

The Animal Welfare Movement in Canada: Role and Future Direction

Shelagh MacDonald,
Program Director
Canadian Federation of Humane Societies



The Canadian Federation
of Humane Societies

La Fédération des sociétés canadiennes
d'assistance aux animaux

History

In the 1950s humane societies
saw the need for a national
organization

1950s

CFHS formed in 1957

Farm animal welfare a prominent
issue

"The greatest evil
in Canada today is
the method of
slaughtering
animals for food."

-Dr. Alue Cameron



The CFHS is a registered charity



- We are governed by a
volunteer board of directors

Mission Statement

- ◆ As the national voice of humane societies and SPCAs,
the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies
supports its member animal welfare organizations
across Canada in promoting respect and humane
treatment toward all animals.

Primary functions:

- ◆ Provide resources and
support to member
societies
- ◆ Work on national animal
welfare issues
- ◆ Focus is on legislative
change and livestock
welfare and companion
animal issues



No
Government
Funding!



Canadian Federation of Humane Societies

THE
National
VOICE FOR
ANIMAL
WELFARE
IN CANADA

Industry, media, government,
public, non-governmental organizations,

Bringing together those who
work with, and care for
animals to promote respect
and humane treatment
toward all animals



Understanding animal welfare

- ◆ It is a mistake to assume that all organizations who work to protect animals in Canada are “animal rights” groups
- ◆ As **animal welfare** proponents, CFHS accepts the responsible and humane use of animals (i.e. companionship, service & farming)

CFHS is an animal welfare organization


- ◆ CFHS promotes the value of pets and the human-animal bond, and collaborates with our member humane societies and SPCAs to educate the public about compassion toward all animals
- ◆ We accept those animal use practices that can be conducted with respect and humaneness
- ◆ **Our goal is not to stop all uses of animals by humans; rather it is to encourage compassionate and humane treatment of all animals and to prevent cruelty and abuse**

The role of the CFHS

- ◆ Lack of regulations or standards for the treatment of animals on farms
- ◆ The concept of Recommended Codes of Practice
- ◆ “A more encompassing farm animal care structure was needed” - Formation of NFACC



Farm animal welfare



◆ **CFHS’ position statement:**

◆ CFHS accepts only those practices for care, management and use of farm animals which provide high levels of care for the animals, protect them from suffering at all stages of their lives, respect the welfare of individual animals and provide for the animals’ physical and psychological well-being and behavioural needs.


-May 1999

5 Five freedoms:


1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst
2. Freedom from Discomfort
3. Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease
4. Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour
5. Freedom from Fear and Distress

- Farm Animal Welfare Council of the UK

CFHS is particularly concerned with:



- ◆ Intensive confinement systems
- ◆ Painful procedures
- ◆ Transportation of farm animals
- ◆ Slaughter methods



NATIONAL FARM ANIMAL CARE COUNCIL
CONSEIL NATIONAL POUR LE SOIN DES ANIMAUX D'ÉLEVAGE

NFACC

- ◆ Important initiative
- ◆ CFHS the lone animal welfare organization
- ◆ CFHS supports the new Code development process
- ◆ However, voluntary codes without a verification process is not good enough!

Animal welfare verification

- ◆ Animal welfare verification component is essential to an effective system of oversight
- ◆ CFHS commends those commodities that have already taken the lead in developing animal care assessment programs




NFACC



- ◆ CFHS is pleased that the government has committed to funding further consultation on NFACC's framework model for verification programs
- ◆ CFHS recognizes the challenges facing producers
- ◆ CFHS strongly urges the Federal government to accept responsibility for animal welfare and fully fund NFACC

Animal welfare prominent in the media and in the minds of consumers.....

- ◆ North American pork processors announced decision to phase out the use of gestation stalls for sows
- ◆ Universities and cities adopting cage-free egg purchasing policies
- ◆ Exposure of inhumane practices used in the production of foie gras



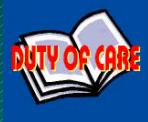

Despite this interest...

- Government lags behind in its policies and strategies
- CFHS is concerned about the federal government's lack of attention to animal welfare



Canada needs a comprehensive, national strategy for animal health and welfare; **FUNDING** to back it

Animal health & welfare pillar would support:





NFACC

- ☑ Development and verification of on-farm standards
- ☑ Increased support to livestock industry to implement animal welfare initiatives
- ☑ Enhanced capacity for research into animal welfare improvements



A global look...



- ◆ Animal welfare gaining an increasingly higher profile around the world
- ◆ Animal welfare is taken more serious by governments in:
 - ✓ Europe
 - ✓ New Zealand
 - ✓ Australia



Humane labelling initiatives

- ◆ RSPCA: Freedom Foods
- ◆ RNZSPCA: Free-run barn eggs and free-range eggs
- ◆ RSPCA Australia: National Food Accreditation program
- ◆ BCSPCA: SPCA Certified program





www.spc.bc.ca/farm

Corporate responsibility

CFHS acknowledges the retail sector:

- ◆ McDonald's
- ◆ Wendy's International
- ◆ Burger King





Research



The scientific community plays an important role in animal welfare

Researchers:

- ◆ Evaluate practical and humane alternatives
- ◆ Provide results that are useful for farms across Canada
- ◆ Lend credible expertise for development of standards and policies

Role of humane societies in Canada

- ◆ Enforce provincial and federal animal cruelty laws
- ◆ Care for neglected animals
- ◆ Help during livestock emergencies
- ◆ Liaise with local and provincial livestock groups
- ◆ Implement practical solutions to animal welfare concerns

Future direction?

- ◆ Increasing consumer interest in farm animal welfare
- ◆ Canada's government has a reputation for providing leadership in many sectors
- ◆ Where is Canada's leadership in farm animal welfare?
- ◆ CFHS is a valuable stakeholder in farm animal welfare!



CANADA NEEDS:



1. A national strategy for animal health and welfare
2. Mandatory animal welfare verification programs
3. More resources for farm animal welfare research

THANK YOU!



The Canadian Federation
of Humane Societies
La Fédération des sociétés canadiennes
d'assistance aux animaux