

Agriculture and Agri-Food Committee

June 03, 2021

House of Commons

131 Queen Street

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

**Brief from Yasmin Koop-Monteiro Regarding  
Proposed Federal Bill C-205:  
An Act to Amend the Health of Animals Act**

Dear committee,

Bill C-205, “An Act to Amend the Health of Animals Act,” has many problems that put into question the motivations behind its proposal.

First, is its lack of focus on standard animal farming practices and the animal farming environment (including farming equipment, confinement, dead or sick animals, feces, wildlife, and animal products) as major biosecurity risks (Canadian Food Inspection Agency 2013). The United Nations has, in fact, identified animal agriculture as a key risk factor for zoonosis emergence (UNEP 2016). Further, given the industry’s overall association with other major zoonosis emergence risk factors identified in the UN report—as it is the leading cause of deforestation for pasture and feed crops (Weisse and Goldman 2021; WWF 2020), the primary user of antibiotics (O’Neill 2016), and a

leading cause of climate change (Poore and Nemecek 2018; Clark et al. 2020)—environmental researchers have concluded that “meat production imposes great risk on our societies, and the current prevention systems seem to have largely reached their limits” (Espinosa, Tago, and Treich 2020: 20).

Given the overwhelming evidence that standard industry practices produce the conditions for the generation and spread of infectious disease, Bill C-205’s focus on external risks, such as “enter[ing] without lawful authority or excuse,” is perplexing. Particularly when one considers the fact that disease outbreaks on Canadian farms often result from standard farming practices and poor adherence of biosecurity protocols (Animal Justice 2021). Indeed, there are no documented cases where citizens, including animal advocates, have caused or contributed to disease outbreaks on Canadian farms (Animal Justice 2021). Critically, instead of addressing the major issues surrounding standard animal farming practices that leading scientific experts have advanced, Bill C-205 attempts to divert attention away from the inherent risks of the animal agriculture industry. Thus, Bill C-205 appears to be motivated by industry interests, and not by concerns for public health.

Second, there is no legislative gap that Bill C-205 would fill. Indeed, every Canadian province has anti-trespass legislation, and individuals that have trespassed have been prosecuted under these existing anti-trespass laws. Likewise it is already illegal—both in Canada’s Criminal Code and in provincial animal welfare laws—to harm or poison animals. As such, any trespasser could also be prosecuted under these existing laws. Bill

C-205 would add nothing but drastically increased and severe punishment for trespassing. This begs the question: Why introduce legislation that adds nothing but shockingly severe punishment? Who will Bill C-205 benefit? The clear answer is it will benefit Canada's animal agriculture industry—which is already a self-regulating industry that creates its own voluntary codes of practice (Sankoff 2019)—by further shielding it from public scrutiny with its promise of severe punishment to outsiders that could expose the conditions that farmed animals in Canada are kept.

Finally, there are many more problems with Bill C-205 not explored here, including the charge of Bill C-205's unconstitutionality. I leave it to the legal experts to draw the federal Agri Committee's attention to this problem.

In sum, I ask that the federal Agri Committee reject Bill C-205 on the basis that it fills no legislative gap, and will only serve to protect Canada's animal agriculture industry from public scrutiny while deflecting attention from the industry's inherent risks.

Cheers, and thank you for your attention.

Respectfully,

Yasmin Koop-Monteiro,

A concerned citizen

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