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Chair

Mr. Pat Finnigan

Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

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• (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Pat Finnigan (Miramichi—Grand Lake, Lib.)): Welcome, everyone, to this 51st meeting. Pursuant to Standing Order 108, we continue our study of amendments to health of animal regulations, regarding humane transportation.

We have a very packed table to give us some information today and to answer some of the questions we will have. With us this morning we have, from the Canadian Pork Council, Gary Stordy, public relations manager, and Frank Novak, vice-president. From Chicken Farmers of Canada, we have Steve Leech, national program manager, food safety and animal welfare; and Mike Dungate, executive director. From the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, we have Matt Bowman, who is a director and the president of Beef Farmers of Ontario, and Brady Stadnicki, policy analyst. Also, from Metzger Veterinary Services, we have Kenneth Metzger, veterinarian.

Welcome, everyone. We will start with the presentations by the groups, for seven minutes each.

Mr. Novak, would you like to start for seven minutes?

Mr. Frank Novak (Vice-President, Canadian Pork Council): Thank you.

Good morning. My name is Frank Novak. I'm a producer from Alberta and first vice-chair of the Canadian Pork Council's board of directors. I'm joined today by Gary Stordy, who is our manager of government public relations. I want to first thank the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food for the invitation to appear before you this morning and to discuss the amendments to the health of animals regulations.

I'd like to spend a little time this morning outlining some of the CPC's industry activities related to animal care and transportation and why we have concerns with the proposed amendments to the health of animals regulations. First of all, I just want to point out that the CPC represents more than 7,000 pork producers across Canada. We produce, as a group, more than 25 million animals per year and are responsible for over 100,000 jobs across our industry. The industry generates almost \$24 billion in economic activity and last year exported 3.8 billion dollars' worth of pork.

Raising livestock is a 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year commitment, and those who do it take the responsibility very seriously and consider it much more than just a job. Hog producers want to ensure that our animals arrive at their destination in the best condition possible. Canadian farmers are dedicated to the highest quality

standards. Registered producers demonstrate their commitment to national standards for food safety and animal care through the national Canadian quality assurance program known as CQA. To be a registered CQA producer, a producer has to undergo an annual assessment for compliance to program requirements.

Producers recognize the importance of animal welfare and led the process to update the code of practice for care and handling of pigs on our farms, which was released in 2014. It was developed through a reasoned and scientifically informed debate that goes far beyond minimum requirements and includes provision for further progressive changes in the future.

I'd like to point out also that the livestock transportation industry is also in the process of updating its code of practice for livestock trucking, and pork producers plan to be engaged in the development of that code. Producers raise their animals to the highest standards to ensure health, safety, and high-quality product, and it is in our best interests to maintain this through transportation.

Hog producers and hog transporters take specialized training courses addressing the specific needs of animals in transport. This includes training staff on how to handle pigs, load and unload pigs, account for weather conditions, be prepared for emergency responses, and understand the potential impacts of those actions on the animals' well-being. Education tools like the Canadian livestock training program, or more specifically for swine, the transport quality assurance program, are mandatory training for anyone who wants to handle or transport pigs to Canada's federally inspected plants.

The CPC supports the move to outcome-based regulations and recognizes the need for continuous improvements, including in areas such as preventing undue stress for animals during transport. We believe that the welfare of animals in transit is dependent on a wide variety of conditions including vehicle condition, weather, handling, etc. It's not possible to describe every possible situation that you might incur.

Outcome-based approaches allow transporters and animal handlers the flexibility needed to ensure good animal welfare by identifying best practices to align with the regulatory requirements. This is why we are unsure why the CFIA has chosen to use both prescriptive measures, such as time off feed and water, as well as outcome measures to address the same concern. We feel that this is unnecessary.

The CPC does not agree with the proposal to reduce the maximum interval for restricting access to food and water from 36 to 28 hours. We feel that the prescriptive time limit does nothing to contribute to the goal of improved animal welfare and only serves to take away from progress that could be made by designing and implementing outcome-based regulations that are grounded in unbiased science.

Very little scientific evidence is offered to support the CFIA's claim that the change will improve animal welfare and reduce risk of suffering during transportation. Despite claiming that the position is establishing clear and science-informed requirements, no research has been cited demonstrating the impact of long transportation times for pigs. The small amount of data available on transportation is limited to market hogs, and no data has been presented for early-weaned pigs, feeder pigs, or breeding stock.

●(1105)

Most of the movement with a duration of between 28 and 36 hours in our industry is for isoweans transported to nursery barns in the midwestern United States. These shipments experience extremely low mortality rates and the U.S. nursery barns report exceptional performance from our pigs when they arrive. These newly weaned pigs have very low feed and water intake in the first couple of days at any rate, even without being transported. It is unreasonable to expect them to eat much, if anything, during this time.

Stopping also compromises biosecurity and increases the risk of exposing these animals to disease. The unloading of pigs will create significant stress leading to even more sickness and death losses, and both of these issues do nothing to improve animal welfare.

In 2016, Canadian producers shipped over 20 million market hogs to federally inspected plants. Our numbers, or the CFIA's own public numbers, show that 0.3% of those animals were found to be sick, injured, or dead upon arrival. This, to me, suggests that we don't have a problem that is out of hand. Rather, it shows that we can always improve. Longer hauls often show reduced rather than increased losses.

CPC is supportive of the efforts to improve animal welfare; however, we believe that better progress can be made by designing and implementing outcome-based regulations that are firmly grounded in unbiased science.

I would also like to add that research on newly weaned pigs' ability to withstand long-distance transport is being initiated currently at the University of Saskatchewan. This project will determine the maximum reasonable transport time that does not significantly impact the pig's welfare. Our recommendation would be that these regulations not be amended, or at least that this particular section not be amended, until that research is complete.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to appear before you today.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Novak.

We'll now go to the Chicken Farmers of Canada.

Mr. Dungate, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Mike Dungate (Executive Director, Chicken Farmers of Canada): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning committee members. I'm here with my colleague Steve Leech today.

Chicken Farmers of Canada appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the proposed health of animals regulations regarding transport.

Canada's 2,800 chicken farmers willingly accept that they have a serious responsibility in terms of animal care, and they take that responsibility seriously. CFC takes pride in its long-standing, progressive approach to animal care. We have a third party, audited, mandatory animal care program that has been in place since 2009. Unlike any other programs that may be proposed out there, the CFC animal care program is the only program that establishes one national standard for all chicken production and is verified by annual third party audits. It's also the only program that is capable of ensuring animal standards on all farms in Canada.

Our program has credible foundations. It's been designed based on the code of practice developed by the National Farm Animal Care Council. The National Farm Animal Care Council is a world leader in bringing together stakeholders with different perspectives and a broad spectrum in terms of input to develop robust and sound codes of practice.

We want to take it one step further. That is why we are, as part of the next agriculture policy framework, seeking a recognition protocol for animal care similar to the one that we have in place for food safety. We think that would provide additional assurance as part of a public trust of agriculture component.

In light of our commitment to animal care, CFC believes that transport regulations should be science-based and developed to work in unison with food safety regulations. We can't do them in isolation. They have to be mindful of the operational structure of Canadian production, and developed with a view as to how they'll be interpreted by the courts. CFC's full comments and the proposed regulations are detailed in our submission, which we've provided to the committee. Specific areas of concerns that we'll address today are the definition of suffering; changes to the feed, water, and rest intervals; and the assessment of compromised and unfit animals. Clearly, I'm not going to try to address in seven minutes all the issues here, but I'll point out some highlights.

The first concern is with the definition of suffering. Under the current health of animal regulations, the reference is to "undue suffering" whereas the proposed version has removed all references to the word "undue". CFC believes that "undue" must be maintained in the regulations.

The Canada Agriculture Review Tribunal and the Federal Court of Appeal have already developed a balance between animal welfare requirements and normal legal practices of agribusiness in transporting animals and chickens. The word “undue” provides the ability for the courts to interpret if the suffering was unwarranted, disproportionate, or unjustified. Without the word “undue”, any suffering would be illegal, and farmers would be constantly at risk of being before the courts. CFC is of the opinion that maintaining the word “undue” in the regulations will ensure that the objectives of the regulations are met without unduly harming the industry.

Moving on to the transport time—and I'm speaking specifically of the interval for chickens—the proposed regulations would reduce the transport time for chickens from 36 hours to 24 hours. That is a one-third reduction in terms of the time that we're allowed to transport animals. However, the impact is far greater, because the proposed regulations would incorporate feed withdrawal, which can be six to eight hours. Effectively, chickens would now have to be loaded, transported, and unloaded in 16 to 18 hours, so we're talking about more than a 50% reduction in the transport time. This is not continuous improvement; this is radical change.

Feed withdrawal is a food safety issue. This is where we think that we have to pay attention. CFIA has both food safety regulations and animal care regulations. It is there as a food safety issue to reduce the pathogen load on carcasses, and thus reduce public health risks. The proposed transport regulations would compromise food safety, making industry decisions a fight between human health and animal welfare. To remove the inconsistency between CFIA's food safety and animal care requirements, the maximum interval time should be modified to begin once water is withdrawn, not feed.

