

ARE WE WINNING THE FIGHT FOR FARM ANIMALS?

TAKING STOCK

10 YEARS AGO, it was painfully obvious that animals raised for food had no visible friends in Canada. Humane concerns were simply not extended to the pathetic creatures that eventually arrived dead on the dinner plates of "kind and compassionate" Canadians. Of course, kind and compassionate Canadians simply had no idea of the scandalous abuse that went on behind the closed doors of factory farms, as producers and politicians of every stripe made sure that consumers as well as animals were kept in the dark.

Why do we NOW believe that times are changing in favour of a better deal for farm animals? Thanks to the information network and growing public awareness let us count the ways:

1) It is widely acknowledged that the meat industry is in serious trouble, and that it will continue down the very slippery slope of public opinion unless major changes occur in the way farm animals are handled. For reasons of both humaneness and human health the public is turning in droves to meat alternatives. High expectations of

profit leading to over-production has left many a farmer high and dry in the market place while demand has plummeted. This can be seen daily in the increasing varieties of non-meat food items available to shoppers.

2) The Canadian Cattlemen's Association – never a big supporter of farm animal reform – has finally come up with a project to educate truckers on how to transport livestock. The proposal has been picked up by the Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan, the chairman of which, Wayne Gamble, recently commented: "We have a lot of young people driving trucks now that have no background with animals and may actually be afraid of the animals. Their models for handling livestock may be based on old western movies where guys come riding over the hill at full gallop shooting their guns in the air. That kind of macho attitude is unacceptable for ethical and monetary reasons".

Gamble would like to see the program become mandatory, resulting in a special designation on drivers' licences for those who are allowed to transport animals.

3) At the University of British Columbia, the chair of the animal welfare program, Dr. David Fraser, believes that livestock producers should draw up a list of management practices they want outlawed and get it made into law. He would like to see the list incorporated into Saskatchewan's animal protection act which is now being developed.

Most animal protection legislation (approved by provincial SPCA's and farm animal councils) refers to "reasonable" practices of animal management, husbandry and slaughter. Says Dr. Fraser, "I look upon that wording as an invitation to the industries to make a statement of what they consider NOT reasonable and generally accepted practices."

This is an important challenge to all defenders of abusive practices. They are now being told to live up to the principles of animal protection which they claim to promote. Hiding behind barn doors is no longer acceptable.

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TAKING STOCK... (continued from page 1)

According to Fraser, a few of the practices that should be outlawed include castration without anaesthesia, removal of velvet antlers without anaesthesia, and striking pigs on the nose to change their direction. Although a list developed by the animal production industry may not sit well with protectionist groups, it's better than the vague language that exists in current regulations.

"I think most people", he says, "would rather see the industry taking a stand to set its standards than the current situation." (i.e. of continuing to use abusive practices without remedies). The responsibility for humane practices is placed squarely where it belongs - on the shoulders of the livestock producers themselves. If the industry is to prosper, consumers will have to be convinced that the product is cruelty-free.

(#2 & 3. The Western Producer, Feb.4/99)

4) At the centre of the pig-raising region of Canada, the Winnipeg Humane Society has gone all-out for the abolition of gestation crates, where pregnant sows live out their lives in stringent confinement during one merciless breeding after another.

The Society's campaign was stepped up by their Newsletter article which sparked written responses from 800 readers demanding abolition of the crates. "We believe this is a very important ethical issue" said executive director Vicki Burns, who notes it was the biggest single response to animal welfare in five years.

Furthermore, the Society is pursuing a FREEDOM FOOD

label for grocery stores, similar to a current system in Britain, where the label indicates that the animals who produced the food were treated humanely.

(Manitoba Co-operator, June 24/99)

5) Almost ten years ago, CETFA approached the BCSPCA regarding the appalling abuse of livestock, particularly during transportation and slaughter. Videos taken of horrendous conditions on site in the U.S. were dismissed as being irrelevant to Canadian practices. Consequently, little attention was paid to our complaints!

It was only when CETFA's live video was shot on-site in Toronto, chronicling the agony of an injured cow being removed from a truck with ropes and chains that government, industry, and provincial humane societies began to listen and respond. Further, it was found that some 700 downers a month in Ontario alone, were delivered to provincial slaughterhouses to suffer similar fates. To

its credit, the Ontario government responded by toughening regulations, and banning the transportation of downers to federal abattoirs.

