



2025
FEDERAL ELECTION
POLICY
PLATFORM

www.humanecanada.ca

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INTRODUCTION

Humane Canada is the national federation of SPCAs and humane societies, representing one of the oldest social institutions in the country and serving Canadian communities for more than 150 years.

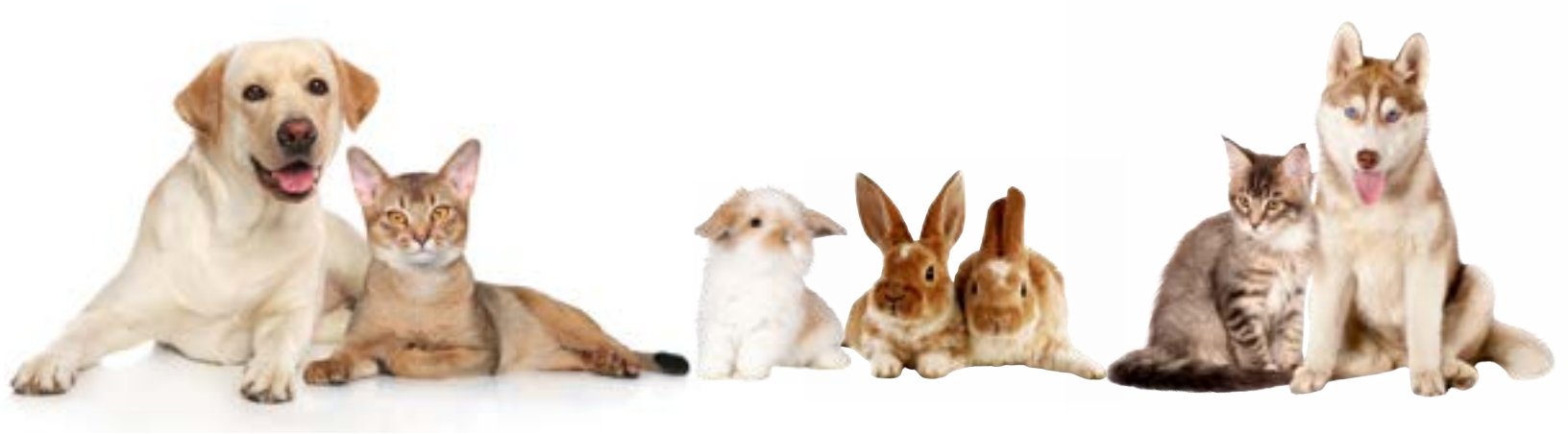
As Canada's voice for animal welfare, we drive positive, progressive change to end animal cruelty, improve animal protection and promote the humane treatment of all animals. Humane Canada believes that all animals possess intrinsic value, remarkable complexity and inherent dignity, and as such are deserving of respect and moral concern.

Humane Canada recognizes that the health and welfare of animals are inextricably linked to human health, well-being and environmental integrity. We embrace a One Health / One Welfare approach that considers the essential interconnectedness among these elements and relies on cooperation and partnership across disciplines.

On behalf of our members, we advocate the humane treatment, care and protection of all animals. We hold that animals used by humans must be provided with high levels of care, including allowing them to express their natural behaviours, to ensure their health and comfort. We also advocate for habitat protection and enhancement for the well-being of animals in the wild.

Humane Canada created the following recommendations as a guide to action that can be taken to create a more humane Canada.

If elected, how will your party create a more humane Canada for all animals?



COMPANION ANIMALS

Canadians highly value their pets, with over 60% of households including a dog or cat post-pandemic, and 71% of these householders considering them family. They depend on the humane societies and SPCAs in their communities to care for companion animals who find themselves homeless or in need of protection, but are surprised to learn that the organizations they trust implicitly are underfunded and do not receive the governmental support that they need to fulfil their critical social services mandate.

Meanwhile, animal shelters are experiencing a catastrophic capacity crisis as a direct result of unchecked and unregulated breeding, evolving economic uncertainty and the high cost of veterinary care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Federal Funding: Provide a stable, ongoing funding package for animal shelters to address capacity issues caused by abandonment and overpopulation. Explicitly include animal shelters as eligible for federal infrastructure funding applications and in the definition of community-oriented structures.

2

Breeding Oversight: Implement laws to regulate breeding, selling and importing animals, including bans on commercial importation of puppies into Canada and commercial third-party sales. Set an effective regulatory framework for registration, licensing and inspection of breeders that incorporates education and care/health care/vaccination and limits on overbreeding, while strengthening CFIA resources to enforce regulations and seize animals in poor welfare conditions.

3

Veterinary Care: Create a national preventive and affordable veterinary care strategy, support international veterinary recruitment and, in consultation with affected communities, subsidize vet resources for Indigenous and remote communities.

