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	BY / DE	DATE
411-0003	**Ms. Davies (Vancouver East)**	June 6, 2011

RESPONSE BY THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD AND
MINISTER FOR THE CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD
RÉPONSE DU MINISTRE DE L'AGRICULTURE ET DE L'AGROALIMENTAIRE
ET MINISTRE DE LA COMMISSION CANADIENNE DU BLÉ

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 [X]

TRANSLATION
TRADUCTION [   ]

The Government of Canada notes the concerns raised by the petitioner regarding the availability and use of electric shock devices on animals.

Electric shock devices encompass a broad range of devices that have been developed and that may be applied for a variety of purposes to companion animals, farmed animals, or in some cases even to wild, feral, and stray animals. The judicious use of electric shock devices by law enforcement personnel is also at times an appropriate or recommended means to control animals and people in order to minimize the chance of injury. As a general rule, they should not be used indiscriminately or in place of other methods that are known to induce less stress.

In some cases, a complete ban of electric shock devices could potentially result in less humane conditions for animals. 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.

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In terms of using electric shock devices at the farm level, electric fences are widely employed in the agriculture community for grazing management purposes, provided they are properly installed and appropriately used and maintained. Therefore, there is no reason to consider that a ban would be helpful or warranted in such a case.

In May 2010, the Government of Canada announced $3.4 million in funding to support the development and revision of the Recommended Codes of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals and a framework model for on-farm animal care assessment. Revisions are being made to the pig, beef cattle, sheep, mink, fox, and horse codes. Issues pertaining to housing, transportation, management, and husbandry practices, including humane procedures and equipment used, are being addressed through the code development process.

The Government of Canada recognizes that electric shock devices, as they pertain to on-farm husbandry practices, must be used sparingly, restricted only to the power output required to have an effect on the animal, and 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 Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle, 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.

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.