• (1110)

In Canada, water is available right up to the point at which we load the birds for transport. In CFC's view, radically reducing the transport time by 50% could be considered if there were definitive and compelling scientific evidence to do so. While we won't go into specifics, the consultation submission by Dr. Trever Crowe from the University of Saskatchewan raises significant questions about the scientific evidence to support the proposal. It is a detailed piece from a researcher on animal welfare who is globally recognized, and I think it's an important submission that should be considered by the committee.

CFIA's regulatory impact analysis statement indicates that changes are required to better align with the standards of Canada's international trading partners and the OIE animal welfare standards. However, there is no consistency in feed, water, and rest regulations for chickens among international trading partners. In the United States, there are no federal regulations for transport times; there are only industry guidelines.

Australia, one of the jurisdictions in the proposed regulations, commented that time off feed and water must not exceed 24 hours for chickens, while feed must not be withdrawn longer than 12 hours prior to transport. Since 24 hours plus 12 hours is 36 hours, that's exactly where we are today, although it's being claimed that it's 24 hours. They're not seeing, however, that the regulations are not covering just the transport time. They're expanding what is considered transport.

In Europe, the maximum times that chickens cannot have access to feed and water is 12 hours. However, this does not include loading and unloading times. To Mr. Novak's point, it's interesting that loading and unloading times are not included because of animal welfare concerns. They don't want to put pressure on quickly loading or unloading the birds just to meet time requirements. They want to give them the time necessary to do it properly.

• (1115)

The Chair: If you can, conclude quickly. We're—

Mr. Mike Dungate: Yes.

If you assume four hours for loading and three hours for unloading, the maximum feed and water rest interval in the EU is 19 hours. Our understanding is that the feed withdrawal is 12 hours on top of that, for a total of 31 hours. As there is no international harmonization, coming back to a species-specific point of view, we are prepared to go from 36 hours to 28 hours but not to expand beyond what is the current transportation timeline.

I will skip over the visibly observable and just conclude by—

The Chair: I'm sorry, we're very pressed for time so I'm going to have to conclude—

Mr. Mike Dungate: I'll just conclude. I'll stop that part and conclude.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Mike Dungate: CFC will continue its leadership role on animal welfare, whether on the farm or in transport. We have the only program that retailers and restaurants can rely on with confidence to assure their customers and all Canadians that the chicken they sell has been raised under the most credible, mandatory, third party audited program in Canada.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Dungate.

Now, with the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, we have Mr. Bowman.

You have seven minutes.

Mr. Matt Bowman (President, Beef Farmers of Ontario, and Director, Canadian Cattlemen's Association): Thank you for the invitation to speak with you this morning. My name is Matt Bowman, and my family and I raise cattle in Temiskaming, Ontario.

I'm currently the president of the Beef Farmers of Ontario and a director of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association. The CCA is the national voice of Canada's 68,000 beef farms and feedlots. With me today is Brady Stadnicki, a CCA staff member here in our Ottawa office.

Transportation is a critical element in modern cattle production, marketing, and distribution. All cattle are transported at least once in their lives. Successfully hauling cattle requires particular skills and a strong emphasis on good pre-transportation decision-making and ensuring that the animals are fit for the entire journey, not just fit enough to get on the truck.

Proper animal care and welfare is paramount in the beef industry and producers continue to ensure the best life possible for their livestock. This proactive approach includes maintaining animal health; minimizing stress when handling, treating, or transporting animals; and continually updating and improving our practices.

When it comes to understanding the effects of transportation on cattle, the Canadian beef industry has not taken a backseat in this approach. In collaboration with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, academia, animal welfare experts, veterinarians, truckers, and animal care advocacy groups, cattle producers have invested substantial dollars into research to benchmark how the industry has been performing and to seek ways to minimize the stress on the animals.

Canadian research has shown that the outcomes for cattle transported in Canada are very positive. Studies have found that 99.95% of animals on a longer haul of over four hours reach their destination incident free, and 99.98% of the animals on a short haul of less than four hours reach their destination injury free.

We want to ensure that any amended regulations do not inadvertently move this number farther away from 100%. While we believe this is a good news story, it hasn't stopped industry from continually looking at ways to improve these outcomes. Researchers are always looking into more specific aspects of cattle transport and how they affect the well-being of animals. Examples of such areas include comparing the stress of unloading and reloading versus the stress of completing the journey, and the effects of temperature, trailer design, loading densities, and how a trucker drives.

In addition, it is important to understand whether rest stops do in fact relieve stress. For example, rest stops can facilitate the spread of respiratory and other diseases, especially on vulnerable animals.

With respect to the proposed regulatory changes, Canadian beef animal producers and CFIA share the goal of continually improving animal health and welfare outcomes. It is CCA's position that any regulatory change needs to be based on scientific evidence, and wherever possible, uses outcome-based guidelines that focus on the animal. The CCA believes that for a new rule to be meaningful, the supporting research needs to be conducted using commercial cattle, transport trailers, and drivers under typical commercial distances and conditions in Canada.

CCA is supportive of the efforts to modernize the regulations by bringing more clarity to certain definitions and make regulations less prescriptive and more outcome-based. However, we are concerned with some aspects of the regulatory proposal and the effect they could have on our industry.

First, we're concerned with the change in the maximum number of hours that cattle can be transported, which has been reduced to 36 hours from 48 hours. The geography, climate, and infrastructure that the Canadian cattle industry operates in are much different from other cattle jurisdictions, such as the European Union's, which is a

jurisdiction that CCA believes has limited applicability to the Canadian context.

There is little existing evidence that suggests a prescriptive change in the number of hours cattle can be in transit will make the small number of negative outcomes in the cattle industry even smaller. Instead, CCA believes that regulations should be consistent with an outcome-based approach, which would allow experienced and competent drivers to use their judgment and get cattle from point A to point B as safely and efficiently as possible.

CCA also recommends that more research on rest stop intervals and durations is required before any regulatory change comes into force to avoid unintended, negative consequences on animal welfare outcomes. Furthermore, CCA recommends that the existing four-hour grace period in transport times be retained as there is need for reasonable flexibility for unforeseen circumstances that occur during long-distance travel.

CCA is also concerned that the regulatory impact and cost-benefit statements included in the proposal do not accurately represent the cattle industry. It also fails to acknowledge that producers will bear the majority of the added costs created by these regulations. CCA is concerned about the capacity for existing rest stations to handle increased volume, as well as the suitability of existing rest station locations across Canada.

● (1120)

I've recommended that CFIA provide a more sector-focused analysis before any new rules come into force.

Finally, there are concerns about the transfer of responsibility requirement and some of the proposed definitions, which we would be happy to elaborate on a little later during questions.

In closing, I would like to say that cattle producers are continually working to make demonstrable improvements in animal health and welfare outcomes with all aspects of our industry. As we move forward, it is critical that any regulatory change also contributes to real welfare improvements rather than unintentionally risking the high prevalence of positive outcomes delivered by industry today.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this morning, and we look forward to your questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Bowman.

Now we'll go to Metzger Veterinary Services.

Dr. Kenneth Metzger (Veterinarian, Metzger Veterinary Services): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I know what you're all thinking. Who is this Ken Metzger, and what is he doing in this meeting?

I'm not a national organization and I don't represent thousands of people. I'm just one little vet from Linwood, Ontario, but I am hands-on and my clinic provides the veterinary service for about 10% of Ontario's hog production and about 75% of Ontario's beef production.

When I read the *Canada Gazette*, I became worried that the government may just be naive enough to believe these fantasies and actually implement the changes, so I wrote to my MP, my MPP, and Dr. Kiley, expressing my concerns, and I guess that's how I ended up here today. Thank you for inviting me.

One of the main proposed changes in the *Gazette* would reduce the maximum transport time from 52 hours to 36 hours for cattle, and from 36 hours to 28 hours for pigs. This should not be done because it would seriously disrupt our industry in Ontario. Remember that pigs cannot be unloaded and reloaded for biosecurity reasons.

Every week in Ontario, we bring about 8,000 early weans from Nova Scotia and Manitoba. These trucks can't make that journey in 28 hours, so that entire flow would have to be discontinued. In the case of the Nova Scotia producers, many of them would go out of business. Many of the Manitoba farms are owned by Ontario producers to supply their Ontario pig flow, and many of those farms would have to be sold.

In addition, Ontario has a shortage of hook space, and we need the ability to market pigs to Manitoba for slaughter. There are also over 100,000 cattle per year from Manitoba that would have to be unloaded unnecessarily. Currently, they come straight through.

There is no scientific evidence that shorter transport times would enhance animal welfare. In fact, the research shows that loading and unloading is the most stressful part of the journey and where most of the injuries occur.

Another argument you'll hear is that calves become dehydrated during the journey. That's simply not true, because they have a five- to 10-gallon rumen capacity. Just think about it. The driver might consume three litres of water, but the calf already has 30 litres of water in its rumen. Calves don't become hungry, either, again because of the large rumen capacity and because they eat straw while they're on the truck.

It's already been mentioned that the unnecessary unloading of Manitoba cattle at Thunder Bay is a biosecurity risk. In our own vet clinic every year, we do a survey of our producers on cattle health. We consistently find that long-distance western calves have half of the sickness rate that our Ontario and Quebec calves have. The current transport times are working just fine. Western calves arrive in Ontario in excellent health.