4

Pet-Friendly Housing: Engage with housing stakeholders to find collaborative solutions to increase the availability and affordability of pet-friendly housing for all Canadians and include pet-friendly criteria in federally-funded housing projects.



FARMED ANIMALS

Each year, more than 800 million animals are raised on farms in Canada for food. There is increasing public awareness and scrutiny regarding the welfare of farmed animals in all phases of their life: while on the farm, during transportation and at slaughter.

The public expects that farmed animals will be treated humanely, leading to pressure on the agriculture and retail sectors to modify certain farming practices. Consequently, these sectors have been making commitments to phase out confinement housing and painful practices. However, many Canadian farming practices still do not meet higher animal welfare standards seen in other regions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The federal government has several mechanisms available to help improve farming practices and conditions for the animals involved. The following recommendations are aligned with public expectations and divided into three pillars: **public accountability, regulatory improvements, and ethical practices.**

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

- 1 Restore Public Confidence:** Make a federal commitment to improving animal agriculture aligned with Canadian values regarding welfare and the environment including a refusal to enact any legislation that reduces transparency in farmed animal welfare and care.
- 2 Strengthen Inspection and Enforcement:** Increase funding and resources to ensure robust inspection and consistent enforcement of animal health and welfare regulations by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.
- 3 Increase Transparency:** Mandate Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) on farm, during transport and in slaughterhouses.



REGULATORY IMPROVEMENTS

- 4 National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC):** Enact federal legislation to establish the NFACC Codes of Practice as mandatory minimum standards of animal care, with a clear reporting structure, robust enforcement system and commitment to prosecute non-compliance. Require periodic review of the Codes by representatives from food and farm industry, animal welfare advocacy, veterinary medicine and academia/research.
- 5 Method of Production Labelling:** Through the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, require mandatory, standardized labelling specifying the method of production of animal products to allow consumers to make informed food choices.
- 6 Federal Funding:** Establish a new federal grant program to help producers phase out intensive housing systems, with a focus on phasing out conventional and enriched cages for laying hens, gestation stalls for pigs and tie stalls for dairy cattle.

ETHICAL PRACTICES

- 7 Humane Depopulation:** Require that mass depopulation of domesticated animals adheres to the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association's recommendations, including a comprehensive and transparent decision-making process for planned and emergency depopulation, consideration of alternatives and prioritization of animal welfare, such that killing methods minimize stress, fear and pain until irreversible loss of consciousness occurs. Prohibit ventilation shutdown as a method of mass depopulation.
 - 8 Prohibit Intensive Farming of Wild and Exotic Species:** Enact federal legislation to prohibit fur farming and octopus farming and the importation of farmed octopus into Canada.
 - 9 Ban the Export of Live Horses Overseas for Slaughter:** Enact federal legislation to ban the practice of shipping live horses overseas via air to be slaughtered.
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LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Creating a humane Canada requires a legal framework protecting animals from cruelty and ensures animals are treated humanely. This includes strong legislation, robust enforcement, support for prosecuting animal crimes and proper judiciary training. Many laws are outdated or piecemeal, enforcement is underfunded, and courts struggle with training and response.

Moreover, Canadians overwhelmingly support actions to treat animals humanely, including those used in scientific research.

RECOMMENDATIONS: LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 1 Legislative Review:** Convene an all-party parliamentary Animal Welfare Legislation Review Committee with a mandate to assess current animal protections and draft recommendations for enhancing and coordinating measures to improve the quality of life for animals. The committee would present its recommendations to Parliament and propose legislation accordingly.
- 2 Create a Ministry, Interdepartmental group or Agent of Parliament** with the responsibility for animal welfare and protection in federal government.
- 3 Criminal Code of Canada updates:**
 - Recognize animals as victims in Section 2
 - Acknowledge the sentience of animals
 - Add a section specifically dealing with seized animals that includes a procedural mechanism providing for their disposition once charges are laid
 - Align the mens rea standard for animal neglect to a criminal negligence standard
 - Consider animal abuse crimes as an aggravating factor in violent cases, including sex offences, domestic violence, and applications for Dangerous Offender status.
 - Formal criminalization of online sexual material that includes animal sexual abuse and exploitation
 - Criminalize the act of coercive control and recognize where animals are victims of this crime.
- 4 Animals in Science:** Create a regulatory framework for the oversight of animals used in science, to protect their welfare and mandate the 3Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement). Provide sustainable funding to maintain the Canadian Centre for Alternatives to Animal Methods (CCAAM).



Canadians deserve to feel safe in their communities, secure in the knowledge that there are laws in force that not only protect them but also the vulnerable animals they care about.

