welfare of an animal regardless of the species, with the same method and using the same science. Veterinarians are trained in that exact manner.

I do have the utmost respect for the CVMA, but as we heard today, their position in this hearing does not represent every single veterinarian in Canada, nor every single veterinary technologist across Canada.

I think there is something to be said about certain equine practitioners who.... The exporters are their clients. It is not in their best interests for these exporters to see this industry come to an end.

I do not question the intention of these veterinarians. I have the utmost respect for equine veterinarians. I know many of them personally, but the reality is that this is their clientele as well.

• (1255)

**Mr. Ben Carr:** Thank you.

Ms. Cartwright, I have the same question for you, and I can repeat it if needed.

**Ms. Barbara Cartwright:** No, that's okay.

I, like Brittany, hold the CVMA in the highest regard. We sat on the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association animal welfare committee for decades and consider ourselves partners. Sadly, we were not aware of this position, which has been challenging for us.

Certainly when it comes to the idea of emotion, I've met—

**Mr. Ben Carr:** I'm sorry, Ms. Cartwright, to interrupt, but I just want to make sure that I understand. Do you sit on the board currently?

**Ms. Barbara Cartwright:** No. It's on the animal welfare committee of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association—

**Mr. Ben Carr:** Is that currently?

**Ms. Barbara Cartwright:** Yes. We have an ex officio seat.

**Mr. Ben Carr:** Were you not made aware of the position taken by the CVMA?

**Ms. Barbara Cartwright:** No, we were not aware of what was coming today.

**Mr. Ben Carr:** Please continue.

**Ms. Barbara Cartwright:** With regard to emotion, I think person has to bring their whole mind, body and spirit to anything they do. The veterinarians I know do that.

I will make mention that animal welfare is not necessarily trained into veterinarians in vet schools, which was really interesting to me when I started 10 years ago in this role.

There is a drive to bring more animal welfare science into veterinarian schools, so I will leave you with that: that we need to continue to increase in all people who work with animals an understanding of animal welfare.

**Mr. Ben Carr:** I noted with some interest my colleague across the way a moment ago, who took some time out of our witness testimony today to suggest that the committee should report back to the House the number of signatures that he has received from people who are reacting to a different policy, that being a price on pollution. Perhaps we should table from this committee the 36,000-plus signatures we have received in relation to this piece of legislation. It seems to me somewhat contradictory to suggest that petitions are, in one instance, worthwhile when they support the position you're taking on one issue, but dismissed as emotional when they support another.

Ms. Semeniuk, I'd like to go back to you and then ask the same question of Ms. Cartwright: Can you tell us what evidence you have seen that helps explain the process by which horse welfare is taken into consideration once the horses have arrived in Japan through to the point when they're slaughtered?

Mr. Lawson, with all due respect to him, could not come up with anything beyond suggesting through anecdotal and second-hand conversation that he was confident that horse welfare was being

looked after. In addition, a statement from the Embassy of Japan is hardly evidence to support that.

Ms. Semeniuk and then Ms. Cartwright, in about 20 seconds apiece, could you please just speak to what evidence you have seen to suggest that the horses' welfare is being upheld in Japan?

**Ms. Brittany Semeniuk:** I have not personally seen any evidence that the welfare is being upheld in Japan. I have seen instances of other cases of extreme violations in the use of horses in Japan that have raised significant red flags. These are not necessarily concerning horses that have been exported for meat; they are severe welfare violations that have been brought forward about race-horses within Japan.

**Mr. Ben Carr:** Thank you.

Mr. Chair, how much time do I have?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC)):** You're done.

**Mr. Ben Carr:** Can we give Ms. Cartwright just 15 seconds?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** Be very quick, Ms. Cartwright.

**Ms. Barbara Cartwright:** I have no evidence, which is a problem.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Perron, you have two and a half minutes.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Martellani, some people, including some committee members, have expressed concern that enacting the ban would set a dangerous precedent for other livestock that are exported. We understand that horses are sensitive animals, but all animals are sensitive. We export pigs, and they're sensitive, too.

What would you say to people who are afraid this will set a precedent for other livestock?

• (1300)

**Ms. Erin Martellani:** That is indeed an argument that we've heard more than once. Personally, I think it's an unfounded and somewhat alarmist argument.

The bill as drafted specifically targets horses that are exported for slaughter in Japan, a specific niche market. Nowhere does the bill mention the export of horses for other reasons or the domestic slaughter of horses. I don't think it can be interpreted as targeting other sectors of the livestock industry.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Thank you.

Many people feel that this bill is more about the social status of the horse than banning the export of horses by air. A few witnesses have suggested that the horse is more of a companion animal than a livestock animal, and that the next step would be to prohibit the slaughter of horses. Do you want to respond to that?

**Ms. Erin Martellani:** Yes, certainly. I would say more or less the same thing. The bill is very specific and does not address domestic slaughter at all. In Quebec, horses are not raised for slaughter. The ones that are slaughtered for their meat are mostly culled or injured horses. These are slaughtered in Quebec, though. They're not exported halfway around the world to be slaughtered.

The fact that 85% of our horsemeat is being exported to Japan proves that the demand is more for horsemeat than live horses. I think that answers the question.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Perron.

[*English*]

Mr. MacGregor is giving back his two and a half minutes.

I have a question from the previous chair for Ms. Cartwright.

His question was this: You mentioned that there are ways to improve transportation regulations and make horse transportation safer, but you were saying that perhaps it wouldn't be economically feasible. Shouldn't the focus be on the transportation rather than on the end use, and wouldn't it be up to industry to decide whether or not it's economically feasible? If it's not, I guess that's another way to end the practice.

**Ms. Barbara Cartwright:** The question that I believe the former chair was referring to is this: If we ship them like we ship racehorses, could the industry be viable?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** That's correct.

**Ms. Barbara Cartwright:** I would say that the industry would not be viable if we shipped them in the same manner we currently ship racehorses or horses for show.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** Ms. Cartwright, you also mentioned that the CFIA made changes that may not have been science-based and may have been coerced—that's probably not the right word—or lobbied by the animal food industry.

Dr. Mary Jane Ireland, who has testified before this committee, is the chief veterinary officer of Canada and a delegate to the World

Organisation for Animal Health. She is a leading expert in this and set those guidelines. Are you insinuating that Dr. Ireland's changes to the regulations on animal transportation were not based on science or her best experience and judgment?

**Ms. Barbara Cartwright:** I will say a few things there.

One, I have a great deal of respect for Dr. Ireland. We meet with her fairly regularly.

My understanding is that she is not responsible for writing the regulations from 2019 and that there were 20 years of debate prior to that. This happened in 2017. I can only speak to what is in the ATIP.

Of course, they don't provide detailed information about who said what, because it's all redacted. However, it is clear from the ATIP, as reported in *The Globe and Mail* in March 2017, that the industry had a significant role in the shift in the way the CFIA was proposing animal welfare regulations, as opposed to industry-driven regulations.

I'm happy to share what I have of that, but I also know where the original ATIP is. I can ask whether that can be presented to you as well.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** Thanks, Ms. Cartwright.

That ends this group of witnesses.

Thank you very much to all the witnesses who appeared with us today.

Team, we'll allow our witnesses to leave. Before you take off, I have a couple of notes from the chair and the clerk.

The deadline for the submission of amendments to Bill C-355 is on Thursday by four o'clock eastern time. Please have any amendments for this particular bill to the clerk by this Thursday, April 11.

On the import-export study, provide witness lists by the end of the week. That's for those who have not submitted them yet. Please have the list of any witnesses for the next study to the clerk by the end of the week.

Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.







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