If the committee feels the need for reassurance on that, I'd encourage you to simply open your laptop, go on Twitter, type in "Ken Schaus", and take a minute to watch some of those videos of unloading western calves in Ontario. Those calves tell the real story.

The second main part of the *Gazette* deals with a series of definition changes. Now let me be clear. The only group I can see

that would benefit and cares about these exact definitions is the CFIA, because they use these definitions to assign AMPs. In four and a half years, the CFIA has issued over 1,000 AMPs that have generated \$8.5 million in fines. In my opinion, many of the AMPs that my customers have received are unjustified.

Kathy Zurbrigg, who is a Ph.D. student at the University of Guelph and now works at Ontario Pork, has presented her research to the CFIA. I have it here. It is about in-transit losses in hogs, meaning pigs that die on the truck on their way to slaughter. Her findings were that many of these pigs had heart lesions that caused their death, and that there was no way that producers or transporters could know ahead of time which pigs were affected or if or when they would die.

• (1125)

These pigs simply died, and it's no one's fault. The CFIA assumes, however, that it's from overcrowding, even though the scientific research says otherwise. The CFIA does not seem to be influenced by scientific research, and they continue to issue AMPs for this.

I'd like to give you one more example of how disastrous these definition changes would be. In paragraph 136(1)(f), any animal with "slightly imperfect locomotion" would be deemed compromised and could only be transported if it's segregated, loaded last, and unloaded first, etc. There are tens of thousands of animals with slightly imperfect locomotion every year in Ontario. It would be simply impossible for the industry to comply with that regulation.

In summary, I implore this committee to do the right thing. Don't give in to the irrational objectives of the animal activists. Don't make it even easier for the CFIA to issue AMPs when there are already too many unjustified AMPs. We all want improved animal welfare, both the activists and the livestock industries, but what the activists don't understand is that these changes would actually backfire and reduce animal welfare.

We have a world-class livestock industry in Canada, some of the best farmers, the best transporters, and the best processors producing the best beef and pork in the world. Let's all work together to achieve our common goal of enhanced animal welfare within a successful and thriving livestock industry.

Thank you.

• (1130)

The Chair: You're right on time, Mr. Metzger. Thank you so much.

We'll start our questioning round. I want to welcome Mr. John Nater here, replacing Mr. Shipley. We'll start with Mr. Anderson for six minutes.

Go ahead, Mr. Anderson.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have some organizations here.

These changes have been discussed for several years or whatever, off and on, but my understanding from the information from the bureaucrats was that they really haven't followed up on this in the last couple of years.

Can you tell me, have your organizations had direct conversations about these issues in the last couple of years with the government, or was this dumped on you without recent consultation?

Mr. Steve Leech (National Program Manager, Food Safety and Animal Welfare, Chicken Farmers of Canada): Thanks.

Certainly over the last number of years, there have been discussions with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency on transport regulations. For a number of years, the file, I think, was fairly inactive, and we were actually trying to work with CFIA to look at the transport regulations. Over the last couple of years, there's been some interaction back and forth, but it's been fairly limited in some situations in terms of the amount of discussion that we've had. But certainly we've been working to put forward the notions that we have, which Mr. Dungate spoke about and which are in our submission report, about some of the complexities of the definitions and how the changes in transport times could negatively impact the industry.

Mr. David Anderson: Would anybody else like to add?

Mr. Brady Stadnicki (Policy Analyst, Canadian Cattlemen's Association): I'd just echo those comments. In 2013 there was a survey and a kind of pre-consultation questionnaire that went out, and the CCA did provide comments to that. At value chain round tables and meetings like that, we kind of got an update that they were being worked on but the details weren't in detail.

I guess one thing is that, even with that process going on, industry has been working, on our own part, in terms of researching and trying to really get a better understanding of the effects of transportation on animals and to benchmark, essentially, trying to answer the questions of today and tomorrow, not just sitting still on the topic.

Mr. David Anderson: Two of you, at least, or your organizations, have said that over 99% of the animals are moved without incident, without issues, or whatever. Do we need a revamp of these entire regulations just to deal with less than 0.5%, and are these things that you can take care of internally, that you can change the standards on?

You've talked about animal care programs and those kinds of things. Is that the kind of thing that industry can take care of themselves, do you think?

• (1135)

Mr. Brady Stadnicki: Yes, with the research benchmarking the cattle industry has done—as you mentioned—we're having over 99% success at a national level. The analogy I use is that we're playing darts and we're hitting the bull's eye 99% of the time. If we have wide-sweeping changes to the regulations—or, in the analogy's case, our technique of throwing that dart—we're less likely to get closer to 100% and more likely to get further away. Certainly, if we look at the specific small issues that deal with 0.05% of areas we can improve on, I think that comes around training, industry education, and further research.

Mr. David Anderson: Dr. Metzger, will you talk a little bit more about the challenges of unloading and reloading animals? You talked about biosecurity. I wonder if you can go a little bit further into the issues animals face if they're going to be unloaded and reloaded a couple of times between, say, here and my area in western Canada. What does that do to animals, and how is that in their best interest at all?

Dr. Kenneth Metzger: Sure. I'd be glad to comment on that.

One of the main things to keep in mind is that respiratory disease is our biggest health challenge with new cattle. Also keep in mind that the incubation period for *Mannheimia haemolytica*, the main pneumonia-causing bacteria, is five days. An unnecessary stop of eight hours, which turns into 12 hours with rest, doesn't seem like that much—it's just half a day—but that extra 12-hour delay in getting those cattle to Ontario and into the feed-yard where they can be properly cared for is absolutely critical. There's absolutely no question that the groups of cattle that give us the most trouble, from a health perspective, are the ones that have long delays in getting to Ontario. Without a doubt, the best ones come straight through.

Mr. David Anderson: We want to have science-based regulations. You've all talked about the interest in outcome-based and science-based regulations. Also, the CFIA has expressed a desire to better align with the standards of Canada's trading partners. I'm just wondering if you can give me a little information. What happens if those two things are not the same, and their standards are not based on science but on politics? How do we deal with that? That seems to be what's happening here. The idea that we would have European standards is in a lot of ways ridiculous because of the complete difference in geography, transport issues, and those kinds of things. Does anybody have a comment on that?

Go ahead, Mike.

Mr. Mike Dungate: I agree.

New Zealand has a 12-hour limit, but you can go from one end of the country to the other in 12 hours. Did they put it at the maximum so that you're not going to drive a couple of times around the island before you get there? I think you're going to look at what you're going to put in place depending on your geography.

We don't know the reasons why they are there. What we do know is that they're inconsistent from one country to another, so there has to be something other than science that's driving them to have that basis. We are fully supportive of the science aspect in doing research and in continuous improvement. The better you know, the better you do. I don't think radical change is necessary.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dungate.

Thank you, Mr. Anderson.

Monsieur Breton, you have six minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Breton (Shefford, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

I'm going to talk in French, so you might want to put on your headsets.

[Translation]

My comments will be in the same vein as Mr. Anderson's.

We know that in Europe, the regulatory framework contains extremely high standards. The standards regarding animal transportation are probably among the highest in the world.

Could you tell us a bit about your assessment of the European system? You spoke at some length about shortening the maximum period animals can go without food and water, with which you are more or less comfortable. In Europe, when transportation lasts for eight hours, that is considered a long period, and trucks must be equipped with ventilation systems and drinking troughs, among other things.

What is the situation in Europe? Why is this system cited as an example everywhere on the planet? Could we not get closer to that standard?

You may all answer in turn.

Mr. Novak, you can go first, please.

[English]

Mr. Frank Novak: We had an issue with the microphone for the first part of your question, but if the question is directed towards why we would be following European standards, for example, I guess my answer would be that I don't know why we would be. My understanding is that some of those standards are actually there because of labour laws, as opposed to anything to do with the livestock being transported.

As we said over here, when you have countries that you can circumnavigate in less than the number of hours we're talking about, they can pick whatever they want, and I think they pick things for reasons that have nothing to do with what's actually being transported. It's because they're regulating the driver, which seems like a horrible place to look for information about how to manage our own industry.

• (1140)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Breton: Mr. Dungate, you have the floor.

Mr. Mike Dungate: You spoke about an eight-hour period, but in Europe it is 12 hours for chickens. We want to go about this species by species and take differences into account.

Most people think that things are better in Europe, but I'm not sure that that is really the case, given the proposals we have here. Our transport times include loading, unloading and transportation hours. In Europe, they only count transportation hours. So those are additional hours. It means that we are talking, rather, about 19-hour periods, without counting the feed withdrawal period of 12 hours. So 12 hours have to be added to the 19 hours. In total, we are probably talking about 31 hours. We are satisfied with our position if we compare ourselves to Europe.

Mr. Pierre Breton: Does anyone else have anything to add?

[English]

Mr. Brady Stadnicki: I'd just add quickly that when we're making regulations that have an effect on animals within Canada, we

want to make sure that they're being based on what actually is happening in Canada to ensure that the outcomes for the animals within the country are the best and we're not taking something from another jurisdiction that doesn't have as much of an application in our own country. We want to be making improvements and rules based on what actually happens here.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Breton: I have another question on draft regulations, regarding the mandatory training for animal loading, transportation or unloading. Have you already started this training? How is it going? How is this training, which is important in my opinion, affecting your business?

