



June 1, 2021

Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food
Sixth Floor, 131 Queen Street
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Sent by e-mail: AGRI@parl.gc.ca

Dear Committee Members,

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

Ontario Pork strongly supports the passage of Bill C-205 and welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the Committee on amendments to the *Health of Animals Act*, that will help safeguard the biosecurity of Canadian farms, and our national food supply.

Our organization is the voice of the province's 1,143 pork farmers, and a leader in the agriculture industry. Led by producers, Ontario Pork is committed to sustainable growth in the pork sector, delivering government representation, research investment, and industry improvements in areas including animal care and environmental sustainability, while growing the brand and reputation of producers and their product. Ontario's pork industry "farm to fork" generates \$2.74 billion in economic output and 15,339 in full-time equivalent jobs.

Ontario's pork farmers are committed to internationally recognized high standards of biosecurity, animal care and farm practices, based on science, education and animal husbandry best practices. They are proud of how they manage their animals and work hard to produce high-quality food for Canadians. They work closely with veterinarians, feed specialists and regulators to raise healthy animals in a sustainable and responsible way.

Maintaining farm biosecurity is crucial. Anyone entering barns or farms, handling animals or moving between barns without being invited, and without following proper biosecurity protocols puts the health of animals, the safety of food and the livelihood of farmers at risk. Safe farms are important for the people who live and work there, as well as for animals and consumers.

Making it an offence to enter private property without lawful authority or excuse a place in which animals are kept, is of prime importance to the protection of the pork sector, as well as the entire agri-food system.

Swine veterinarians have voiced the following concerns about risks posed by anyone who enters a farm property, without consent:

- Pig farmers are responsible for the health and safety of their staff and families, and farming is a dangerous profession. Having untrained, unknowledgeable intruders entering a farm site is a risk for human safety.
- People can infect pigs with influenza virus. Farmers control access to their pigs and require special biosecurity procedures such as vaccination to prevent pigs from getting the flu.
- Pigs become habituated to their human caregivers and to the normal daily routines these caregivers perform. Strangers coming to the barn at a strange time is upsetting for the pigs.
- When individuals interfere with or feed unknown substances to animals, it presents a risk to animals. For example, if an activist lets pigs out of pens to roam free in barns, and the pig finds and eats rodenticide baits, the pig may die, and the meat, especially liver, is contaminated for a very long time. Essentially, the pig is no longer safe for food ever.

The majority of Ontario Pork's members are family farm operators who live and work on the same property, often located in remote parts of rural communities. With the family home and the farm operation often at the same location, it is paramount that pork producers feel safe and protected from anyone trying to trespass on their properties. The agri-food sector has experienced too many trespassing incidents, which not only cause fear to farmers, their families and employees, but also jeopardize animal health.

In Ontario, with the enactment of *Bill 156, Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020*, pork producers as well as others in the agri-food sector, now have protection from trespassers. With Bill C-205 and the proposed amendments to the *Animal Health Act*, producers across the country can benefit from the same level of protection, regardless of where they are located. Having federal leadership in this area would greatly ensure the biosecurity concerns of our farmers are fully addressed, as well as protect our food supply.

Ontario Pork appreciates the opportunity to give input on Bill C-205 and would be pleased to provide any additional information to the Committee.

Sincerely,



John de Bruyn
Board Chair