

The purported claim for implementing Bill C-205 into law is to protect our food system by ensuring proper biosecurity, with the assumption that whistle-blowers and animal rights activists may somehow compromise such biosecurity concerns.

I will keep this brief short as I'm certain many aspects of this bill are being sufficiently represented in other briefs.

I would like to bring up the farm occupation by a dozen activists at a pig farm in St-Hyacinthe. I am one of the accused activists who entered this farm and I would like to set the record straight.

In the first and second reading of this proposed bill, many erroneous claims were made about the introduction of disease into this farm, and how many animals were affected after the activists entered. I would like to state that these false claims are being perceived as true by many members of parliament. These claims are not based on fact. The facts will be presented in the upcoming trial later this year.

However, the MAPAQ report covering the investigation of conditions at Les Fermes Porgreg, has now been made public, and the evidence is clear that the codes of practice for pigs were not followed. The report found non-conformance in many areas: too many pigs housed in pens, filthy stalls, insufficient ventilation, and more.

We have also seen the images of pigs sitting or standing in many inches of their own waste, dead and dying pigs, and filthy conditions everywhere. It's quite apparent that this facility was the perfect breeding ground for pathogens and disease.

A report recently released by lawyers at Animal Justice, looked into disease outbreaks and biosecurity failures over the past 17 or so years in farms across Canada, and found that not one was attributed to activists. Not one.

If activists had not entered Les Fermes Porgreg, these horrible conditions would still exist. The activists' only request was media access so that the general public could see for themselves the appalling conditions inside; said request was denied). So much for a transparent food system.

Animal agriculture is already an industry cloaked in secrecy because if people really knew how animals are raised, there would be an outcry. Farm workers are not likely to blow the whistle on their employer if they witness something of concern. Let's get real here.

Bill C-205, under the pretense of protecting our food system, only serves to keep the dismal conditions of animals further hidden from view. It is not in the best interests of the animals who have no laws to protect their welfare; only Codes of Practice that may or may not be adhered to by farmers. Activists, whose goal is to bring to light the suffering of animals, would be unfairly penalized.