6) Britain continues to lead the way. The respected society COMPASSION IN WORLD FARMING (CIWF) has, with others, succeeded in winning agreement by the European Union, to phase out battery cages for laying hens. Its next target is TRANSPORTATION of live animals, which should provide a shining example to Canadian policy makers! Having the British citizenry solidly behind them is a key factor to success.

Now that progressive steps are being taken across the country - albeit cautiously - we have asked the B.C. SPCA to outline their current plan for improving livestock conditions in British Columbia.

We are pleased and encouraged to include the following submission: ↓

B.C. SPCA TAKING ACTION ON FARM ANIMAL STANDARDS

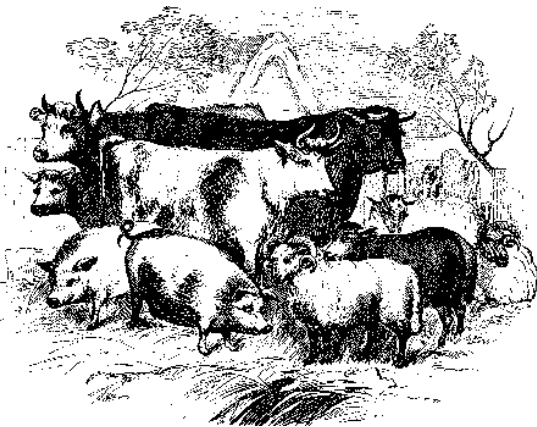
The B.C. SPCA is working with producers, academics, and others to create, label and monitor an enhanced welfare standard for farm animals. Based on the U.K. Freedom Food program, the proposed standard addresses animals' natural behaviour requirements, as well as environmental, community and human health concerns.

"There are many B.C. producers who take more time and care in looking after their animals - or who would like to - but find it difficult to do so and remain price-competitive. By differentiating such products in the market place, this program will encourage such innovations, and provide the means for consumers to recognize and support them," says Stephen Huddart, BC SPCA Director of Community Relations.

The Vancouver Foundation and several animal welfare foundations are supporting the program, which is to be launched in the first part of next year.

OPEN LETTER

My early years were spent on a farm in northern Saskatchewan and early on I became acquainted with the fact that animals were shipped to market never to be seen again. Of course, when we left the farm for the city, I discovered libraries and my education went ahead by leaps and bounds.....from Upton Sinclair's "THE JUNGLE" to humane society photos of animals being slaughtered in an abattoir. My point is that "THE JUNGLE" was written at the turn of the century, and I saw the humane society photos in 1955, a span of 55 years. Here we are, another 37 years down the road and nothing has changed!



I know that people will not stop eating meat, but something must be done about the way animals are tortured as they await the executioner. The calves I used to see each day gambolling in the farm acreage bordering #5 road in Richmond are gone now, chained by the neck in a box in which they can't lie down, or scratch an itchy hide against the boards of their enclosure. They have less than four months to live, and not once in that time have they been nurtured by their mothers. And

they will never be touched by a sympathetic hand, or feel the comforting touch of their own kind.

I have literally not seen a normal chicken for 20 years. I remember them pecking in the dirt in the farmyard, scampering inside to shelter only when a chicken hawk hove into view, or the weather changed or darkness fell. They never see the sunlight now, and spend 27 weeks of a most miserable existence crammed in cages in which they cannot spread a wing to stretch or curl their feet around a comforting perch in a dark roost. And to see the way they are shipped to slaughter on their final journey is to be disgusted to be a human being and know that another human is responsible!

Perhaps the saddest fate of all belongs to the female pig. What must it be like to be pregnant continuously until you die? To be confined in narrow birthing crates for 16 weeks? To lie on wooden slats or cold, wet concrete floors until your productive years end and you are sent to the slaughterhouse.....never having known what it is like to wallow comfortably in a nice cool pool in a warm sun, or chase your own kind around a sty in a game that

only the players understand.

