

Bill 156, Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020

June 2020

Q+A

Why can't activists come into barns or interact with animals?

- Anyone entering barns or farms, handling animals or moving between barns without following proper biosecurity protocols puts the health of animals, the safety of food and the livelihood of farmers at risk.
- People entering most barns need to follow biosecurity protocols, including taking a full shower and changing into designated clothing and footwear.
- Entering barns without following proper protocols increases the risk of disease to animals, and the risk of injury to people unfamiliar with equipment or livestock.
- Animals can be startled by strangers entering their barns, leading to increased stress and injury.
- Producers and processors need to be certain that animals have not been exposed to any potential toxins or materials that put food safety at risk.

Is it true that there are no laws or regulations protecting farm animals?

- Ontario farms, livestock truckers and food processors are tightly regulated, with several levels of validation and inspection ensuring compliance.
 - Farms are regularly visited by veterinarians, who monitor the health and well-being of animals.
 - Ontario farmers support the new Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS) Act, which protects animals, including livestock from abuse and neglect. Ontario livestock organizations work with provincial enforcement agencies to report and address any concerns related to livestock care in the province.
 - Ontario farmers are subject to animal cruelty provisions in both the provincial PAWS Act, and in the federal Criminal Code of Canada.
 - All livestock commodities in Canada are subject to national animal care guidelines under the National Farm Animal Care Council.
 - CFIA veterinarians are present at federal processing plants, and OMAFRA inspectors are at provincial plants to inspect for signs of illness, injury or mistreatment.
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Who are farmers trying to protect?

- **Our homes and families.** Farms are more than barns and fields – they are the homes of farm families, and should be under the protection of the law.
- **Our workers and transporters.** Ontario’s Occupational Health and Safety Act says that workers should expect a workplace free of harassment and violence. Livestock transporters have endured ongoing harassment, threats and interference from animal rights extremists when delivering animals to processing plants in Ontario.
- **Our animals.** Barn break ins, as well as protestors crowding, shouting and interfering with animals in transit causes undue stress to animals.
- **The food supply.** Introducing unknown substances to animals puts food safety at risk.
- **The police.** Bill 156 is an important step, giving police additional tools to protect farm families, animals and others involved in the food sector from harassment, invasion of private property, and harm.
- **Animal rights activists.** Invasions or break-ins by people unfamiliar with farm or plant operations, animals or equipment puts people and animals at risk of harm. Protestors stepping in front of moving transport trucks, or reaching inside vehicles with limited lines of sight put themselves at risk, in addition to blocking public roadways.

Why do farmers support rules that would discourage getting hired at a farming operation under false pretenses?

- Bringing in staff to work with our animals is an exercise in trust and training.
 - We expect all employees to treat animals with the high standards of care that each farmer has committed to uphold.
 - Most farmers require staff to sign commitments to immediately report any concerns about animal health or treatment, because if something goes wrong, it needs to be corrected immediately.
 - “Undercover activists” may claim to have the best interest of animals at heart, but in practice will allow concerns to go unreported – and at times cause undue suffering to animals – all in the interest of creating a few moments of dramatic footage to advance their agenda, and protecting themselves from any repercussions.
 - This is not investigative journalism. Journalists have a professional obligation to report honestly and objectively, even when covering difficult subjects. This is about individuals gaining access to animals under false pretenses, failing to
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live up to their responsibilities of care, then manipulating video clips to evoke an emotional response in support of their cause.

What are the long-term impacts of activist extremism on farmers, truckers or plant workers?

- Livestock transporters may choose to leave the business rather than deal with daily harassment, exacerbating ongoing labour shortages.
 - Farmers forced to deal with nuisance complaints and harassment have less time to focus on their core mission of animal care.
 - Ongoing harassment, unfounded accusations and attacks made in person, through social media or in public venues put undue stress on farmers and individuals in the food sector who are following the law, caring for animals and putting food on the table for Canadians.
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How does COVID-19 impact farming, livestock transport and processing?

- COVID-19 has made Canadians much more aware of the importance of proper biosecurity procedures in reducing the spread of disease.
 - Farms and processing plants have been diligent in introducing new health and safety protocols designed to reduce risk and protect workers.
 - By necessity, workers at farms and processing plants may work in close quarters. In the early days of the pandemic, personal protective equipment was prioritized for healthcare workers, and supplies for plant workers were limited, leading to some outbreaks.
 - The impact of these closures meant that producers were forced to find alternate processing capacity or hold livestock longer than usual, entailing additional production costs and subjecting them to greater price volatility.
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