[English]

Mr. Matt Bowman: Most of the major long-distance trucking companies that come to Ontario would be trained under the Canadian livestock transport system. All their drivers would be certified under that system currently, or the vast majority of them would be. If they're not, they're all moving towards that. There are some establishments that won't allow you to load or unload unless you have that certificate. We're moving in that direction to make sure that everybody is certified and trained in animal care and transport.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Breton: Mr. Leech, what do you have to say?

[English]

Mr. Steve Leech: With the Canadian livestock transport system that was just spoken about, we also have a training module in the poultry sector as well. Quite a number of companies are having their employees train for loading and unloading and transport times. That's another example where all industries have gone ahead and done this pre-regulatory requirement to do that. It's part of our animal care program, as we've talked about. It's good management practices. In terms of having the training programs in place and moving forward, the industry is moving quite well in that space.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Breton: Thank you for your answers.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Breton.

[English]

Thank you to the panel.

[Translation]

Ms. Brosseau, you have six minutes.

[English]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Thank you, Chair.

I would like to thank all the witnesses here today and for the documents provided. I've been going through all the documentation and submissions. It's really interesting.

Mr. Novak, you spoke of the University of Saskatchewan doing research. Do you know when that will be completed and when we could have access to that?

Mr. Frank Novak: My understanding is that the U of S study is quite exhaustive. I think they're talking about a two-year period to actually complete the whole process. If I were picking a time, I would say two years is what they're working on. They might have things to talk about before. A person would have to ask them directly, but the point of their study is to make sure they do absolutely everything they need to do and not rush it to get an answer.

● (1145)

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau: When we're talking about unloading, reloading, and rest stops, what would that look like exactly? Biosecurity is an important issue. I know everybody takes that very seriously. Our farmers do. When transporting animals, it's very important that we use all of the tools in our tool box to make sure that we're fighting against potential risks. Can you elaborate on what that would look like if we had to stop and unload and reload, and also from the infrastructure point of view?

Mr. Frank Novak: For the hog industry, I want to make sure that everybody understands how major a risk biosecurity is for us. For anybody here who doesn't know, there was the PED virus outbreak in the U.S. in 2014, where they managed to kill some 7 million baby pigs. This bug is so virulent that our vet described it as being able to take one thimbleful of this virus, diluting it in an Olympic-sized swimming pool, and having enough virus to kill the entire Canadian hog herd. This is how virulent this is.

If you talk to Canadian hog producers about going to a public area and unloading pigs with a bunch of other pigs whose history they don't know, or cattle trucks that might have come back up from the U.S. packing a PED virus in a cattle liner, they will tell you unequivocally, it won't happen. They will not put their animals at that risk.

What would it look like? Imagine some sort of a NASA biocontainment facility with eight million different roads, so you never had to travel on the same road as the truck before you. It sounds like a ridiculous thing, but honestly that's what you would be talking about if you wanted to go to something close to zero risk. That's why we don't do it.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau: Mr. Bowman, or are there any other comments?

Mr. Matt Bowman: Currently the rest stations in Ontario are just outside of Thunder Bay. Any trucks that are required to stop have to unload there. They look like great big barns with big pens. There's enough room for everybody to get off to get feed and water and then get back on.

What would they look like? They would have to be much bigger under the proposed regulations, plus more locations, because we can't drive as far in between rests. We would have to have a whole other set of rest stations somewhere along the way for those cattle to make it to Ontario from wherever they are coming from.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau: I'm not quite sure who can answer this question or if anybody is interested to comment on it, but with regard to the changes to unfit animals, what does that look like? That's with regard to the current...and what is proposed in the recommendations that were in the *Gazette*.

Are those changes okay? Are there any thoughts around the changes to unfit animals?

Mr. Matt Bowman: I think what we want is more clarity around those definitions, so that all of us here can answer that question easily. The way it's written now is very vague.

We want to make sure that if there are changes to those rules and regulations, that kind of question can be answered with ease, without any grey areas on whether that should or shouldn't be going on the truck.

Mr. Gary Stordy (Public Relations Manager, Canadian Pork Council): I was just going to add that producers are responsible for the animals they raise. Most of the commodities have on-farm handling procedures on how to move animals from one pen to another, or moving from their farm onto a truck. That's where training comes into play. Bearing in mind that loading animals is stressful, taking them off the truck is stressful. They have to be certain that even before they get to that point, that animal can make the trip. There are situations where things are unseen, whether there's a heart condition within the animal or whatnot that develops during transportation.

There are steps in place to address some of the issues beforehand, but it's the small percentage of things that may happen, whether it's in a barn or on a truck.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau: Mr. Leech.

Mr. Steve Leech: To build on that comment quite quickly here, I think one of the recommendations we put forward is to add in the words "visually observable" for unfit or compromised birds, for the very reason that's been stated. Obviously, there can be mortality that results in transport, but the key is whether that was visibly observable before the animals were loaded, and how that was determined.

I think that goes back to the definitions, making sure that we define those specifically before we finalize the regulations, so that we all understand the common playing ground we're on.

● (1150)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Leech.

Madame Brosseau, your six minutes are up.

Now, Ms. Lockhart, you have six minutes.

Mrs. Alaina Lockhart (Fundy Royal, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all of you for your testimony today.

Being from Atlantic Canada, I'm going to ask a few questions about the impact to industries in Atlantic Canada. In our last meeting with CFIA, I brought to the table the fact that we have seen a significant decrease in the number of slaughter facilities in Atlantic Canada, meaning that there needs to be more transportation.

Dr. Metzger, you mentioned the flow from Nova Scotia and that it would need to be stopped, or you felt it would need to be stopped. Could you speak to that?

Then perhaps I'll speak to the industries, if I have a chance.

Dr. Kenneth Metzger: It's for exactly the reasons that have been mentioned. There's a lack of slaughtering facilities there. In the case of the early-wean pigs that come here, Ontario is one of the only potential outlets for them from those particular farms. People often ask why they wouldn't go to Quebec. There may be possibilities there, but the industry in Quebec is so integrated that introducing a new line of pigs with a different health status probably is not feasible.

That's why I made the comment that in the case of the farms that Ontario transporters haul pigs out of, we believe that most of them would have to go out of business. They simply wouldn't have an outlet for their pigs.

Mrs. Alaina Lockhart: I think it's important to note that as we're trying to move closer to an international standard, we do need some recognition of the geography of Canada and some of these challenges.

To the pork producers, could you give me your insight?

Mr. Gary Stordy: Certainly, coming from the east coast, producers are innovative. They've been well in advance of some of the trends within the industry in the past 15 years that I've been with the pork industry, and they continue to be. These regulations would make it difficult to be innovative. It's partially just because, as Mr. Metzger mentioned, there are producers who are involved in the weanling industry who do transport long distances, and they transport well. They would use a number of examples to show that when the weanlings arrive, they arrive in good condition, ready to take a foothold within their new environment.

That's one of the reasons why across Canada our industry excels at raising essentially these baby pigs for the export market, or raising them in another barn. For the east coast and some of the innovative producers who are trying to break into niche markets, this would add another layer of complexity to what they're already doing. Whether they want to ship into processing plants in Quebec or further, unfortunately they would have to take that into consideration and may decide to do other things.

Mrs. Alaina Lockhart: Okay.

To the cattlemen, I know that Atlantic Canada has some growth potential there too. How would this impact that?

Mr. Matt Bowman: There's one major processor on the island who's starting to make some inroads into filling that market, but still the vast majority of cattle from the Maritimes have to come to Ontario for processing. There is no other spot. All those cattle are going to have to get on a truck and make that trip to Toronto or to Ontario. It'll be a significant challenge if these regulations get changed.

Mrs. Alaina Lockhart: Do you know the timing now? How long is that trip?

Mr. Matt Bowman: How long a drive is it from Halifax to Toronto?

Mrs. Alaina Lockhart: Right, so it's a non-stop trip right now.

Mr. Matt Bowman: Yes. They can make it in a non-stop trip. If the regulations come through and they have to make a stop, then it will add significant cost and time to that transport.

Mrs. Alaina Lockhart: Right.

For chicken...?

Mr. Mike Dugate: I think we're better off now because there's been a new plant built in Clair, New Brunswick. There's also a new one in the Annapolis Valley in Nova Scotia. There had been some longer transport times. Probably those on Prince Edward Island, where there isn't a processing plant, had the longest. They can work within the regulations that are now....

As I said, it comes down to species-specific. We can deal with 28 hours as long as we're not adding on feed withdrawal and other times and changing the definition of what is actually transport.

•(1155)

Mrs. Alaina Lockhart: I think that's important to point out too. We heard your testimony today, and we heard from CFIA that they believe that 98% of the transportation of animals from Atlantic Canada would be compliant with the new regulations that were proposed. But perhaps further investigation into some of the other regulations might complicate that.

