

To the members of the Committee,

June 3rd, 2021

In this brief, I will illustrate:

- That Bill C-205 is Ag-Gag legislation dressed up as biosecurity protection.
- That the Bill does not accomplish what it claims to accomplish but in fact is a product of the powerful agriculture lobby and targets concerned citizens who desire transparency in farming practices and conditions.

1- There is **no legislative gap** that Bill C-205 addresses. Every province already has its own anti-trespass legislation and it is already illegal under the Criminal Code AND under provincial welfare legislation to harm or poison animals.

2- The bill is misleading by insinuating that biosecurity threats come from activists or outsiders. The facts show that the real threat to biosecurity on farms is **farm workers** and **farming practices**.

- There is not a single documented case of an animal advocate introducing a biosecurity threat onto a farm.

-Disturbingly, disease outbreaks occur regularly on farms. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency monitors these, and report that they are typically caused by farm staff working on multiple farms, sharing equipment like needles and insemination equipment and, in the case of mad cow, feeding the ground up bodies of dead cows back to living cows. *Recent example:* the multiple outbreaks of Covid-19 on BC mink fur farms<sup>1</sup>.

-If Bill C-205 was truly intended to protect biosecurity, then it would apply to farmers as well. It does not. Scientific research has shown that Canadian farms demonstrate poor adherence to their voluntary biosecurity protocols. In a 2019 study, researchers found poor adoption of infection spread reduction measures on Canadian dairy farms, with a majority of farms not adopting sanitary practices. The researchers concluded that many important biosecurity practices are not being implemented on Canadian dairy farms<sup>2</sup>.

3- Bill C-205 does succeed in introducing shockingly severe punishment for people engaging in civil disobedience by occupying farms.

The reason people trespass on farms is that the government does not proactively monitor animal welfare conditions on farms in Canada. Our only federal law surrounding animal cruelty exempts all farming animals.

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<sup>1</sup> BC Government News Release. (2020, December 24). Mink on second farm test positive for COVID-19. <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020AFF0067-002145>

<sup>2</sup> Denis-Robichaud, J., Kelton, D.F., Bauman, C., Barkema, H.W. (2019) Biosecurity and herd health management practices on Canadian dairy farms. Journal of Dairy Science. 2019 July 102(10). [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334660417\\_Biosecurity\\_and\\_herd\\_health\\_management\\_practices\\_on\\_Canadian\\_dairy\\_farms](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334660417_Biosecurity_and_herd_health_management_practices_on_Canadian_dairy_farms)

Animal welfare is of intense public concern, yet without federal or provincial animal welfare regulations for farms in this country, Canada is positioned far behind many European nations such as Belgium, Austria, Switzerland and the UK who have far more progressive laws around farming regulation and impose them on a national level. In Canada, we allow the farming industry to make its own rules.

Whistleblowing is the **only way** the Canadian government has left concerned citizens to witness and seek to improve the conditions of animals and workers on farms.

I have been speaking with many friends, family members and coworkers about this issue and we're losing faith and confidence in the farming industry because of this lack of transparency. We are also growing frustrated with the governments lack of understanding around these issues and the continued support of legislation put forth by the agricultural and farming lobby.

Times and attitudes are shifting and evolving. The Canadian government's reputation is increasingly under fire by the public for making choices that go against the ethics and values of Canadians. Voting in Bill C-205 would continue this trend.

**I recommend that the committee vote AGAINST Bill C-205.**

**I recommend that the committee take to heart the misleading nature of Bills such as Bill C-205.**

**I recommend that the committee read the following analysis from a 2021 study published by Animal Justice on the issue:**

"...a visitor will generally only pose a significant risk to biosecurity if that visitor has recently been at another animal agriculture facility. Considering the number, frequency, and severity of disease outbreaks in the Canadian animal agriculture sector that have posed significant risks to animals, producers, food safety, and the public, prudent regulatory measures to address biosecurity should focus on the gaps and failures within the sector that have historically caused these outbreaks. Ag gag laws that harshly punish whistleblowers and animal advocates are a distraction from the true biosecurity vulnerabilities in the animal agriculture system."<sup>3</sup>

Thank you for reading this brief, and for the work that you do to make Canada a country we all want to live in. I acknowledge that these issues are hard and can feel confrontational, especially if you are a meat consumer or have not substantially researched the agricultural/dairy processes in Canada before. I deeply appreciate your careful consideration on this matter.

Warmly,  
Stephanie Izsak

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<sup>3</sup> Disease Outbreaks Biosecurity Failures on Canadian Farms  
<https://animaljustice.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Disease-Outbreaks-Biosecurity-Failures-on-Canadian-Farms-May-202021.pdf>