The dictionary defines "HUMANE" as tender or compassionate, but it seems as though those individuals who are

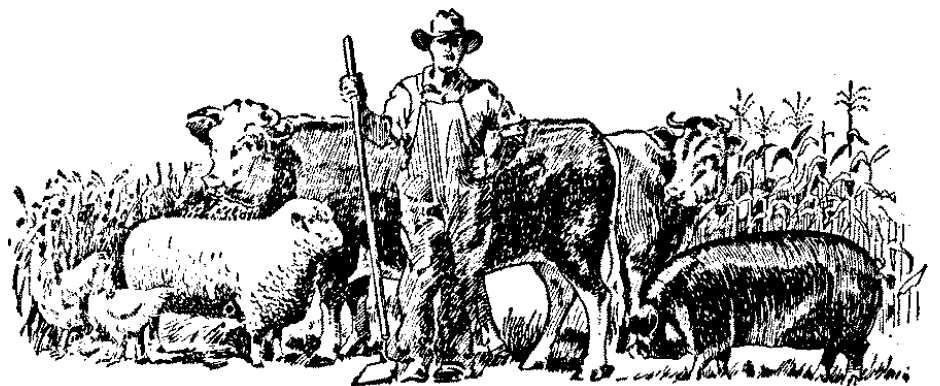


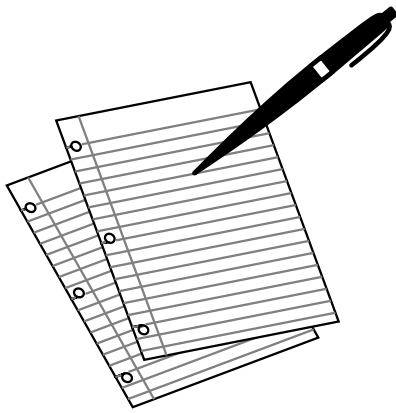
employed in this industry are only disposed towards cruelly inflicting pain on the most helpless of creatures.

Why is compassion not a part of every child's school curriculum - an inherent part of all education? Compassion, Awe, Wonder, Curiosity, Humility, and Respect for creatures other than ourselves must be taught. Only then, things may change.

YOU HAVE THE POWER. I ASK YOU TO DO SOMETHING WITH IT.

Yours truly,
Ellen Hardy
Member, Board of Directors
C.E.T.F.A.





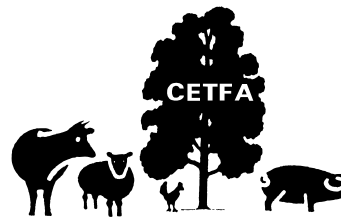
WRITE RIGHT NOW

Lack of an act or regulation requiring the inspection of meat and meat products throughout British Columbia, continues to be a scandal. In B.C. there are 20 federally inspected slaughter plants from which meat may be exported out of the province, and out of the country. There are 7 provincial plants which process meats that must not cross provincial borders, or enter any federal plants. These are restricted to local consumption. There are at least 40 Abattoirs that have no system of inspection whatsoever, either for the Health of the product or the humane treatment of livestock.

Please write your MLA and/or the Premier protesting this 3-tiered system that provides no guarantees of a wholesome meat product to consumers.

MLA - Legislative Bldgs.
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

POSTAGE IS REQUIRED



NOTICE

is given of

CETFA's ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

to be held

October 23, 1999

at 1 p.m.

at 5455 West Boulevard.

Anyone wishing to serve on the executive of the Board is invited to call the Secretary-Treasurer, Dorothy Hahn at 322-0448. We would be very happy to consider such an offer.

Please note that in the future, only members will receive CETFA mailings and newsletters. Membership is \$10.00 a year. Thank you for your faithful support, knowing that all our money goes to farm animal reform, and all our efforts directed to one desperate need.

*Farm animal reform is on a roll.
Help it to continue at full speed.*

**Canadians for the
Ethical Treatment
of Food Animals**

Annual Membership
\$10.00

Application for New ___ Renewal ___ Membership

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

*We believe that animals raised for food should have
a pain and stress free life and a humane death.*

I might be able to help with:
 Writing Letters
 Assisting at information tables
 Maintaining Website

Please make your membership fee payable to:
Canadians for the Ethical Treatment of Food Animals
Box 18024, 2225 West 41 Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6M 4L3