



MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARD A HUMANE CANADA





A HUMANE CANADA™

All animals have a life worth living. They are recognized as sentient beings by a society that embraces its responsibilities with regard to their interests.

LAWFUL INTERACTIONS WITH ANIMALS

HUMANE USE

For animals under direct human responsibility (e.g. companion animals, animals used for human purposes, such as farm animals, animals in science, working dogs)

- Standards of care are in use that meet their welfare
- Options are provided to allow them to choose positive affective states
- Ethical considerations are used to guide decision-making about use

HUMANE CONSIDERATION

For wild animals (for whom we don't have direct responsibility for care)

- We recognize our ethical responsibility to respect their needs and interests
- Their resources are not removed, their habitat is not degraded
- We don't harm them for exploitative purposes (e.g. luxury, fashion, sport, entertainment)

LEGAL SYSTEM

- To address unlawful situations

HOW WE WILL GET THERE

Universal humane education that teaches empathy, respect and compassion for others, and relies on ethics, mindfulness and emotional intelligence

A scenic mountain landscape with a lake, forest, and a person sitting on a cliff. The background shows a vast mountain range with a lake in the foreground. A person is sitting on a rocky outcrop in the lower left, looking out over the landscape. The sky is clear and blue, and the mountains are covered in green forest. The lake is a deep blue color. The overall scene is peaceful and majestic.

INTRODUCTION

What is a humane country?

What would a humane Canada look like?

In 2018, the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies changed its name to Humane Canada™ in order to fully embody the vision of the organization and to keep top of mind our raison-d'être: creating "a humane Canada". But how do we know we are making progress in this country toward more humaneness?

In order to answer these questions, Humane Canada™ has developed a list of indicators that will help the animal advocacy community to measure how we are progressing in a diversity of issues that affect different groups of animals. The diagram on the previous page situates those issues and groups, as described next.

In a humane country, there is an understanding that all animals have a life worth living, and they are recognized as sentient beings by a society that embraces its responsibilities with regard to their interests. This is expressed in the legal framework for animals, which determines the lawful interactions with animals. With respect to animals who are kept and used for human purposes, such as companion animals, farm animals, animals in science, and working dogs, lawful use means that standards of care for the animals are applied that ensure good welfare and allow the animals options, so they have some agency to choose positive affective states. As well, ethical considerations are used to guide decision-making about animal use.

With regard to wild animals for whom we don't have direct responsibility for care, but for whom we nonetheless have responsibility to respect their needs and interests, in a humane country, the law protects their resources and habitats and restricts us from harming them for exploitative purposes. For both animals used by humans and for wild animals, where unlawful situations arise, there is accountability within the justice system. The extensive level of social change required to make real progress toward this vision will only be achieved through widespread universal humane education that teaches empathy, respect and compassion for others, and relies on ethics, mindfulness and emotional intelligence.

We can't say that Canada is or is not humane — or even whether or not it is making progress — unless we can measure and track indicators of these issues.

ABOUT HUMANE CANADA™

Humane Canada™ is the federation of SPCAs and humane societies. As Canada's voice for animal welfare, we drive positive, progressive change to end animal cruelty, improve animal protection and promote the humane treatment of all animals.



The Guiding Principles of the organization are:

Humane Canada™ believes that each animal possesses intrinsic value, remarkable complexity and inherent dignity and, as such, is deserving of respect and moral concern.

Humane Canada™ advocates universal humane treatment, care and protection of all animals.

Humane Canada™ insists that all animals used by humans be provided with high levels of care to ensure their health, comfort and behavioural needs.

Humane Canada™ advocates habitat protection and enhancement for the well-being of animals in the wild.

Furthermore, Humane Canada™ has enunciated its philosophy on humaneness:

Humaneness means the treatment of an animal in a manner that ensures its welfare and well-being in circumstances where a human is or should be exercising care, custody, control or use of an animal. A person responsible for an animal must provide living conditions, necessities of life and care suitable to the circumstances and in accordance with the normal psychological and physical needs of the animal. Humane treatment of an animal precludes cruelty and involves every possible effort to avoid or reduce pain, suffering or injury.

Humaneness involves sensitivity toward all life in compliance with ethical, moral and legal principles. Human members of the animal kingdom have the responsibility to be humane in the ways they act or fail to act with respect to other animals. Humans who have care, custody, control or use of animals must be diligent in exercising this responsibility.

HOW THE INDICATORS WERE DEVELOPED

The work of Humane Canada™ includes pillars on advocacy to policy-makers, educating and raising awareness with the public, and strengthening the animal welfare sector. The indicators of a humane Canada provide a foundation for each of these areas.

