

# DRAFT ACTION PLAN

## Animal Welfare and Activism Events

*Ministry of Agriculture, in partnership with Public Safety and Solicitor General, RCMP and Industry*

### Introduction

On October 29th, 2019 Agriculture Day Minister Lana Popham made a statement denouncing the recent animal activism activities within BC. This action plan reflects the Minister's sentiments, including a jurisdiction scan of how other provinces are responding to animal activists, a standard operating procedure, a communications outline and a retail/processor response plan regarding potentially harmful animal activist activities. The goal of this action plan is to compliment the Ministry of Agriculture's current stance on animal activism and to provide a roadmap moving forward on how to address and dictate response within the ministry.

There is a heightened awareness in the industry with respect to on-farm animal activism. Recent incidents have resulted in theft of livestock, activists entering a premise (welfare, removal of animals) and are of concern due to:

- **Biosecurity:** Trespassers can unknowingly bring harmful agents (e.g. Influenza, African Swine Fever) onto a farm via contaminated clothing and footwear, equipment and vehicles.
- **Animal Welfare:** Trespassing can result in pain, stress and trauma for livestock subjected to mixing or 'freeing.'
- **Personal Safety/Trespassing:** Often farmers' place of work and residence are the same property. Farmers are legally entitled to a safe working environment, free of harassment and trespassers.
- **Mental Health:** Repeated stress and public demonization can impact farmer mental health.
- **Public Health:** Interacting with or removing animals or deadstock from farms carries risks for individuals to contract zoonotic diseases
- **Economic Impacts:** Trespasser actions and consequences can obstruct production and damage crops or livestock, resulting in economic loss.

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*The following is a proposed action plan on how to support animal agriculture retailers and processors during animal activism events and activities, proactively and reactively. This plan is separated into two sections: near term and long-term opportunities.*

### Section A: Near Term Opportunities

#### **1.) Promote BC's strict animal welfare laws and support throughout the entire value food chain through awareness and educational campaigns both within industry and to the public**

- Begin to educate retailers, abattoirs, and transporters of the animal agriculture sector on the relevant animal welfare material, and their commitment to animal welfare
- Develop promotional campaigns that educate consumers on high animal welfare standards and strengthen the industry
- Encourage adherence to industry standards within industry
  - AGRI to emphasize the use of the NFACC and the PCA within the entire food processing chain
  - Promote industry to build a brand that emphasizes the morals and resolutions the NFACC and the PCA reflect
- Facilitate educational offerings, information exchanges, and mentoring within BC for retailers, food processors and transporters
  - possibly could base the framework from the One Welfare platform:
  - Increasing education and awareness will help to establish different ways of working and improve efficiency within local and global networks of those working in animal welfare, human wellbeing and environmental issues.

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### **2.) Encourage producers, retailers, food processors and transporters to have an Emergency Response Plan dedicated to animal activism events**

- Allows for preparedness when the value chain is disturbed or interrupted
- Encourage business to plan “Mock Recalls” related to animal activism
- The largest impact felt from animal activism activities on retailer’s food processors in the interruption of market accessibility
  - Have emergency management, food processing analysts and industry specialists work with industry stakeholders to accomplish this
  - Look specifically at Ontario’s Farm and Food Care “Proudly Presenting Agriculture” and recommendations from law enforcement on how to manage an animal activism event

### **3.) Prioritize regaining public trust in AGRI response to animal activism related activities**

- Promote actions that AGRI plans on taking to minimize impact of animal activism on producers, the food processing value chain, and the animal agriculture market
- Highlight the welfare funding through CAP that is already implemented
- Establish an educational outreach program on what is at risk when animal activism takes illegal actions (such as extreme stress on animals, trespassing, and potential zoonotic disease transfer)
  - Highlight the Minister Popham’s statement regarding animal activism and have it echoed throughout the Ministry and in all outgoing communications

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### Section B: Long Term Opportunities

#### **1.) Support retailers, food processors and transporters through relationships and advocacy by creating a more adaptable market**

- Build relationships throughout the value chain
- Promote business courses that focus on building out risk assessments related to animal activism
- Continue to host roundtable discussions between abattoirs, retailers, industry stakeholders and government
  - Focus discussion on creating more nimble markets
  - Encourage the production of emergency response plans

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#### **3.) Establish mental welfare awareness within the entire food processing value chain and producers within the entire food processing value chain and producers**

- Promote the importance of mental health throughout the entire food value chain
- Highlight the interconnections between positive animal welfare and individual mental wellbeing
  - Engage with all members of the food value chain regarding the status of employees, family members etc. mental health
  - AGRI could utilize the One Welfare platform as reference
  - Perform a jurisdictional scan of other provinces programs related to producers and mental health

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### Appendix 1: Jurisdictional Scan

The following chart summarizes current status, as well as response actions to date in various jurisdictions:

Province	Description of Incidents	Supportive Activities Underway/Planned
<b>British Columbia</b>	Documented incidents in the chicken, hog, egg, dairy, game farm and turkey sectors, including “undercover” filming, protests, and harassment (e.g. threatening letters).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Roundtable with various law enforcement agencies/ministries and stakeholders to educate the producers of their rights.</li><li>• Recently adopted welfare codes of practice (builds public trust).</li></ul>
<b>Alberta</b>	Spike in incidents (especially pork). Concerns are associated with illegal activity (trespass, harassment, mischief), public / personal safety and animal health and welfare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On October 3, 2019, the Government of Alberta announced that it would be developing options to amend the province’s <i>Petty Trespass Act</i> to specifically address trespassing on agricultural land, and to increase penalties under the Act.</li><li>• Alberta also plans to amend the Animal Health General Regulation and possibly the <i>Agricultural Pest Act</i> to address biosecurity breaches and create compensation tools for farmers/ranchers impacted by biosecurity breach.</li></ul>
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	On-farm animal activism is of concern to several Saskatchewan’s stakeholder organizations. Producers are looking for support in how to deal with animal rights activism on their property. Organizations are looking for recommendations to producers on how to deal with confrontation, and how to conduct themselves in the event of a trespasser.	Recent changes made to <i>Saskatchewan’s Trespass to Property Act</i> . These changes provide additional protection to landowners. The Act makes it an offence, without lawful authority, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enter onto posted or enclosed lands or other premises without the consent of the owner or occupier;</li><li>• Enter onto lands or other premises, even if not posted or enclosed, after being requested not to do so by the owner or other occupier;</li><li>• Engage in prohibited activities on the lands or other premises without the consent of the owner or occupier;</li></ul>