Mr. Mike Dugate: I think the other challenge right now is that, for instance, would you expect to be getting 50 centimetres of snow in Newfoundland? We make decisions, with a decision tree, about whether to load or not load based on weather. To give you an example, if there's extreme heat in the summer, we'll catch birds earlier so that they're not transported in the middle of the day. They'll go into a large climate-controlled facility at a processing plant. Yes, they'll be on the truck for longer, but they'll be in better conditions than otherwise.

That's where the new regulations will compromise the ability to take different statements.... As you already heard about giving the four-hour flexibility time and that decision. We'll make the best decisions we can, but we need the flexibility at times, even though we're trying to reduce times as much as possible.

Mrs. Alaina Lockhart: Thank you very much.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I think that will do it for our first hour of testimony. I want to thank the panel for coming here today and all that really great information.

We'll break at this time and I think lunch is provided in the back for the members and we'll be back with the next panel.

Thank you.

•(1155)

_____ (Pause) _____

•(1200)

The Chair: For this second hour, the technical problem has been fixed. Everything is good.

For the second hour, we have with us, from Mercy for Animals, Ms. Krista Hiddema. We also have Lauri Torgerson-White, an animal welfare specialist.

From Animal Justice, we have Ms. Anna Pippus. She is on video conference from Vancouver, B.C. She is the director of farmed animal advocacy. Also, with the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, we have Michael Cockram, member of the animal welfare committee.

Welcome.

You have seven minutes each, and we can start with Ms. Hiddema.

• (1205)

Ms. Krista Hiddema (Vice-President, Canada, Mercy for Animals): Members of the committee, it is our honour to have been asked to present to you today. My name is Krista Hiddema, and I'm the vice-president of Mercy for Animals in Canada. I am here with my colleague Lauri Torgerson-White, our animal welfare scientist.

On March 22, in his post-budget interview on *Power & Politics*, Minister Morneau stated that the government is committed to "beat the world" in agriculture. Since Canadian laws governing animal transportation are arguably the worst in the western world, sweeping changes are needed to realize his goal. These changes must ensure that Canada is competitive on a global basis, not just on par with the also-outdated standards of the United States.

Every year, approximately 700 million animals are transported and slaughtered for food in Canada. The government has an obligation to ensure that these animals are not abused. A survey of Canadians regarding farmed-animal transportation revealed that the overwhelming majority believe that animals raised for food must be treated humanely. The reality is that they are not. The CFIA admitted that 14 million animals per year may be suffering during transport, with 1.6 million animals arriving at slaughterhouses dead. One particularly noteworthy finding in our survey was that 95% of Canadians from coast to coast, representing both rural and urban regions, agreed that they would pay more for food that came from animals that were treated humanely.

I will now comment on each of the nine main issues that our evidence-based research has determined to be the most critical factors in assuring the humane transportation of animals.

The first is that the absolute maximum amount of time that an animal should be transported without food, water, and rest is eight hours. This is the practice in many of the major livestock-producing countries, including Italy, France, and Germany, and it is supported by the most current animal welfare science. Not only does increasing journey lengths negatively impact welfare, but it makes us less competitive on the global stage, and it also impacts meat quality.

The second fundamental component is that animals must be protected from weather and have appropriate ventilation. To allow animals to maintain appropriate body temperature, the environment inside the transport trucks must be kept between five degrees Celsius and 30 degrees Celsius, and animals must be protected from rain, snow, and sun. Trucks must be fitted with temperature sensors, a warning system must alert the driver when temperature goes above or below the acceptable limits, and immediate action must be taken when it does.

The third factor is that animals must be provided with enough room so they can assume natural postures and movement. The regulations must include stocking density limits that are species-specific and based on scientific equations that account for the variations in animal weight.

The fourth factor is that only healthy animals should be transported. Transportation is one of the most stressful times in the life of an animal, and under no circumstances should an animal that is already ill or injured be transported. To do so would cause extreme suffering. The determination of the fitness of an animal for transport must be made by properly trained individuals, and where necessary, a veterinarian.

The fifth factor is that there should be a zero-tolerance policy for any form of rough handling of an animal. This means that there must be a complete prohibition on beating, dragging, kicking, and the use of electric prods. Video cameras that are live-streamed to the Internet must be installed in loading and unloading areas.

• (1210)

Sixth, certain animals must be transported separately. The most critical animals this applies to are boars. Boars are often detusked with no painkillers by using bolt cutters below the gum line. This practice is done to allow more boars on a truck, and as you can imagine, it is excruciatingly painful. The practice of detusking boars must be banned, and boars must be transported in separate pens within the trucks.

Seventh, drivers must be required to undergo annual species-specific certification training, which includes animal physiology, drinking and feeding needs, animal behaviour and stress, emergency care, and contingency planning.

Eighth, detailed records of all aspects of animal transportation must be kept and made available to the public.

Last, the government must ensure regular oversight, together with dissuasive fines and penalties for non-compliance. The government has the obligation to treat animals humanely to meet the expectations of its citizens. As Minister Morneau indicated, the government also has the obligation to remain competitive on the global stage regarding animal agriculture.

Budget 2017 provides the Treasury Board Secretariat with \$6 million over three years to continue its efforts in supporting business growth by promoting regulatory alignment with Canada's trading partners, and agriculture is a key element of this. Given that these regulations were last updated four decades ago, fundamental and substantial changes are critical now, and must be based on new science, not decades-old science.

Thank you for your time. We now look forward to answering your questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Hiddema.

Ms. Pippus, we'll give you seven minutes. Go ahead.

Ms. Anna Pippus (Director, Farmed Animal Advocacy, Animal Justice): Thank you very much for the opportunity to be here today to speak on behalf of animals.

Because my special expertise is in law, I'd like to open with some comments about the role of regulation in a democracy. Regulators exist to protect the public interest, not to protect the industries they regulate. I urge vigilance against the common but democratically inappropriate tendency for regulatory schemes to devolve into regulatory capture because of undue industry influence on the substance of regulations.

Justice Wright of the appellate court in D.C. once wisely observed that a recurring question has plagued public regulation of industry, and that is whether the regulatory agency is unduly oriented towards the interests of the industry it is designed to regulate rather than towards the public interest it is designed to protect. The role of the regulator is to establish science-based standards that reflect societal values, in this case the value that animals should not suffer in involuntary service to us. The role of industry is to adhere to those standards in carrying out its economic activities.

Industries the world over resist regulation. This is not due to any particular ill intent but occurs because regulation inherently adds burden and expense. Yet a civilized democracy needs regulation. Vulnerable groups need rules to protect them, and animals are the largest and least politically powerful class of individuals in our society.

The public needs rules in place to ensure that industries don't compromise our cultural values in the pursuit of their own bottom lines, and the public cares deeply about animals and wants them to be free from harm. In a democracy, regulators answer to the electorate, not to the industries they regulate.

In its cabinet directive on regulatory management, the Government of Canada made a commitment to Canadians to protect and advance the public interest to ensure that its regulatory activities result in the greatest overall benefit to current and future generations of Canadians. In addition, the government has promised to make decisions based on the best available knowledge and science, and to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation in the economy.

Many members of the public would be shocked and appalled to learn that according to government figures, 1.59 million farmed animals arrive dead at slaughterhouses each year. This is a crisis. These are animals who suffered to death at human hands. They may have been crowded aboard jostling, jerky vehicles; suffocated and injured; exposed to extreme weather or a lack of air circulation and frozen or overheated to death; collapsed from dehydration, starvation, or fatigue; or all of the above. Many more animals also suffered in these same conditions but managed to hang on to life long enough to avoid becoming a DOA statistic.

This brutal reality doesn't reflect Canadian values or desires.

Canada also has world-class animal agriculture research facilities, including those at the University of Guelph and the University of British Columbia. We should be heeding the fruits of their cutting-edge science. Instead, we're largely ignoring them.

It is said that necessity is the mother of invention. If the regulator only regulates in ways that industries find convenient, what incentive is there for innovation and entrepreneurship to solve the urgent issue of millions of animals suffering and dying? Without meaningful regulation, animal welfare is the inevitable casualty of the consequent race to the bottom.

I'll now say a few words about comparing Canada with other jurisdictions. It is complex to adapt laws from one jurisdiction to another jurisdiction. In fact, there's an entire field of study devoted to the intricacies of comparative law. Situations vary based on culture, economics, demographics, geography, existing political structures, and so forth, yet we can learn valuable lessons by looking to comparable jurisdictions.

One thing is clear. Other jurisdictions are doing a superior job of hearing the public's concerns for animal welfare and of pushing regulated industries to innovate rather than stagnate.

Moreover, the goal should be to be a world leader, not to require only the bare minimum of industry. Canada is a world-class country, and we should be forging new boundaries in the frontiers of compassion and justice for the vulnerable, of respect for science, and of innovation and entrepreneurship, just as the Government of Canada has promised Canadians it would do.

We are particularly concerned with the use of solely outcome-based measures in the weather exposure and loading density provisions. Outcome-based measures rather than prescriptive measures define an outcome but leave it to regulated parties to determine how to achieve the outcome.

• (1215)

In other words, the regulation expresses a vague goal instead of establishing quantitative numbers-based standards. There is a role for outcome-based measures as a regulatory tool, but they must be used appropriately. It is a basic tenet of the rule of law that laws have flexibility as needed, but are as predictable and foreseeable as possible. Specific numbers—quantitative regulations—aid predictability and foreseeability. Vague outcomes do not.

