

November 3, 2014

Via Email

The Honourable Gerry Ritz
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
Gerry.Ritz@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Ritz,

Re: Coalition of Animal Protection Organizations Call for Change to Farmed Animal Transport Regulations

On the heels of a Mercy For Animals Canada investigation exposing profound animal suffering and complicit government inspectors at a pig assembly yard in Alberta, a coalition of animal protection organizations representing hundreds of thousands of Canadians are urgently renewing calls for the federal government to update Canada's archaic animal transportation regulations.

The animal protection movement has been calling for such change since the 1980s, pointing out that Canada lags behind the European Union, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States with the protections afforded to farmed animals in transit.

The federal government has yet to update the outdated regulations, despite promising to do so for more than a decade.

Canadians have expressed shock, outrage, sadness, and plain confusion that our government is so reticent to afford animals common-sense welfare protections. Permitting egregious animal suffering is inconsistent with the values of Canadians from all across the political spectrum.

The law should protect farmed animals in transport by ensuring that:

- animals are not transported for longer than eight hours without food, water, or rest, which is the limit legislated in the European Union.
- animals are not exposed to extreme weather. Trucks should be fitted with forced air and heating ventilation systems that ensure proper air circulation and keep vehicles between 5 and 30 degrees Celsius, or animals should not be transported.
- the use of electric prods is severely curtailed or eliminated.

- animals are not overcrowded. Measurable, science-based loading-density standards should be set out in the regulations.
- male pigs do not have their nerve-filled tusks cut off. Instead, they should be transported separately from one another, as they are in the European Union.
- the permitted slope of ramps used for loading and unloading is greatly reduced or hydraulic lifting systems are used in place of ramps.
- transport companies and personnel are trained, tested, and licenced with respect to animal welfare criteria such as animal behaviour and physiology.

In addition, penalties should be effective, dissuasive and proportionate, as they are mandated by law to be in the European Union.

Canadians are compassionate people who have no appetite for animal abuse. Yet, our transport regulations are at odds with Canadian values, allowing severe animal suffering to flourish. It is time for the government to act to modernize Canada's outdated transport regulations and bring them into line with the rest of the Western world.

Yours truly,

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