

## Regarding Bill C-205, Amendment to Health of Animals Act

To the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food,

It is my suspicion that, in spite of being promoted as an amendment to further improve the health and wellbeing of farm animals, Bill C-205 is a punitive law meant to enact excessive punishments for those found guilty of trespassing on a farmer's property. I have been led to this belief after reviewing a previous fact sheet shared by the OMAFRA that gives details on biosecurity practices for farm animals. Because Bill C-205 fails to pertinently address real matters concerning biosecurity on farms, and because current legislation already makes it illegal to trespass, and to cause harm to or poison animals, I suspect that this bill is being put through to increase the severity of punishment for those who are found guilty of trespassing.

As stated within the fact sheet made available by the OMAFRA, steps to ensure the health and wellbeing of animals largely involve reducing the risk of exposure to waste materials created by other farmed animals. If it is truly the intention of legislators to address surrounding contamination and the spread of disease, it would be pertinent for legislation to be descriptive on the kinds of acts that would bring about these effects. Details for this are provided in the *Biosecurity Fundamentals For Visitors to Livestock Facilities Fact Sheet* written by Jim Dalrymple and Dr. Paul Inness, OMAFRA.

According to the OMAFRA's Guidelines for Visitor Risk Assessment, the highest risk factor for the health and wellbeing of animals *is exposure to individuals who routinely visit farms or auctions, own and/or care for a similar species of animal, or have regular direct contact with animals*. Following from this, those who present the greatest risk to animal health are individuals who make frequent contact with other farm animals or live amongst animals - an aspect of which Bill C-205 fails to be descriptive. In the best interest of animal health and wellbeing, it would be of more use for the federal government to introduce regulations that would sustain the best practices of biosecurity. These kinds of regulations already exist for transport and the slaughter of animals, but as of to date, when it comes to overseeing the health of animals inside farms, there is no government oversight and the industry is left to manage this on its own. Like any other industry, it would be to the benefit of Canadians to ensure that health and sanitation is closely inspected as to reduce the likelihood of the transmission of disease.

In addition to the above, Bill C-205 attempts to make legislation where there are already laws that make trespassing and the harm or poisoning of animals illegal. Laws protecting animals from harm and poison currently exist under the Criminal Code, and it is exclusively within each province's jurisdiction to enact laws on trespassing. If Bill C-205 were to pass, this would be an intrusion on a provincial government's jurisdiction to enact trespassing laws, and could be found unconstitutional.

Because of the above points, it is my belief that legislation introduced in Bill C-205 is meant to target those who would attempt to trespass on a farm. If it were the intent of animal agriculture to improve conditions of biosecurity, proposed legislation would provide apt description of how this could be done. Instead, Bill C-205 creates legislation where other laws already exist, while also allowing for excessive punishment for any found guilty of an offense. As such, it would be in the best interest of all Canadians to stop the passing of Bill C-205, so that we can find better ways to improve the health and wellbeing of animals, so that federal-provincial division of powers in Canada can be protected.

SOURCES:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/vet/facts/04-003.htm>