



Canadian Federation of Humane Societies

Fédération des sociétés canadiennes d'assistance aux animaux

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Animal welfare ignored in new government agriculture framework

OTTAWA - Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has unveiled the *Growing Forward* Framework Agreement that sets Canada's agricultural policy framework for the next five years. However, there's a major flaw in the plan – it will do nothing to address Canada's shameful record on animal welfare.

A report released today by the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (CFHS) illustrates just how far behind Canada is of countries like Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the European Union. All of these jurisdictions have invested millions of dollars in recent years to address animal welfare. In stark contrast, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) launches a five-year plan that basically ignores farm animal welfare.

"The Minister of Agriculture has shown no interest in taking any leadership on animal welfare in Canada", states Shelagh MacDonald, CFHS Program Director. "It's rather unbelievable that the Canadian government is so out of step with the rest of the world on this issue. Throughout the *Growing Forward* consultation process, animal welfare has been ignored, resulting in a framework that includes no provision, strategy nor plan to fund animal welfare."

Other countries have comprehensive animal welfare strategies specifically aimed at ensuring high standards of animal welfare. They also have permanent and state-funded animal welfare advisory committees that provide counsel to government.



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The Canadian government funded the formation and first two years of operation of the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC), which provides a national coordinated approach promoting responsible farm animal care in Canada. But it has refused to provide even \$100,000 per year to support this rather modest animal care initiative.

Recently, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) urged Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz and his government to take action on NFACC funding.

“At a minimum, the Canadian government needs to provide sustainable funding for NFACC through the *Growing Forward* initiative,” explains Dr. Terry Whiting, Chair, CVMA Animal Welfare Committee. “This would aid in further development of livestock Codes of Practice and enhance Canadian livestock welfare.”

There are also increasing market and trade implications of animal welfare around the world and Canada will be left behind if our government doesn't take action now.

“Canadians have repeatedly shown that they care about the welfare of animals”, stated Ms. MacDonald. “They should be appalled to learn that Canada lags so far behind many other countries and that our Agriculture Minister has no plans to remedy this.”

About the CFHS

The Canadian Federation of Humane Societies is the only national voice representing humane societies and SPCAs across Canada. The CFHS is a charitable organization committed to promoting respect and humane treatment toward all animals. We have a seat on the National Farm Animal Care Council, the organization responsible for the review and development of Codes of Practice for the Care and Handling of livestock. To learn more, visit www.cfhs.ca.

About CVMA

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) is the national body representing and serving the interests of over 11,000 veterinarians in Canada. Animal welfare advocacy is a top priority for the CVMA. To learn more, visit <http://canadianveterinarians.net/animal.aspx>