



RESPONSE TO PETITION RÉPONSE À LA PÉTITION

PREPARE IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH MARKING "ORIGINAL TEXT" OR "TRANSLATION"
PRÉPARER EN ANGLAIS ET EN FRANÇAIS EN INDIQUANT "TEXTE ORIGINAL" OU "TRADUCTION"

PETITION NO./N° DE LA PÉTITION
411-3920

BY / DE
Mr. Stewart (Burnaby-Douglas)

DATE
May 27, 2013

RESPONSE BY THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD
RÉPONSE DU MINISTRE DE L'AGRICULTURE ET DE L'AGROALIMENTAIRE

signed by Gerry Ritz, PC, MP

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY
INSCRIRE LE NOM DU SIGNATAIRE

SIGNATURE
MINISTER OR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
MINISTRE OU SECRÉTAIRE PARLEMENTAIRE

SUBJECT / OBJET

Cruelty to animals

RESPONSE / RÉPONSE

ORIGINAL TEXT
TEXTE ORIGINAL

TRANSLATION
TRADUCTION

Animal cruelty is addressed by the Criminal Code of Canada. Animal welfare falls under provincial jurisdiction, however the *Health of Animals Act* does provide authority for the Governor in Council to make regulations for the humane treatment of animals and generally govern the care, handling and disposition of animals. Additionally, the *Health of Animals Regulations* contains provisions for the protection of animals during loading and unloading.

The Government of Canada recognizes that electric shock devices must be used sparingly, must be restricted to only provide the power output required to have an effect on the animal and must be used only when absolutely necessary. As such, under the *Meat Inspection Regulations*, no electrical prod shall be applied to the anal, genital or facial region of a food animal. This is also stipulated in the Dairy Code, which goes on to state that electric cattle prods must only be used in extreme situations, such as when animal or human safety is at risk and they must never be used on calves that can be moved manually.

Human-animal interaction depends on the ability to modify animal behaviour for the safety of humans and animals alike. Electric devices are not the only devices used to modify animal behaviour, however use of these devices may be the best option for preventing serious harm to animals and/or people in certain real-life circumstances. Alternative methods, such as barbed wire instead of an electric fence or a stick instead of an electric prod may, in certain situations, harbour danger of human or animal injury that exceeds the dangers associated with the use of the electric alternatives.

A complete ban on the use of electric shock devices could potentially result in less humane conditions for animals in certain situations. For instance, electric stunning is one of the few internationally recognized methods for humanely rendering an animal unconscious prior to slaughter. Ultimately, it is not the application of electric current to an animal that has the potential to be problematic, but rather the inhumane application of these devices. This is why the Government of Canada accepts the use of electric shock devices under tightly regulated conditions.

The Government of Canada supports the development of guidance from animal welfare groups and industry on this subject. For instance, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is participating in the revisions that are being made to the pig, beef cattle, sheep and horse codes under the new National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC). Each of these codes will include recommendations concerning humane procedures and equipment used in loading and unloading animals.