Legislation is only as good as its enforcement. It is therefore critical that law enforcement and all those involved in the justice system have access to data and training that keeps them informed on the links between animal abuse and interpersonal violence and exploitation.

RECOMMENDATIONS: PUBLIC SAFETY

- 5 Federal Funding:** Fund mandatory training for justice stakeholders to entrench knowledge of animal welfare and the Violence Link into the system.
- 6 Cross Reporting:** Mandate cross-reporting between animal welfare and child welfare agencies and require animal sexual exploitation-related materials input into child exploitation image tracking software to detect child pornography images on potential offenders' hard drives, along with a system for investigating those images in a central repository such as the RCMP's National Child Exploitation Crime Centre [1].
- 7 Collect Data:** Improve collection of crime statistics relating to animal cruelty, animal sexual assault or abuse and animal sexual exploitation materials in Canada and ensure that all reporting and tracking systems, including the Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System (ViCLAS) and the Major Case Management System, integrate animal cruelty.

1. RCMP. [Online child sexual exploitation](https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/online-child-sexual-exploitation) | Royal Canadian Mounted Police ([rcmp-grc.gc.ca](https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca)).



WILDLIFE

The global trade in wildlife for pets, entertainment and products drives the indiscriminate killing of animals and the illegal trafficking of endangered species, and risks spreading diseases to humans. Lax laws on exotic pets lead to animal suffering and pose health and safety risks.

Domesticated animals have been bred for temperament and behaviour over centuries, unlike wild species, which are often unpredictable and unsuitable as pets. Many needs of wild or exotic animals cannot be met in captivity, leading to potential threats to human and animal health if they escape or are abandoned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 End the importation, trade and captive breeding of wildlife and exotic species:** Enact federal legislation to safeguard animal health and welfare and the viability of wild populations, while protecting Canadians from associated health and safety risks. Ban the import and export of animal trophies. Re-introduce Bill C-73 *The Nature Accountability Act* to support the commitments made in Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy.
- 2 Nature Strategy:** Maintain Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy and fulfil all commitments, including the previously committed \$200 million in funding to the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) Fund.
- 3 Restrict Captive Breeding:** Prohibit the importation of endangered species for captive breeding purposes, except for bona fide conservation programs that (a) have a viable mechanism for the introduction of animals back into the wild and (b) incorporate protection of the target species' natural habitat.
- 4 Federal Funding:** Replicate the municipal funding stream for management of wildlife, whether implemented by an NGO or municipality, and standardize across the country.
- 5 Ban Inhumane Methods of Control:** Enact federal legislation that requires consideration of the International Consensus Principles for Ethical Wildlife Control in decision-making and prohibits the use of methods that prolong suffering, cause excessive discomfort or distress and/or endanger non-target wildlife, with a focus on banning the use of Compound 1080 for predator control and glue traps and rodenticides for rodent control.



ONE HEALTH/ONE WELFARE

Humane Canada recognizes that the health and welfare of animals are inextricably linked to human health, well-being and environmental integrity. This One Health / One Welfare approach considers the essential interconnectedness among these elements and relies on cooperation and partnership across disciplines.

This approach also promotes cross-disciplinary collaboration to ensure that solutions to problems in one area, such as human health or development, are considered within their broader context and do not have unintended effects on another area, such as animal welfare.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Pandemic Preparedness:** Address the threat posed by live animal markets and trade in wild animals by supporting and encouraging the closure of poorly regulated wildlife markets globally that carry an elevated risk of becoming sources for future pandemics. Establish a pandemic prevention and preparedness plan.
- 2 Emergency Preparedness:** Support a national response network that ensures that animals receive care during emergencies by improving humane societies', SPCAs' and shelters' readiness and capabilities, advocating for animals' inclusion in response frameworks, involving animal welfare organizations in the planning process and increasing resources for animal responders.
- 3 Biodiversity and Climate Change:** Continued support of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which recognizes the essential foundation of biodiversity and ecosystems to human health, well-being and prosperity, by reintroducing the *Nature Accountability Act* and supporting the implementation of the 2030 Nature Strategy.
- 4 Gender Based Violence:** Create a federal funding model that would expand the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Program to include grant support for humane societies, SPCAs and shelters that offer pet shelter services to support persons leaving a violent partner, ensuring that the sector is equipped to provide options that will keep families and animals together, as suggested by the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, in their 2022 report [*Towards a Violence-Free Canada: Addressing and Eliminating Intimate Partner and Family Violence*](#), under Recommendation 11: Explore funding for the care of companion pets and shelter of survivors of abuse when they leave an abusive relationship.
- 5 Humane Education:** Allocate funds for a national education strategy to ensure every child learns respect for humans, animals and the environment, and develops empathy and compassion for all living beings. This includes working with the Council of Ministers of Education to integrate humane education into environmental and sustainable development education efforts.