As part of the initial research to develop the indicators, we requested Canadian animal welfare experts from different disciplines to respond to three scoping questions:

- What are the top animal welfare issues of greatest importance in Canada?
- What elements of legislation or governance would demonstrate strong animal welfare ethic among Canadian policy makers?
- What public attitudes would indicate a strong animal welfare ethic among Canadian society?

We received responses from a total of 87 experts from the following areas:

- Leaders in the animal welfare sector, from the membership of Humane Canada™
- Researchers from the University of Guelph animal behaviour and welfare group
- Members of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association’s Animal Welfare Committee
- Independent academics and professionals in animal welfare, from the fields of veterinary medicine, animal law (including crown prosecutors and enforcement professionals), environmental law, advocacy, and ethics.

Responses were received from at least one expert in each province, except Newfoundland and Labrador, with more responses from the more populous provinces.

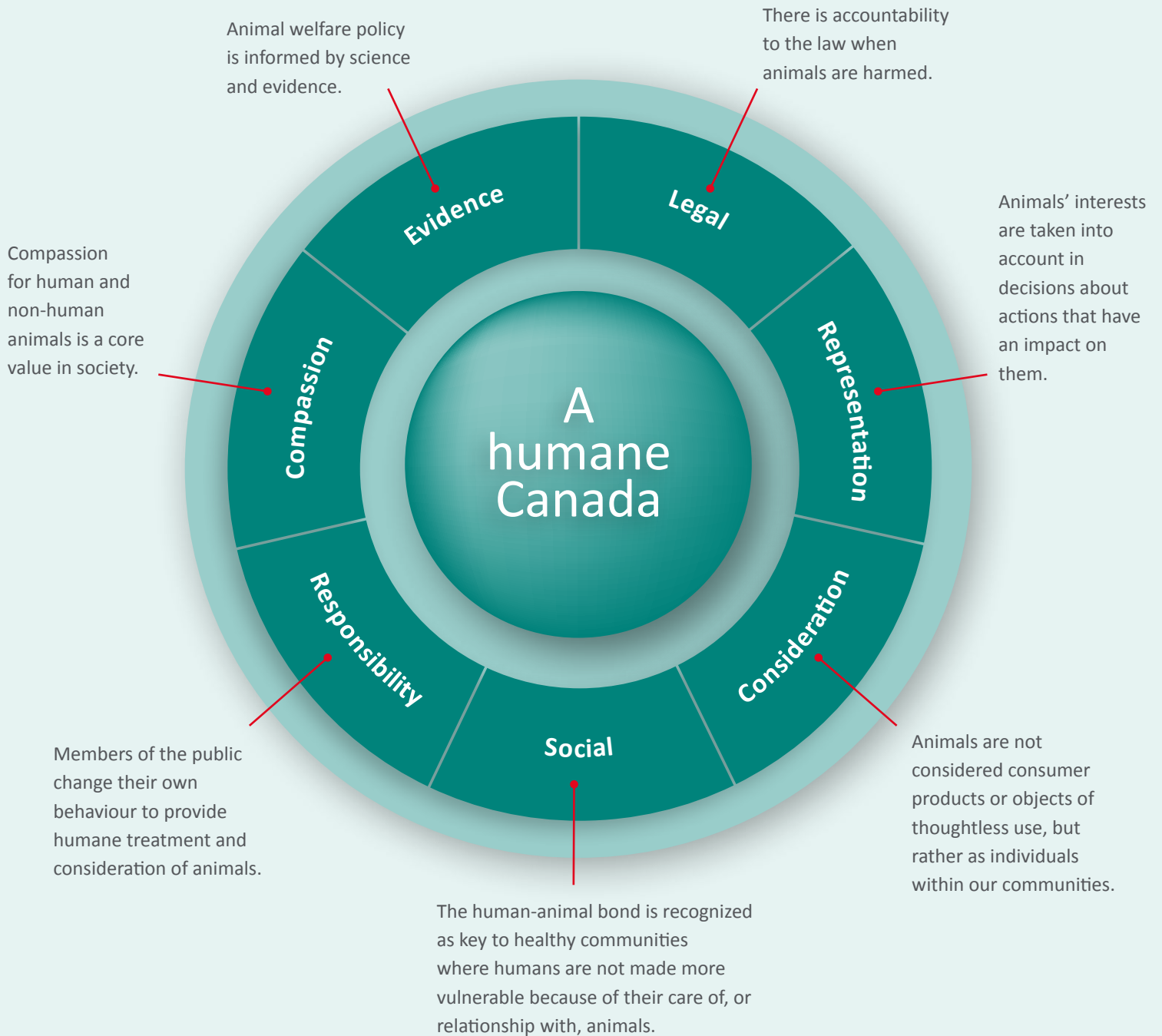
On the basis of the responses received as well as additional consultation and knowledge about animal welfare in Canada, we have identified seven keystones that support the conception of a country that values animals – a humane Canada. Each keystone has a number of enabling conditions and potential indicators thereof, which can be measured to infer our progress. It is important to understand that some of the enabling conditions described can support multiple keystones, but we have chosen the current framework to present the indicators in a simple form, recognizing the complex relationships between these cross-cutting elements.

