

Minister
of Agriculture and
Agri-Food



Ministre
de l'Agriculture et de
l'Agroalimentaire

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0C5

FEB 02 2017

Quote: 227488



Mr. Alistair MacGregor, MP
519 Confederation Building
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. MacGregor:

Thank you for your letter regarding horse slaughter in Canada. I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the concerns of your constituents.

First, let me say that our government is committed to the humane treatment of horses in Canada. We take issues of animal welfare very seriously. All those involved in the raising and handling of horses have a duty to ensure that horses in their care are treated humanely. This is a responsibility shared not only by the federal government but also by provincial and territorial governments, producers, industry organizations, and many others.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) oversees the humane transportation of all animals under the *Health of Animals Act* and the *Health of Animals Regulations*. In terms of the current regulations for the transport of horses, confinement for the purposes of transport cannot exceed 36 hours, after which access to food, water, and rest must be provided. The animals are required to be fit for the trip, must not be crowded to such an extent that they are injured or experience undue suffering, and must be able to stand in their natural position without coming into contact with an overlying deck or roof. The transporter is required to ensure that the construction of the vehicle is adequate for the transportation of horses.

Since taking office, I have been very engaged with stakeholder groups on topics related to ensuring high standards of care for animals during transport. The Government is responding to long-standing requests to strengthen the *Health of Animals Regulations*. The proposed amendments are the product of ten years of consultation with industry, special-interest groups, and the public, aimed at improving animal welfare and reducing the risk of animal suffering during transportation. The proposal seeks to establish clear, science-based requirements that better reflect the needs of animals while taking into account current industry practices.

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Mr. Alistair MacGregor, MP

I am pleased to inform you that the proposed amendments to Part XII of the *Health of Animals Regulations*, which pertain to the transport of animals, are now in the public comment phase in the *Canada Gazette*, Part I, Vol. 150, No. 49, and can be found at www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2016/2016-12-03/html/reg2-eng.php. This pre-publication stage provides an opportunity for interested parties, including the Canadian public, to review the draft regulatory text and provide comments and recommendations. I encourage you to take this opportunity to make your voice heard by participating in this important process.

CFIA inspectors also enforce laws about the humane handling and slaughter of animals in facilities they inspect, as required under the *Meat Inspection Act*. The inspectors can intervene if there are infractions, and they can issue requests for corrective actions. In response to severe or repeated infractions, they can suspend or cancel an operator's licence to produce meat for human consumption.

Anyone who observes farm animals suffering during transport or at a slaughter facility can report it to the CFIA, which will investigate and take appropriate action. The CFIA responds to reports of animal cruelty from the public, the media, and non-government organizations. The Agency reviews the reports and investigates the facility to verify that operators are following the law. The CFIA may require improvements and, if it does, intensifies its inspection until it is assured that the facility is following the law. For more information about the CFIA's enforcement activities, please visit www.inspection.gc.ca/about-the-cfia/accountability/enforcement-and-compliance/eng/1299846323019/1299846384123.

The safety of horsemeat for human consumption falls within the responsibilities of the Honourable Jane Philpott, Minister of Health. I have taken the liberty of forwarding a copy of your correspondence to her for consideration.

I trust this information will be useful to you in responding to your constituents. Again, thank you for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,



Lawrence MacAulay, PC, MP

c.c.: The Honourable Jane Philpott, PC, MP