



# Three-Year Strategic Plan

2023  
TO  
2025

*Leading the legal fight  
for animals in Canada*





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# Vision & Mission



## Vision

Our vision is a compassionate country where animals are respected, have legal protections, and enjoy the freedoms they deserve.

## Mission

Our mission is to lead the legal fight for animals in Canada.

We work to pass strong new animal protection laws, push to hold industries accountable for harming animals, and fight on behalf of animals in court. Our aim is to create legal, social, and corporate policy change for animals in Canada.



# Values & Principles

## Core Values



### 1. COMPASSION

We value the lives and dignity of all animals. We also understand that the systems that exploit animals and cause them to suffer are harmful to the human members of our communities.

### 2. IMPACT

Our work makes a difference in the lives of animals. We work to end all forms of animal suffering, but choose to focus our resources on tackling the worst forms of suffering that affect the most animals. We regularly examine and re-evaluate our progress and approach, and make evidence-based decisions about how to best effect legal, social, and corporate policy change for animals.

### 3. INCLUSIVE

We respect diversity, value equity, and strive for inclusivity. We believe everyone has a role to play in making legal, social, and corporate policy change for animals. We seek to break down barriers to ensure we welcome people from all communities into our organization and movement.

### 4. COLLABORATION

We seek out and work with allies to achieve results. Building a better world for animals is a complex undertaking, and we know that advancing this mission depends on building partnerships.

### 5. NIMBLE

We anticipate and react quickly to new opportunities and challenges. We support new ideas and technologies that have the promise of enhancing our work to help animals.

### 6. DETERMINED

We have the courage to persevere in the face of adversity. Transforming Canada's relationship with animals is a monumental task, and we are up to the job.

# Guiding Principles

- **Animals are sentient**, with the ability to think, feel, and suffer.
- **Animals should not be mere property.** They deserve legal rights appropriate to their species, including legal standing.
- **Government, industries, and other institutions must be held accountable** for their role in causing animals to suffer.
- **Animals deserve laws to protect them, and public oversight.** Industries that use animals should not be allowed to self-regulate, or to operate without laws and oversight.
- **Transparency matters.** We believe people deserve to know the unfiltered truth about how animals are treated, free from industry spin and marketing.
- **Evidence matters.** We draw on scientific research, veterinary evidence, and the best available data to support our legal and policy work to help animals.
- **Protecting the rights of animal advocates** to speak up for animals is an important part of making social change.
- **Animal suffering and human suffering are deeply intertwined.** Building a better world for animals also benefits humans.
- **Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples** is a responsibility shared by all, including animal advocates.

photo credit: Jo-anne McArthur, We Animals Media



# What Sets Us Apart



## LEGAL FOCUS



Animal Justice is Canada's only national organization focused on animal law advocacy. The law is one of our most powerful tools to make social change for animals, and Animal Justice is uniquely positioned to use it.

## EXPOSÉS



We are the only Canadian organization focused on systematically exposing animal cruelty in all sectors, through hard-hitting undercover investigations.

## EFFECTIVE



We deliver concrete results for animals by improving laws and policies, and mobilizing Canadians to become part of the solution.

## EFFICIENT



With our lean team and strong programmatic focus, we use resources efficiently to maximize our impact.

# The Animals We Work to Help

Animal Justice fights for all animals in Canada across five animal issue areas.

## 1. FARMED ANIMALS

**Factory farming causes unbearable suffering to hundreds of millions of animals in Canada every year.**

Animal Justice's top priority from 2023 to 2025 is protecting farmed animals, because of their numbers and extent of suffering.

In 2022, over 841 million land animals were killed for food in Canada—a record high. An estimated 10 billion aquatic animals are also killed annually.

Farmed animals in Canada have virtually no on-farm legal protections during their lives. Most standard farm practices are exempt from animal welfare laws, and are still legal in Canada. This includes caging hens and confining mother pigs in gestation crates—practices widely condemned as some of the most cruel aspects of industrial farming, and banned in other developed nations.


**Animal Justice is fighting for legal and corporate policy change for farmed animals.**

Worryingly, US-style agricultural gag (or “ag gag”) laws arrived in Canada in 2019. These dangerous laws outlaw undercover investigations at farms and slaughter plants, and target animal advocates with massive fines and jail time. Farms and slaughter plants already operate behind closed doors, shielded from public scrutiny and legal accountability. Ag gag laws seek to shut down the only method the public has to learn the truth about what goes on behind farm doors: investigations by advocates and whistleblowers.


**Animal Justice is actively challenging existing ag gag laws in court, and fighting to stop new ag gag bills from becoming law. Animal Justice also conducts and releases undercover investigations to expose widespread, hidden animal cruelty at farms and slaughterhouses.**







*Animal Justice is  
fighting for legal  
and corporate  
policy change for  
farmed animals.*



*Canada should put animals first — not the profits of breeders, puppy mills, and pet stores.*

## 2. COMPANION ANIMALS

Companion animals are beloved family members, and the law should treat them that way.