The indicators are intended to be measured over the coming years, to gauge our progress toward the vision of a humane country. Humane Canada™ will measure and report on progress with the different indicators identified, and further encourages other animal advocacy organizations making efforts on specific issues to do the same, so that the entire humane sector can collectively track Canada’s progress.

TERMS USED IN THE MODEL

Keystone	Enabling Conditions	Indicator
The central principle or part of a policy, system, etc., on which a humane Canada depends for support.	Aspects that make it possible to achieve the keystone.	A measurement that can be used to infer progress in the enabling condition.

THE KEYSTONES OF A HUMANE CANADA





Legal Keystone

There is accountability to the law when animals are harmed.

Enabling Conditions

Animal protection laws are strong and applied in a clear, consistent and harmonized fashion across federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions.

Indicators

- L1. Laws in Canada that recognize animal sentience
- L2. Roles and responsibilities for animal welfare enforcement are clear, consistent and harmonized across provincial governments

Throughout the justice system, there is support for strong, effective outcomes for animal offences, such as prosecution with meaningful sentences and penalties to provide just denunciation/deterrence or alternative measures.

Indicators

- L3. Provinces have clear policy directing prosecution of animal cases, including Animal Cruelty Resource Counsel who specialize in animal law
 - L4. There are consistent definitions of offences, powers and obligations in provincial animal protection legislation
-

There is recognition of the violence link¹ in the legal system.

Indicators

- L5. Existing crime reporting and tracking systems that integrate animal cruelty
 - L6. Laws that address animal abuse and violent offences toward humans in a coordinated fashion
-

Justice stakeholders are trained and have knowledge of animal welfare and the violence link.

Indicators

- L7. Training programs on animal welfare and the violence link offered to prosecutors, judges and police staff
 - L8. Level of participation of prosecutors, judges and police staff in these training programs
-

Law enforcement is well-resourced and effective.

Indicators

- L9. Enforcement budgets for animal cruelty and abuse, including revenue, expenses and gaps
 - L10. Of the number of charges laid, those that result in prosecution
-

Ongoing democratic discourse, public consultation and debate regarding the ethics of use of animals is integrated in the legal system.

Indicators

- L11. The federal government has an animal welfare advisory body with diverse representation and knowledge from animal welfare non-governmental organizations, indigenous organizations, animal welfare science, bioethics and veterinary medicine
-

There is federal leadership on animal welfare overseeing coordination of all animal-related laws and issues.

Indicator

- L12. The federal government has a central body for coordination on animal welfare issues, such as a ministry or interdepartmental working group
-

1 The relationship between violence against people and animals is commonly known as the violence link. There is evidence that violence against animals and violence against people are not distinct and separate problems. Rather, they are part of a larger pattern of violent crimes that often co-exist. Cases of partner abuse, gang violence, youth crimes, assaults, homicides, sexual assaults and child abuse also commonly include animal abuse.



Representation Keystone

Animals' interests are taken into account in decisions about actions that have an impact on them.

Enabling Conditions

Legally-binding standards of care for companion animals provide for humane conditions in which animals have choices to experience positive welfare. These standards prohibit inhumane, painful, and stressful practices, including medically unnecessary alterations.

Indicator

R1. Jurisdictions that do not allow medically unnecessary procedures

Legally-binding standards of care for animals who are farmed, transported and slaughtered provide for humane conditions in which animals have choices to experience positive welfare. These standards prohibit inhumane, painful, stressful practices.

Indicator

R2. Poor animal welfare practices allowed in current NFACC codes of practice

R3. Poor animal welfare practices allowed in current regulations or policies

While animals are still being used, scientific research is carried out recognizing the interests of animals used. Legally-binding standards of care for animals used in research provide for humane conditions in which animals have choices to experience positive welfare. These standards prohibit inhumane painful and stressful practices.

Indicator

R4. Number of animals experiencing poor animal welfare impacts at institutions overseen by the CCAC

Compassionate conservation principles and ethics are applied, including respect for individual animals, and conservation and sustainable use in the interests of non-human species.

Indicators

R5. Non-lethal methods are used for government-implemented wildlife population interventions

Consideration Keystone

Animals are not considered as consumer products nor as objects of thoughtless use by humans, but rather as individuals within our communities.

