

June 4, 2021

The Canadian House of Commons

Re: Bill C-205

The proposed rationale for Bill C-205 claims to address issues of biosecurity for the protection of farm animals and farm employees. Ironically however, industrial farming in and of itself, is much more of a risk to biosecurity and the spread of disease than any “trespasser” or animal advocacy group would ever be. Disease outbreaks occur regularly on farms. For example, mad cow disease, which was caused by the industry itself, when they fed the farm animals other dead animals. In addition, the recent COVID-19 outbreaks at mink farms in British Columbia were caused by infected workers, who then passed the virus on to minks.

The necessity to implement this bill also seems questionable, given that there has never even been a single documented case where animal advocates have caused issues of biosecurity, or risk to food safety. It is clear that the reasons being provided to the public for the passing of Bill C-205 are not legitimate or truthful.

Groups across Canada document farm animals in their final moments of life, and these horrendous scenes can cause a significant impact on the public’s view of the farming industry. This documentation often includes animals who are suffering, starving, exposed to the elements - causing heat exhaustion and frostbite, and sadly animals who are dying or have already died during transport. The truth is, the large and powerful farming industry want laws such as Bill C-205 in place to ensure that the public remains blind to the animal cruelty that takes place every day within the world of industrial farming. The farming industry, supported by the Canadian government, are now attempting to create laws under the guise of something that will help animals, when in reality these laws only harm animals further, and punish those who advocate for their humane treatment.

The unfortunate truth is, that people trespass on farms largely due to the fact that animal welfare on farms is not regulated by either the provincial or federal government. This makes documentation by activist the only way to create transparency and bring awareness of these poor conditions to the public; and hold the industry accountable. The National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) claims to monitor and regulate farm practices, while creating its one code of conduct. The obvious bias being, that the NFACC is made up largely of those closely invested in the industry, and those who receive personal and financial benefit by supporting the ongoing concealment of the inhumane treatment towards farm animals.

Farms are focused on getting as much value as quickly as possible from animals. The industry wants the public to believe that farming in Canada is made up of ethical family farms, run by hardworking farmers, just trying to support their families. In reality, the majority of farms these days are industrialized factory farms. Even in situation where the farm may be owned by a family, and not a corporation, the level of mass production and the approaches used, are essentially the definition of factory farming.

Bill C-205 is a federal bill that intrudes on provincial jurisdiction. Provincial trespass laws already exist, as do laws around harming an animal. Any trespasser or individual who were to harm an animal can already be charged under those laws, so why create additional laws? Further to that, many provinces in Canada have already passed laws similar to Bill C-205, making bill C-205 redundant and unnecessary. Bill C-205 is simply overkill, ensuring the current state of inhumane farming is not scrutinized or disrupted by demands from the public to change their ways.

If biosecurity is the real concern here, the government and farming industry need not look any further than at themselves. It is the current industrial farming practices causing risk to biosecurity, not the relatively minute number of activist, who has mentioned, have never in history actually caused any biosecurity problems. The primary cause of disease on farms is oversized farms, with too many animals living together in unsanitary conditions. There are many other areas the government should be focusing their energy in regards to biosecurity. For example, creating a neutral regulatory body to monitor the industry, in order to address true issues of biosecurity. The government and industry need to make improvements to the treatment, transport, and slaughter of farm animals if we are to truly mitigate biosecurity risks. The industry and government need to stop looking to blame or punish the public for these biosecurity problems, as they are not the culprits, and are simply seeking transparency and the humane treatment of animals.

I appreciate the Committee's thoughtfulness in the matter, and I strongly urge you to vote against Bill C-205.

Sincerely,

Victoria Caldwell