Most of us care deeply about the cats, dogs, and other companion animals with whom we share our homes. But the Canadian pet industry is almost entirely unregulated, leading to horrible suffering of the animals we love the most. Laws are weak, inconsistent, and poorly enforced. Puppy mills and backyard breeders run rampant in Canada, often with animals crammed into tiny, filthy cages, and forced to pump out litter after litter until their bodies give out. It's not just dogs who face this abuse—cats, rabbits, reptiles, birds, hamsters, mice, rats, and many exotic animals are also bred for sale. And while breeders profit from selling animals, animal shelters and rescues are stretched thin as they try to care for abandoned animals in need of homes.

Although many provinces restrict the ownership of some exotic animals, these laws don't go far enough. It's often still legal to keep wild and exotic animals as pets—no matter how much they suffer in captivity. Ontario, the largest province, has no restrictions whatsoever.

Canada should put animals first—not the profits of breeders, puppy mills, and pet stores.

**Companion animals deserve strong animal protection laws, backed by effective public enforcement to crack down on cruelty. Animal Justice is advocating to overhaul legal protections for the companion animals who depend on us.**



### 3. ANIMALS IN LABORATORIES

#### Animals in laboratories deserve stronger legal protection.

At least 4 million animals like primates, dogs, birds, mice, and rats are used in research every year in Canada. They are often kept in barren conditions, and forced to endure cruel, painful laboratory experiments—sometimes without any pain relief. Unlike most other developed countries, the federal government doesn't regulate or oversee animal experimentation, and most provinces don't either. This leaves animals unprotected, and the public ignorant about the extent of animal suffering in laboratories.

In 2023, Canada passed a bill to end cosmetic testing on animals, and passed a groundbreaking bill aimed at phasing out toxicity testing on animals—the cruellest and most painful form of animal research. In toxicity tests, animals are subjected to practices like being force-fed deadly substances or having chemicals dripped into their eyes. More than 150,000 animals suffer in toxicity tests every year in Canada.

**Animal Justice was a vital force behind passing the toxicity testing law.**

Canada now joins other countries worldwide that have passed laws to restrict or end animal toxicity and cosmetic testing.

Though these are positive and welcome steps, Canada still has a long way to go. We urgently need national regulation and oversight of laboratories, with regular, unannounced inspections and full public transparency. Canada should also create a national strategy and timeline to end animal experimentation as a whole, and instead mandate cruelty-free alternative methods that are better for animals, and are better science.

**Animal Justice will continue to work to end the suffering of animals used for experiments, product testing, and teaching.**



***Animal Justice was a vital force behind passing the toxicity testing law.***





*Animal Justice will continue fighting to get animals out of zoos, aquariums, and rodeos.*

## 4. ANIMALS IN ENTERTAINMENT

Zoos, aquariums, and rodeos are harmful to animals.

Wild animals like elephants, lions, tigers, monkeys, whales, and dolphins belong in their spacious natural habitats—not caged for human entertainment. Zoos and aquariums condemn animals to a lifetime behind bars, often in isolation or social groups that are unsuited to them. They're condemned to live in cages or tanks that can never simulate their natural habitats or climates.

**Animal Justice has gone undercover at zoos to expose the truth about how animals suffer.**

Animals used in rodeos and circuses are coerced into performing by fear-inducing, abusive training methods. Horses used in racing and rodeo

chuckwagon events have catastrophic injury and death rates. Causing distress to animals is illegal, yet rodeos are never prosecuted for cruelty.

Fortunately, Canada has been making some progress for animals used in entertainment. Most Canadians now oppose keeping animals in zoos and aquariums. Some municipalities have restricted circuses and zoos, horse-drawn carriages, rodeos, and other animal entertainment. And in 2019, Animal Justice was instrumental in passing a national ban on keeping whales and dolphins in tanks.

**Animal Justice will continue fighting to get animals out of zoos, aquariums, and rodeos.**



## 5. WILD ANIMALS

### Wild animals lack basic protections.

Canada prides itself on our majestic and varied wildlife, but wild animals in Canada have few legal protections. They are subjected to trophy hunting, killing contests, trapping and snaring, fishing, poisoning, and government-sponsored extermination programs. In addition, fur farming is still legal in Canada, with animals like foxes, minks, and chinchillas confined in tiny, barren wire cages on industrial-scale fur farms.

Wild animals urgently need stronger protections, and it's time for Canada to join with other countries around the world that are closing down fur farms to protect animals, and prevent the spread of dangerous diseases.

**Animal Justice is working to ban trophy hunting and wildlife killing contests, outlaw fur farming, and end extermination programs and other cruel practices.**



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# Our History

The team at Animal Justice consists of passionate professionals who fight tirelessly to help animals.