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	<p>Industry is frustrated with increased rural crime and how the police and judicial system handles the incidents. These incidents affect producer's livelihood and their business. Industry recommends producers revisiting security protocols for property and how to conduct themselves in an event of a trespass.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fail to leave lands or other premises, or to discontinue an activity, after being requested to do so by the owner or other occupier; and</li> <li>• After leaving lands or other premise or discontinuing an activity pursuant to the request of an owner or other occupier, return to the lands or other premises or resume the activities.</li> <li>• Persons contravening the Act are liable on summary conviction to a fine of up to \$2,000.</li> <li>• The amendments to the <i>Trespass to Property Act</i> will come into force soon. We are optimistic that these amendments will reduce acts of trespass and improve the safety of livestock producers.</li> <li>• We encourage livestock producers who are the victim of trespass, harassment, or other criminal conduct to contact the police.</li> </ul>
<b>Manitoba</b>	<p>The department is aware of isolated incidents in the past that include members of activist groups attempting to join communal farming communities as members of farm staff or interested parties. As well, activist groups have appeared at high traffic, facilities with public access (e.g. auction marts).</p> <p>However, currently, the Province is not aware of any available historical data sets to accurately review the incidence and frequency of all activist activities on farm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manitoba's Animal Welfare branch can enforce and can respond through the <i>Animal Care Act</i> to any significant complaint against activists who have placed the health of an animal at risk or owners whom may have animal welfare issues on their premises.</li> <li>• The Provincial Animal Care Committee exists to improve collaboration between associations, universities and governments and discuss important emerging issues related to animal care that include activist realities.</li> <li>• The provincial Chief Veterinarian's Office continues to be involved in overarching efforts with industry associations</li> </ul>

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		towards enhancing their public trust and social responsibility that result in ongoing improvements.
<b>Ontario</b>	Increased advocacy from producers around on-farm activism in Ontario (e.g., letter writing campaign, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ontario's Minister Hardeman met with sector representatives in June to discuss concerns. Heard frustration over convictions not pursued in the judicial system. Stakeholders have called for assurance of a more rigid process to address incidents (from a prevention and enforcement perspective).</li> <li>• Currently considering all options, including new legislation, to shield farmers from animal rights activists.</li> </ul>
<b>Quebec</b>	<p>Producers have not been briefing the Ministry's regional offices of activism incidents.</p> <p>Reported events have been identified through social media (e.g., cyberbullying, protests against livestock production, and release of videos of animal slaughter or mistreatment). In August 2014, individuals illegally released 3000 mink from a breeding farm.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At this time, there are no specific activities underway to support producers other than the already existing support geared for mental health.</li> <li>• Steering group members of the <i>Stratégie Québécoise de santé et de bien-être des animaux</i> were invited to forward to their co-chair, and to the president of the committee <i>Un bien-être (Comité national de santé et bien-être animal)</i>, incidents of activism brought to their attention.</li> <li>• On October 17, 2018, partners of the annual meeting of the <i>Stratégie Québécoise de santé et de bien-être des animaux</i> had as their theme "Health, Well-being: Truth and Consequences". Ms. Pierrette Desrosiers, psychologist and one of the speakers, made a presentation entitled "Animal and caretaker welfare: what is the link, where some aspects of the impact of aggressive activism were addressed.</li> <li>• Incidents of on-farm activism may be reported to the <i>Sûreté du Québec</i> and suspects may be charged with break and enter and mischief.</li> </ul>

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<b>New Brunswick</b>	<p>Anti-dairy campaign advertised on buses and billboards in Fredericton and Moncton, NB in June 2019. Vegan Education Group NB conducted campaign with the slogan 'Dairy is Scary' directs consumers to Erin Janus's YouTube video posted in 2015 about the dairy industry. One billboard showed a dairy calf accompanied by the slogan 'dairy took my mom and my life'.</p> <p>A visitor to a farm during Open Farm Day in 2018 asked the question what happens to calves after they are born. The visitor (a self-proclaimed vegan) was not happy when she was told that animals may not be kept and started a Go Fund Me campaign on Social Media to save the calves and raise money to bring them to a sanctuary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In response to media requests, New Brunswick's Department of Agriculture has supported the industry in promoting the work of dairy farmers on adhering to animal welfare standards through the Pro Action Program.</li></ul>
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All activities are prevention focused to promote public trust (animal welfare) and assurance in agriculture. Support industry-led and producer-led assurance projects as appropriate through CAP.</li><li>• Collaborate with Canadian Centre for Food Integrity to promote public trust.</li><li>• Animal Welfare Act incorporates all NFACC Codes of Practice by reference.</li><li>• Working with communications colleagues to develop series of tweets "Welfare Wednesdays" to educate re: Codes of Practice.</li></ul>

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<b>Yukon</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Government of Yukon is updating legislation regarding the welfare and control of animals, which includes livestock.</li></ul>
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