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To: Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

From: National Cattle Feeders' Association (NCFA)

Date: April 1, 2021

***Re: Submission on Bill C-205 – An Act to Amend the Health of Animals Act***

As the national voice for cattle feeders, NCFA strongly supports the passage of Bill C-205 and is pleased to provide this submission to the Committee accordingly.

The hundreds of beef cattle feedlots in Canada are highly sophisticated operations, relying on bio-safety protocols, skilled workers, and advanced production technologies to deliver the highest standard of animal care and food safety.

Limiting the introduction of diseases and/or toxic substances into cattle feeding operations is of critical importance. This is achieved by carefully managing the process by which people, vehicles, and substances enter and exit the cattle feeding premises. These biosecurity measures enable farmers to raise healthy animals and deliver safe food in Canada and internationally. Illegal trespassers entering a farm—for any reason—severely compromises these measures.

Accordingly, NCFA strongly supports the content and intent of Bill C-205. The sector welcomes this legislation that will make it an *offence to enter, without lawful authority or excuse, a place in which animals are kept if doing so could result in the exposure of the animals to a disease or toxic substance*. NCFA calls upon committee members to carefully consider how Bill C-205 will significantly contribute to the safety of producers, workers, animals and farm families across Canada. The livestock industry works tirelessly to protect the health and welfare of the animals under their care, and Bill C-205 provides an essential tool to support those efforts.

Canadians have experienced the long-lasting and devastating economic impact and the strain on our food supply when disease enters food production. These diseases can be introduced unintentionally by a trespasser onto farm operations. In addition, farm operations are the keepers of key animal health records, feed supplies, and inputs that need to be held secure at all times.

The majority of Canadian farms are family-owned, and this includes cattle feeding operations. As such, the farm operation and the family home are often at the very same location. Urban Canadians would not accept trespassers on their property, and this same legal and safety standard should apply to rural families. In short, trespassing is illegal and is an ongoing threat to producers, workers, and our hard-working farm families.

Canadian cattle feeders follow strict regulatory and voluntary systems for the care of their animals and property. A good example of this is NCFA's *Canadian Feedlot Animal Care (CFAC) Program* and the industry-wide *Verified Beef Production (VBP) Program*. Further, many beef producers regularly welcome visitors to their farms to proudly showcase their operations (i.e., politicians, school groups, media, etc.). But this is done in a legal manner and planned in advance to ensure all bio-safety protocols are followed for the protection of the animals, the operation, the workers, and the welcomed guests.

NCFA recognizes that activism is part of the fabric of Canadian society. But illegal trespassing on private property to advance an activist agenda is not, and should not, be accepted. ***NCFA firmly believes that this needs to be articulated in federal legislation.***

Currently, the *Health of Animals Act* sets out strict obligations and prohibitions in respect to actions of the animal owner to control exposure to disease and toxic substances. However, the *Act* does not address those very same risks created by trespassers. Bill C-205 works to close this legislative gap.

While individual provinces and territories may have legislation in place to address trespassing on farm operations, Bill C-205 brings continuity across Canada and in some cases enhances protection. NCFA calls upon the federal government to provide leadership so that all Canadian farmers benefit from the same level of protection no matter the location across the country.

The preventative and proactive nature of Bill C-205 is welcomed by the sector. Now more than ever, society as a whole must collectively protect our farmers, animals, and food supply from unnecessary threats. The safety of our producers, workers, animals, and farm families across Canada depends on it.

NCFA welcomes the opportunity to further expand on our position through an appearance before the Committee on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Casey G. Vander Ploeg', written in a cursive style.

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Casey G. Vander Ploeg  
Vice President  
National Cattle Feeders' Association