



Animal Agriculture Joint Submission to AGRI on C-355

We, the undersigned, are writing on behalf of all animal agricultural sectors to express concern with Bill C-355, An Act to prohibit the export by air of horses for slaughter and to make related amendments to certain Acts, specifically the dangerous precedence it sets and the potential negative impact across the entire livestock industry.

Canada's animal agricultural industry, from farmers and ranchers through to processors are strong advocates of science and evidence-based decisions. Decision making based upon public opinion can at times be ill-informed and lack nuance, resulting in unintended consequences.

As representatives of livestock groups, the health and welfare of animals is important to us. That is why we provided support to the federal government in the development of Health of Animals Act Part XII: Transport of Animals. This Act is a standard on how to safely transport all classes of livestock. Horses are regularly transported by air for several purposes and all must be in compliance with the Act, regardless of the end use. Officials from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) provide inspection services related to the transportation of various types of animals in Canada and can act if concerns arise.

The fact that Bill C-355 specifically targets animals destined for slaughter means that mode of transport and animal welfare during transport are not the issues, but rather the intended end use for these horses (slaughter) is what this proposed legislation is trying to prevent. We are concerned that policy is being proposed without any regards to the science behind the legislation and regulations. We are also concerned with the precedent this sets in Canada. Canada's regulators have strong science-based standards and legislation and an international reputation that relies on continuing this basis. Bill C-355 would jeopardize the credibility of Canada's regulatory and inspection systems both at home and internationally.

We propose an amendment to Bill C-355 that would focus on animal welfare. Section 4 (1) currently states "It is prohibited for a person to export a horse" and we propose the following clause is added, "deemed compromised or unfit for transport". This would fit

within the mandate of CFIA to ensure humane transport of animals and has the full support of animal agriculture for continued care for horses until end of life.

The horse meat industry is legitimate, providing high-quality protein to cultures around the world and at home, notably in Quebec. Canadian producers, including members of indigenous and Metis nations, work hard to ensure a high-quality product is available.

At the end of their life, horse slaughter provides both an economically sustainable and a humane way to prevent serious and potentially long-term inhumane outcomes. Without appropriate marketing channels, horses could and would experience significant negative welfare outcomes, as has been well documented in other jurisdictions enacting horse slaughter bans.

We are concerned that this proposed Bill would have dramatic repercussions on animal welfare in Canada and urge the government to base policy decisions on scientific and economic evidence rather than force a value proposition on people. Welfare concerns about Canadian animals should be addressed through working with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, which is the authoritative regulator who most closely works with animals, producers and exporters and understands the impacts of such a ban.

Canadian farmers are trying their utmost to meet rising global demand for high-quality proteins and to contribute to both domestic and global food security. Closing marketing channels for these livestock producers could make the global food crisis worse for underprivileged nations and worse for the animals.

Thank you for your continued support of the Canadian livestock industry and a sustainable rural Canada.

Sincerely,

Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance
Canadian Cattle Association
Canadian Federation of Agriculture
Canadian Meat Council
Canadian Pork Council
Canadian Sheep Federation
National Cattle Feeder's Association