## KEY EVENTS

**2008**

Lawyers for Animal Welfare founded as the only national animal law organization.

**2012**

Lawyers for Animal Welfare becomes Animal Justice.

**2015**

Animal Justice argues on behalf of animals for the first time at the Supreme Court of Canada.

**2016**

Animal Justice hires its first full-time Executive Director, Camille Labchuk.

**2017**

Animal Justice releases Canada's first-ever Canadian undercover zoo investigation.

**2019**

Animal Justice hosts the first Canadian Animal Law Conference.

Animal Justice helps pass the first new federal animal protection laws in over 100 years, including a ban on whale and dolphin captivity.







## 2020

Animal Justice releases hidden-camera footage from an Ontario pig factory farm—the last legal undercover investigation before ag gag laws take effect.

## 2021

Animal Justice Academy launches to train and mobilize advocates.

Animal Justice files the first Canadian lawsuit challenging ag gag laws.



## 2022

Animal Justices releases an undercover exposé of the Ontario zoo industry.

## 2023

Animal Justice is a vital force behind passing national laws to phase out toxicity testing—the most painful forms of animal research.



# Our Focus Areas

Animal Justice is prioritizing three Focus Areas in 2023-2025

- Legal & Policy Campaigns
- Inform & Inspire
- Organizational Strength

## Vision, Mission, & Focus Areas

### Vision Statement

Our vision is a compassionate country where animals are respected, have legal protections, and enjoy the freedoms they deserve.

### Mission Statement

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### Focus Areas

#### Legal & Policy Campaigns

Improve laws and corporate policies to protect animals

- Strengthen legal protections
- Give animals a voice in courtrooms
- Promote corporate change in the food system

#### Inform & Inspire

Drive increased public awareness of animal suffering, and empower animal advocates

- Expose hidden animal suffering
- Train and mobilize animal advocates
- Grow the field of animal law

#### Organizational Strength

Create a powerful and resilient organization

- Grow annual budget and resources
- Maintain a diverse and inclusive workplace
- Ensure effective administration and compliance



# Legal & Policy Campaigns

**Goal:** Improve laws and corporate policies to protect animals

## Objectives

Strengthen legal protections for animals, to better align with Canadian values

Give animals a voice in courtrooms across the country

Promote corporate change to end some of the worst animal suffering on farms

## How we're moving forward

## Strategies

1. Work with lawmakers to champion laws that protect animals from suffering and end animal exploitation
2. Mobilize a national movement to demand stronger animal protection laws

1. Engage in strategic litigation to uphold and strengthen legal protections for animals
2. Fight in court to block ag gag laws and other attempts to cover up animal cruelty, and to protect the legal rights of animal advocates

1. Expose hidden animal suffering in the food system through hard-hitting undercover exposés
2. Campaign against companies complicit in cruel farming practices, like cages and pens

photo credit: Andrew Skowron, We Animals Media





# Inform & Inspire

Goal: Build a powerful and effective animal advocacy movement

## Objectives

Inspire strong public support for protecting animals

Empower animal advocates to be more active and effective

Grow the field of animal law

## How we're moving forward

## Strategies

1. Grow public awareness of and concern over animal suffering
2. Educate people and shift public opinion by sharing compelling, informative content across platforms
3. Secure widespread, mainstream media coverage promoting animal protection

1. Maintain and grow the Animal Justice Academy training and community-building platform
2. Offer targeted training to drive advocacy that supports campaign priorities
3. Grow our base of active supporters and deepen their engagement in our campaigns

1. Continue to grow the annual animal law conference
2. Foster the next generation of animal lawyers through the student program
3. Increase awareness of and engagement in animal law



# Organizational Strength

## Goal: Create a resilient organization

### Objectives

Increase annual resources and budget to drive programmatic growth

Foster an inclusive, diverse organization with a strong and positive culture

Ensure effective administration and compliance

## How we're moving forward

### Strategies

1. Inspire strong ties and long-term engagement from individual supporters
2. Build sustainable and transformative relationships with mission-aligned funders

1. Attract and retain a committed and qualified team to fulfill our mission with dedication and integrity
2. Build a diverse and inclusive employee base, where no one feels excluded from our mission
3. Foster a culture of excellence and continuous learning

1. Manage assets and allocate resources prudently and responsibly
2. Safeguard the assets of the organization and protect against financial and legal risk
3. Increase awareness of and engagement in animal law advocacy in the legal community







# How You Can Help

To learn more about our work, how to get involved, or to donate, visit [www.animaljustice.ca](http://www.animaljustice.ca) or write to us at [info@animaljustice.ca](mailto:info@animaljustice.ca).

Together, we'll transform legal protections for animals in Canada.  
Thank you for your support.

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Animal Justice Canada is a registered charity.  
Animal Justice Canada Legislative Fund is a registered nonprofit.