

## **Bill C-205, An Act to amend the Health of Animals Act**

May 12, 2021

Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) is Manitoba's general farm policy organization, providing a unified voice for farmers on issues that affect agriculture. KAP represents and promotes the interests of 4,500 farmers and 20 commodity associations.

As the voice of Manitoba farmers, KAP's democratic and grassroots decision-making process is essential. KAP policy is developed by farmers and commodity group members representing all agricultural commodities and all regions of Manitoba.

Farmers take biosecurity and food safety seriously because they know that the food they produce should meet the highest standards. KAP is committed, through policy developed by farmers, to protect the interests of agriculture from the spread of animal disease, and to address the growing trend of rural crime and trespassing in Manitoba.

Farmers work hard to develop and adhere to biosecurity protocols that protect their farms and livestock from the spread of disease to humans, animals and plant life. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency develops national biosecurity standards, protocols and strategies in collaboration with producer organizations, provincial and territorial governments and academia. When biosecurity protocols are compromised, this jeopardizes food security and often necessitates drastic action to prevent disease breakouts; which have critical, immediate and long-lasting impacts on the agriculture industry, along with the Canadian economy.

KAP advocates that no person or persons should be allowed on a farm property without explicit authorized consent from the farm operator. By requiring a person to obtain consent before entering a building or enclosed place where animals are held, this legislation will improve farmers' ability to maintain the health and safety of their livestock and, ultimately, the food they produce. However, it is important for legislation to clearly define consent for the general public and ensure that legally authorized personnel can enter a farm property, so long as they develop and adhere to biosecurity protocols and seek authorized consent from the farm operator.

Biosecurity and food safety does not end on the farmyard. Farmers are responsible and accountable for the health and safety of their livestock, including in transportation. Conditions of transport are carefully controlled to adhere to federal animal transport regulations and ensure a safe and healthy arrival for livestock at their destination. If livestock are exposed to an animal disease or unknown substances during the transportation process (such as at a rest stop), this can pose a serious risk to the health and safety of animals, marketing and Canada's

food supply.

KAP supports stronger legislation, with tougher penalties to deter rural crime and trespassing. In Manitoba, the growing trend of rural crime and trespassing has left farm families concerned for their safety and the safety of their livestock. Farm families have the right to know who enters their property, and they should feel safe, secure and at ease living and working in rural communities.

As the voice of Manitoba farmers, KAP appreciates this opportunity to provide feedback regarding Bill C-205. We encourage the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food to ensure the safety and wellbeing of farm families and livestock and the integrity of Canada's food supply.