We know from the existing health of animals regulations that outcome-based measures for weather exposure and loading densities do not work, yet these provisions remain essentially unchanged in the proposed regulations. Jurisprudence in the United States has found that outcome-based measures in the context of animal welfare do not work to establish enforceable, minimum animal-welfare standards.

We need prescriptive measures in the areas of weather exposure and loading densities to promote consistency between producers; to avoid a race to the bottom at the expense of animal welfare; to ensure that laws are justly, foreseeably, uniformly, and regularly enforced; and to maintain public trust. Outcome-based measures ought to be used to augment evidence- and numbers-based rules.

Please refer to our brief for more specific detail and for further concerns. I also rely on and endorse the proposals of my colleagues from other animal protection organizations.

Thank you again for hearing my concerns today on behalf of animals, the public, and democracy.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Pippus.

Now, from the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, we have Michael Cockram.

• (1220)

Dr. Michael Cockram (Member, Animal Welfare Committee, Canadian Veterinary Medical Association): Mr. Chairman and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee.

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, CVMA, provides a national and international forum for over 5,500 veterinarians working across Canada. Veterinarians promote animal health and welfare, strive to relieve animal suffering, and protect public health. Veterinarians provide unique expertise on the health and welfare of all types of animals and have a professional obligation to ensure the welfare of animals. Animal welfare advocacy is a strategic priority for the CVMA.

I am a member of the CVMA animal welfare committee and a professor at the Atlantic Veterinary College, University of Prince Edward Island, where I hold a chair in animal welfare. My main area of research is the transportation of animals.

The importance of animal welfare to society and our understanding of how animals respond to management practices such as transportation have increased considerably since the existing health of animals regulations were written. They are in urgent need of revision. As you already would have heard in the evidence presented, both transportation and animal welfare are complex issues. Different stakeholders adopt different positions on the regulatory amendments.

Scientific research on animal welfare has clearly demonstrated that mammals and birds have the capacity to suffer and that aspects of transportation can place animals at risk of suffering. The good news is that if care is taken over the fitness of animals, the quality of the journey, and the associated handling and management of the animals, many if not most animals can be transported without experiencing severe welfare issues. However, situations are rarely ideal and different types of animals are more susceptible to aspects of transportation than others. Unfortunately, some animals experience suffering and others die as a result of transportation.

There are patho-physiological and emotional aspects to suffering associated with transportation. Handling, loading and unloading, vehicle movement, and interactions with other animals can cause injury, pain, and discomfort. Restriction of feed and water during long journeys can result in hunger, weakness, exhaustion of body energy reserves, thirst, and dehydration. Exposure to thermal extremes due to an inability of the transport arrangements to protect the animals from harsh external conditions, both hot and cold, and from the buildup of heat and moisture within the vehicle, can cause thermal distress and death. Animals can experience fear and distress

by exposure to novel factors and can develop fatigue during long journeys.

Animals that are weak or suffering from disease or injury are most likely experiencing welfare issues such as pain and sickness before they are transported. They're likely to experience increased suffering because transportation will exaggerate any pre-transport issues. They're less able to cope with challenges such as getting on and off the vehicle, maintaining stability, avoiding fatigue, and coping with feed and water restriction and extreme thermal environments. They're likely to deteriorate during long journeys and more likely to die, become non-ambulatory, or have to be euthanized on arrival than those that are healthy.

The regulations need to address these issues by defining how the management of the animals during transport can reduce the risk of suffering. Unfortunately, the proposed amendments to the health of animals regulations do not fully reflect international standards, scientific research, and veterinary understanding of the implications of transporting animals.

Our main comments on the proposed regulatory amendments can be summarized as follows.

• (1225)

First, on fitness of animals for transportation, the CVMA believes that the proposed conditions listed in the compromised animal category should be reconsidered and that many of these conditions should be placed in the unfit for transport category. It is the CVMA's opinion that proposals that would permit the transport of animals for up to 12 hours with the types of conditions listed under the "compromised animals" category would result in considerable suffering.

The second point is about the intervals that animals may be transported without feed, water, and rest. The CVMA strongly supports the reduction in the time intervals that animals may be transported without feed, water, and rest. However, it is the CVMA's opinion that the proposed maximum intervals for animals are still longer than they should be to reduce the risk of suffering. In some situations, scientific research can provide evidence that indicates deterioration in animal welfare after a specific journey length. However, in most situations, the responses are linear and do not indicate a clear cut-off point. Research on this and associated topics is under review by the NFACC transportation code scientific committee.

Our third point relates to the suffering of animals during transportation. The CVMA believes that multiple approaches are required in the regulations to ensure that even though an animal arrives at its destination alive, suffering has not occurred along the way. In addition to the proposed outcome-based measurements, the CVMA believes that weight must also be given to the research evidence, professional advice, and opinion of veterinarians with respect to the assessment of suffering and the enforcement of regulations.

The CVMA strongly supports the removal of the term "undue suffering" from the current regulations and endorses its replacement with the word "suffering". In addition, we made a number of detailed suggestions to various sections of the proposed regulations.

The CVMA encourages the federal government to dedicate the necessary resources for enforcement, training, and research in order to implement and sustain the new regulations so as to achieve the desired animal welfare outcomes.

The CVMA wishes to express its support for the general direction being taken by the proposed regulations. However, the CVMA is strongly of the opinion that modifications are necessary to ensure that the new regulations are effective and meaningful in strengthening the humane treatment of animals during transport. We look forward to working with the various stakeholders to develop solutions to the challenges of transporting animals, bringing to the table our knowledge, skills, and experience as veterinarians.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cockram.

Now we will start with our question round.

[Translation]

Mr. Gourde, you have six minutes.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the witnesses for being here with us.

Mr. Cockram, you are here on behalf of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, which represents 5,500 veterinarians. I would like to know how many of them specialize in large animals such as cattle, hogs and horses.

[English]

Dr. Michael Cockram: There is a range of expertise within the CVMA. We have a large number of practitioners with experience of cattle, equines, and other livestock.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Do you know what percentage of the veterinarians in your association specialize in large animals?

Is it 10%, 20%, 30% or 40%?

We hear it said currently that there is a shortage in Canada of large animal specialists, and that this could be a problem in future.

[English]

Dr. Michael Cockram: I can certainly talk about the latter points.

There is a need for more expertise and advice for the industry on animal health and welfare issues, and a need to ensure that there are sufficient economic incentives for veterinarians to engage in livestock practice and to ensure that they are dispersed across the whole of Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: You acknowledge that there is probably in Canada a shortage of large animal specialists.

In my region—and I am told that this is the case in other regions as well—it is difficult to obtain the services of a veterinarian who specializes in dairy cows, for instance.

[English]

Dr. Michael Cockram: Veterinarians, during their education, would specialize in basically livestock or small animal practice. The veterinarians who have taken the livestock stream would have the basic skills to apply to any type of livestock situations. The principles apply to each and every sector. There is always a need for increased specialization in some areas.

• (1230)

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: In your association, are there many veterinarians who work for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and assess the condition of animals who arrive at the slaughterhouses?

[English]

Dr. Michael Cockram: Yes. A major role of veterinarians is to assess the health and welfare of animals on a viable slaughter plan.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Do those veterinarians have expertise or particular training, or is it their general training that allows them to occupy that type of position?

[English]

Dr. Michael Cockram: My understanding is that the CFIA gives these veterinarians additional training. You can never have enough training and education on this very difficult topic. Perhaps there's a need for more but they get extra specialist training in this area.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Among the veterinarians who occupy such positions at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, are there some who have not practised for 5, 10 or 20 years with large animals, and who have rather general training?

[English]

Dr. Michael Cockram: This is a question for the CFIA rather than me as an animal welfare specialist representing the CVMA.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: We are talking here about the transportation of animals, mainly commercial animals, such as beef and pigs. In Canada, those animals represent 80% to 85% of all animals that are transported. We know that other animals are not moved as frequently. When these commercial animals arrive at the slaughterhouse, it is the veterinarian's assessment that determines whether they are accepted or not. We should at least ensure that those veterinarians carry out an assessment that is fair and equitable for the producer and trucking companies that have the joint responsibility for animal transportation.

When the animals arrive at the slaughterhouse, there is no second opinion. The only assessment comes from the agency, and it does not provide a second opinion to the producer and the carrier. Is that correct?

[English]

Dr. Michael Cockram: The veterinary profession is a profession. We abide by certain standards. We go through years of education and continual professional development. You should be able to have confidence in veterinarians and their ability to carry out and do this work. There's no reason to have a second enforcement body. You can have confidence in the work of the veterinary profession to be able to assess the health and welfare of animals.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: So, when the veterinarians carry out their assessment at the slaughterhouse, the trucking company and producer can be fined, but they are not allowed to send a second veterinarian to check whether the first assessment done by the agency was truly fair and equitable. They receive a fine one month, three months or a year later, and it is then impossible to get a second opinion.

[English]

Dr. Michael Cockram: If there is enforcement of the regulations in the way that you describe, the industry body transporter can get an opinion from a veterinarian on the evidence presented, and this happens quite frequently. We view the appeal cases. We go before the agricultural review tribunal, and I've read most of them. That happens frequently. There is independence and expertise available to industry.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cockram.