Enabling Conditions

Companion animals are bred in an ethical and controlled fashion, avoiding the birth of more animals than homes that can be provided, allowing only traits that promote good health and welfare and that serve the animals in their actual lifestyles and environments.

Indicators

- C1. Laws that include requirements for ethical, responsible breeding
- C2. Animal shelter population size of cats and dogs and percentage of population that is juvenile

Non-animal alternatives to dissection are used in primary, secondary and higher education.

Indicators

- C3. Number of provinces that require animal dissection as a curriculum learning objective
- C4. Number of school boards with policies allowing student choice to opt out of dissections

Animals are no longer used in toxicological testing, and alternative methods are used instead.

Indicator

- C5. Number of animals experiencing moderate or severe distress and pain in studies for the regulatory testing of products

Animals used in research are phased out through system-wide approaches to reduction and replacement. These approaches are applied throughout the research enterprise, by individual investigators, research institutions, and enabling entities that fund or publish research results.

Indicator

- C6. Strategic priorities of federal funding agencies include alternatives to animal methods

Impacts and activities affecting wild animals are regulated, enforced and minimized. Such activities include hunting, trapping, fishing, and those that affect habitat use and cause its degradation.

Indicator

- C7. Hunting, trapping and fishing regulations that promote ethical practices and their enforcement

There are opportunities for wildlife to be provided with humane care, including a compassionate death.

Indicator

- C8. Number of wildlife rehabilitation centres or sanctuaries

Exploitative uses of animals are not acceptable.

Indicators

- C9. Number of fur farms
- C10. Number of zoos, mobile zoos, marine parks, aquaria, circuses and rodeos

Wild or exotic² species are not kept as companion animals.

Indicator

- C11. Canadian households with exotic animals

2 Humane Canada™ has a position statement on wild or exotic animals that includes this definition: A wild or exotic animal is any animal, native or non-native to Canada, that has not been subject to domestication through many generations of selective and controlled breeding and thereby adapted to living in close association with humans.



Social Keystone

Recognition of the human-animal bond as key to healthy communities where humans are not made more vulnerable because of their care of or relationship with animals.

Enabling Conditions

Members of the public have equitable access to vet care and resources allowing them to be responsible guardians.

Indicators

- S1. Shelter relinquishment due to lack of resources for treatable veterinary conditions
- S2. Geographic distribution of veterinarians

Local governments recognize the human animal bond and set effective policy and educational initiatives to promote responsible companion animal guardianship.

Indicators

- S3. Local governments with bylaws that incentivize fertility control and permanent identification
- S4. Bylaws discouraging unsupervised roaming of owned cats and dogs
- S5. Municipalities that offer education on responsible companion animal ownership

Animals are not separated from their human companions because of housing situations, when fleeing violence or due to other situations that make them vulnerable.

Indicators

- S6. Proportion of women's shelters with on-site pet sheltering programs
- S7. Number of provinces whose legislation allows for pet friendly housing

Emergency management and response includes animals.

Indicator

- S8. Emergency frameworks and response plans include animals
-



Responsibility Keystone

Members of the public change their own behaviour to provide humane treatment and consideration of animals.

Humane, evidence-based information and resources regarding behaviour and training of companion animals – particularly cats and dogs – are widely available and used by guardians.

Indicator

Rs1. Companion animal trainers who use humane training methods

Labelling of the agricultural practices used to produce animal products allows consumers to make informed choices about humane options.

Indicator

Rs2. The number of meaningful animal welfare labelling systems used in Canada

Individuals scale back on their consumption of animal products in order to improve planetary health and reduce the impact of climate change on humans and other species, while allowing the agriculture system to evolve away from industrial farming, implementing the best practices in animal welfare.

Indicator

Rs3. Per capita meat consumption

Companies have policies regarding humane treatment of animals within their supply chains or in other areas of their business that impact animals.

Indicator

Rs4. Top corporations in Canada that reference animal welfare in their policies



Evidence Keystone

Animal welfare policy is informed by science and evidence.

Enabling Conditions

The government funds independent animal welfare research/science and uses an evidence-based approach in laws and decision-making.

Indicator

E1. Level of government investment in independent animal welfare research

Animal issues are tracked by Statistics Canada.

Indicators

E2. Information is collected about companion animals in Canadian households

E3. Crime statistics include data on the co-occurrence of animal abuse and interpersonal violence



Compassion Keystone

Compassion for human and non-human animals is a core value in society.

Enabling Conditions

Every child and youth is provided the education and training they need to develop respect, empathy and compassion toward human and non-human animals and thereby to value the interests of others.

Indicator

Cp1. Number of provinces that have humane education concepts in their curriculum



All photographs used in this report are from www.unsplash.com

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