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Gourde.

[English]

I ask the members to identify to whom they want to direct the question because we have a video conference. This way, Ms. Pippus can know if the question is for her.

[Translation]

Thank you.

Mr. Drouin, you have the floor.

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

[English]

Thank you to all the witnesses for being here. I appreciate it.

Ms. Hiddema, do you believe that the majority of farmers abuse their animals?

Ms. Krista Hiddema: I think we're talking about farmed animal transportation here.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Can you answer the question?

Ms. Krista Hiddema: If you're asking whether we have done undercover investigations in Canada, we have now done 11 undercover investigations coast to coast. In the 11 facilities that we have gone into undercover we have seen abuse in every one of those situations. That abuse has been made public through a video that's available to any member of the general public. As it relates particularly to transportation we did an investigation at a facility called Western Hog Exchange and at Maple Lodge Farms—

• (1235)

Mr. Francis Drouin: I believe you also made a video about chickens not too long ago. It was on your website—

Ms. Krista Hiddema: It was.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Why is it removed now? It's not there. I checked a few weeks ago.

Ms. Krista Hiddema: It has not been removed.

We did an investigation—

Mr. Francis Drouin: It was there, but now it's not there. Is it because of the chicken and egg farmers' press release they put out calling you out?

Ms. Krista Hiddema: No.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Okay, just checking.

Ms. Krista Hiddema: We did an investigation at a facility that was—

Mr. Francis Drouin: Do you believe that the majority of farmers abuse their animals?

Ms. Krista Hiddema: I did not say that. I said that in the 11 facilities we went into, we saw abuse in every one of those cases.

Mr. Francis Drouin: I'm just reading your website, "blatant abuse is now standard practice on farms both large and small". Standard practice means the majority of farmers are abusers, and abuse their animals.

Ms. Krista Hiddema: I think there is—

Mr. Francis Drouin: That is the theory you are coming forward with.

I'll just get back to transportation, but at the end of all this, I believe that my job is to balance proper regulations with making sure that we don't increase the price of food. Otherwise, I'm going to have poverty advocates here saying that the price of food is too high. We're talking about... You've mentioned that over 700 million animals being transported are slaughtered. That's 2% of animals that would be suffering when they're being transported, if you do the math. It's also less than 1% of animals who arrive dead on arrival.

At the end of all this, the proposed regulations, how much—and I'm asking all members here; they can answer the question—will it reduce that percentage? At the end of it, if it doesn't reduce that percentage, we're doing this for nothing. I want to make sure that what we propose, what we come forward with, and what recommendations we propose in this committee reduce that number. If they don't, then we did this exercise for no reason.

Ms. Krista Hiddema: We know that the most amount of suffering in transport is in birds. There was a study done in Canada by Schwartzkopf-Genswein in 2012 that indicated that 86% of cattle journeys are already less than eight hours, and that the majority of pigs already spend less than three hours in transport trucks.

We know that the real problem in Canada is the transportation of birds, chickens in particular. When we look at the statistics for the number of animals that are arriving either DOA or so sick and injured that they can't become part of the supply chain, the vast, overwhelming percentage is birds.

We also know that, where we see the courts stepping in—which has nothing to do with Mercy for Animals—they are stepping in on incidents regarding birds, in particular Maple Lodge Farms, who has been held to account in our court system and on multiple occasions been charged with animal cruelty. The biggest issue regarding animal transportation is birds.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Mr. Cockram, do you have anything to add?

Dr. Michael Cockram: You need to look at the role of legislation that's in society to look at these broader aspects. It's basically to provide a framework of essential practices that the industry needs to adopt to reduce the risk of suffering. Doing that, you have commercial conformity when delivering these essential provisions. You also need to have a mechanism for dealing with non-compliance for these essential practices, so it's really a type of insurance to try to make sure you have the infrastructure there to reduce the risk of suffering.

Mr. Francis Drouin: On DOAs for instance, for poultry, I'm looking at numbers in the U.S. They're at 0.025%, and in Canada right now we're at 0.015%, so we're actually lower than the U.S. At the end of this, I just want to make sure that we don't over-regulate for no reason.

Dr. Michael Cockram: I can deal with that one.

The good news is that the DOA percentage in Canada for the transport of poultry has gone down quite dramatically in recent years. That shows the commitment of the industry to achieve that end. It shows that, by changing management practices, you can get a desired outcome. But we need to do more than count dead chickens, unfortunately. It's quite a bad welfare outcome for an animal to die. We need to be able to catch other forms of suffering before death occurs. Therefore, we need to make sure that we have a well-designed manageable system of regulation in place. It's not impossible to get improvements.

• (1240)

Mr. Francis Drouin: Do you have numbers in other jurisdictions in terms of suffering, the percentage for poultry, for instance, or cattle in Europe, the US, or Australia, for example?

Dr. Michael Cockram: It's already been said. Poultry is at the greatest risk of dying during transportation. There should be very little reason why cattle die during transport. We're talking at a very sort of base level here, in terms of animal welfare, about transporting animals so you don't kill them. You shouldn't be killing any animals when you transport them.

We need to go for a higher level of standard so that it's actually beneficial for the industry in terms of saving money, getting better product quality, but increasingly now, by increasing consumer confidence in the food that they want to buy. They don't want to buy food if they think there's any risk of animals being exposed to suffering in their production. This is all—

Mr. Francis Drouin: If I tell consumers that 98% of their chickens are safe, do you think they'll react like that?

The Chair: Maybe you can answer that in the next one.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Drouin.

[*English*]

Thank you, Mr. Cockram.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brosseau, you have six minutes.

[*English*]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau: Thank you, Chair. I'd like to thank our witnesses before committee today on this study on animal transport.

I'm just trying to go through this. When we're done our day in the House, I always go home and I try to prepare for the following days.

I must commend you on the amount of documentation provided for this study. Thank you. I'm still trying to process it all.

I'd like to start off by asking a question. We had laws put in place in 1977. Now in 2017 we're going over them after a 10-year consultation period. I know we're trying to get in line and harmonize our laws and certain of our practices in Canada with international standards. I know what we do has to be made in Canada and has to take into account the geography and the weather we have here in Canada, the four seasons.

Could you maybe comment on where Canada is as compared with the States, and maybe comment on Europe's practices and standards in comparison with regard to international animal health?

Ms. Krista Hiddema: Is that for me?

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau: Yes.

Ms. Krista Hiddema: We've actually done an analysis of where Canada sits in comparison to every major country, including the OIE. That can be found in our documentation, in chart format. Unquestionably, we fall behind every other civilized country in terms of animal transportation. While we don't fall particularly far behind the United States, we are still behind. We certainly take the position very strongly that, as Canadians, and in particular as Canadians who don't want animals to suffer, we have an obligation to make dramatic change at this point.

The other thing I just want to comment on is the ongoing question about the EU. At the end of the day, while we are not the EU, animals certainly have the same capacity for suffering, whether those animals are sitting in Germany or they're sitting in Canada.

When we talk about the number of hours in transport, there are alternatives. When we talk about animals being offloaded and reloaded, yes, that's extremely stressful, but there are trucks available that have on-board food and water, on-board ventilation, and on-board monitoring of temperatures. When we know those transport times are going to exceed maximums like eight hours, they should be utilizing separate trucking systems.

We also believe that there is an opportunity for job development in having more slaughterhouses so that they simply would not have to be in transport for 52 hours, which is grossly unacceptable. We know there are job opportunities here, and there are better trucking systems.

It's no different. If you're going to take your kids to Florida, what are you going to do? You're going to pack a lunch and put it in the back of your car, and you're going to do a few other things, and you're going to stop. There are opportunities for animals as well. As Michael has indicated, every animal feels suffering, and not one death is acceptable. Where we can reduce that dramatically, we have that obligation on the global stage, to Canadians, and quite frankly, to the animals.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau: I know my colleague Alaina Lockhart has brought up quite often the need for slaughterhouses. I think we could all agree that if that infrastructure and those types of services were more accessible and closer to home, that would solve a lot of these issues.

Mr. Cockram, what is the difference between “unfit” and “compromised”?

• (1245)

Dr. Michael Cockram: An “unfit” animal is an animal that cannot legally be transported. Canada is quite unique compared to, say, the EU regulations, by having a separate category of “compromised animals”, whereby those animals are not fully fit but they are allowed to be transported under special circumstances.

The difficulties we in the CVMA have when we look at the proposed regulations are, first, the maximum time they could be transported is 12 hours—that's a long time for an animal to go downhill—and, two, there are a number of conditions listed for compromised animals, meaning that the suffering will be exaggerated by the transport. Having sick or injured animals enter the human food chain is a way of allowing industry to get an economic return from them.

We are suggesting that the list of compromised animals be reconsidered so that animals that shouldn't be transported at all are not transported, and that the only option for these animals should be local slaughter, say within an hour of the livestock unit. Otherwise those animals are going to suffer unduly, and that's not acceptable.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau: I've been going through the document you've submitted to the committee, “Mercy for Animals”. There are studies and quite a lot of expert testimony that have been included. Could you comment on this, Ms. Torgerson-White?

Ms. Lauri Torgerson-White (Animal Welfare Specialist, Mercy for Animals): Yes, absolutely. We spent a ton of time going through—

The Chair: Give a quick comment, please.

Ms. Lauri Torgerson-White: Okay. I'll be very fast.

We did a lot of research, as you can see. I spoke with animal welfare scientists all over the world, the experts on this, including Don Broom, who was the first animal welfare scientist in the world, and Clive Phillips, who's an animal welfare expert who studies transport. Everyone agrees that moving toward something like the EU regulations—not because they are the EU regulations, but because they're based on the most current science—is indeed what's best for the welfare of the animals.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. White.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Ms. Brosseau.

[*English*]

Lloyd, I understand you're going to split your time, or are you?

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): We have six minutes, and it's coming up to the top, so I'll share with Mr. Peschisolido.

My riding is Guelph. The University of Guelph naturally has been quite involved with veterinary science. Saskatoon is another place where research is going on. We had some testimony earlier around the different metabolic systems within animals. As a person reading a study, quite often I'll substitute a trip to Florida for me or my family with a trip across Canada for a different type of animal.

Could you comment, Dr. Cockram, on the different biologies in effect, how prone to stress different types of animals are, and how some may be more prone than others?

Dr. Michael Cockram: Yes, that's an interesting question. It's a challenge for a regulation to be able to cover that huge variation.

Poultry are particularly susceptible to transportation due to their susceptibility to thermal extremes, whether that's a cold temperature or a hot temperature. Spent laying hens are also particularly prone to handling difficulties, because they tend to have more brittle bones at the end of their production period—

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: What about food intake and being off feed, and off water versus off feed?

Dr. Michael Cockram: If the management of the animals during transport was okay, there shouldn't be the need to put so much emphasis on journey times and times off feed and water.

A number of animals, as you've heard, can be transported on long journeys, if it's done well. It's not impossible to do. In Europe, as you've already heard, there are specialized vehicles for animals to be transported over eight hours. They can only be transported in vehicles that are able to feed and water them on route and that provide good conditions for them.

When looking at the regulations, you need to look at where the major risk factors are. Pigs, for example, are more susceptible to time off water than, say, a ruminant would be. As you heard in the evidence earlier today, ruminants and the ruminant animal—

• (1250)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: The University of Guelph is doing research around water and how much water pigs need, and it is actually raising pigs that don't need as much water.

We are going to run out of time. I'm looking at Mr. Peschisolido, and I told him I would share time with him—

Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): If you have six and I have six, we have lots of time.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: —but do you have just a few seconds on that, please, just in terms of research that could be done in order to improve metabolism and improve the distance travel for animals?

Dr. Michael Cockram: It's difficult to envisage that you can change the metabolism of a pig to decrease its water requirements. You're better off trying to work out how to provide water effectively during long-distance transport.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: But Dr. Moccia has done that. He's gotten 30% less water into his pig. The "Enviro-pig" is what he calls it.

Dr. Michael Cockram: I look forward to seeing the peer review literature.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Yes, it's peer reviewed. It's out there, because we're looking at.... There's not enough time.

Explain the nature of nutritional metabolic abnormality. How does this impact different animals?

Dr. Michael Cockram: A lot. That's quite a difficult term for me to get to grips with, because if you deprive an animal of feed, then it will just try to mobilize its body's energy reserves.

The first energy reserve it calls upon is carbohydrates, and that tends to be stored in the liver. If you look at how long it takes for, say, the liver glycogen to be completely exhausted from a bird, we're talking four hours there. If we're looking at sheep, we're talking several more hours. Then, when it's used its carbohydrates, it goes over to fat and has to burn that off. Therefore, it depends upon how thin or well-muscled the animal is as to how it can cope with that. The final energy resource that an animal has in an extreme situation is that it has to try to burn off its protein, whether that's muscle or even the heart protein.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: That wouldn't happen in the course of their travel. With some animals, poultry in particular, you don't want to slaughter them when they have a full stomach and full bowels. There are health risks at the slaughterhouse and in processing.

Dr. Michael Cockram: There's clear evidence that shows that the risk of poultry dying during transport increases linearly with the journey duration and the time without feed. We need to understand more about these relationships. There is a major issue, however, with the transport of poultry and journey duration.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Part of the study out of Saskatoon is looking at that relationship.

Dr. Michael Cockram: That is partly true. It's one thing that we would explore together as part of the NFACC committee on code development and science.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: We're looking at outcomes and, as Mr. Drouin said, it's less than 2% failure or death at the end of travel, or unsuitable animals at the end of travel. We want to reduce the number even further. Any changes we do in legislation, we want to make sure they have a positive outcome for animals, not a negative outcome.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Longfield.

Mr. Peschisolido.

Mr. Joe Peschisolido: My thanks to all the witnesses, not only you guys but also the previous group of witnesses.

Your testimony was extremely helpful to my understanding and balanced the need to have a vibrant agriculture industry with the need to take care of the legitimate welfare requirements of animals.

Ms. Hiddema, I agree with you that our agriculture sector is very important. I would take it one step further and talk about the statement of our agriculture minister, Minister MacAulay, that we should be a superpower in agriculture. That includes animals: hogs, chickens, pigs. I was blessed to have the minister in my neck of the woods, which is Steveston—Richmond East. We have over 200 farmers: hog producers, chickens, cattle.

How do you think your proposals would impact the industry in British Columbia?

• (1255)

Ms. Krista Hiddema: What in particular? Do you mean the costs?

Mr. Joe Peschisolido: Would the industry be able to adapt? Are you familiar with the industry in B.C.?

Ms. Krista Hiddema: Absolutely.

Mr. Joe Peschisolido: Okay.

Ms. Krista Hiddema: We know that B.C. has very few hog farms. They raise mostly cattle and birds. Certainly, as it relates specifically to British Columbia, we believe that the proposed changes we have provided would have an excellent impact on increasing opportunities for more slaughterhouses, more jobs in British Columbia, improved welfare, and greater advantages for animals and for workers.

Mr. Joe Peschisolido: You spoke earlier about the length of travel. These animals are travelling 2,000 to 3,000 miles, and you talked about the economic benefits of perhaps changing the system. Can you elaborate on that?

Ms. Krista Hiddema: We've all talked about the percentages, but at the end of the day, we're still talking about 10 million animals that are not becoming part of our food supply chain, coast to coast, not just in British Columbia. I think it's important for the industry to focus on spending money to improve welfare instead of spending money to have 10 million animals not even become part of our food supply.

I don't think any reasonable Canadian thinks it would be okay that 10 million animals are transported and slaughtered without becoming part of the food supply.

Mr. Joe Peschisolido: Thank you.

Ms. Pippus, you mentioned the importance of the law and the evolutionary nature of law and how regulation plays into it. I've always been struck by the word "livestock". They're alive, but they're stock. In Quebec, they talk about animals being sentient. But under law, they're also property.

Can you elaborate a little bit on that? There's also an intriguing case going on, I think in Toronto, about someone who was giving water to pigs. How does that impact on things?

Ms. Anna Pippus: Animals under the law are property, but they are a special kind of property. The law doesn't really explicitly recognize that, but it does implicitly recognize that. Quebec's move to classify animals as sentient beings was an explicit move toward that.

For example, it's a criminal offence to abuse an animal. It's not a criminal offence to abuse a table. That's because we implicitly understand in the law that animals are sentient individuals. When it comes to their ability to suffer, animals are no different from us humans, and in fact, we sometimes forget that humans are also animals.

Generally, the world over, there is a trend toward recognizing that animals are a special type of property, that we use them as property, but that we're also increasingly in science recognizing that they are sentient. Also as a society we're becoming much more empathetic and compassionate toward animals as vulnerable individuals in our society.

I think that global trend paints the background a little bit for why it is so important to move these regulations. There is discussion of the difficulties, and there are discussions of whether this is really going to change things, but of course, that's what we're here for. We have to believe that regulating works and is essential to a functioning democracy.

As to the case in which Anita Krajnc has been charged with criminal mischief in Toronto for giving pigs water, I think that case really illuminates the problem with pigs in particular aboard these hot, metal trucks that are not climate controlled. In the winter they can become very cold, frozen even. Ms. Krajnc has documented pigs with frostbitten ears. Conversely, in the summer they can arrive panting, which the code of practice for transportation of animals says is a sign of heat distress in animals and needs to be addressed immediately or the animals risk dying.

We didn't get into too much detail, but in New Zealand, for example, pigs and other monogastrics can't go without water for more than six hours, so they parse out water and food in a species-specific way to recognize that pigs don't have sweat glands, and on board metal trucks they are dropping dead. About 15,000 animals a year are dying in transport.

Mr. Joe Peschisolido: It's interesting that you talked about the nature of regulations, that you give incentives and disincentives, so basically you're trying to modify behaviour.

A previous witness—and I thoroughly enjoyed his presentation, Mr. Metzger—discussed that if your presentation or amendments are put forth, it would significantly disrupt the industry. What are your thoughts on that?

• (1300)

Ms. Anna Pippus: We haven't updated our regulations in 40 years, since 1977. In that time, we've had slaughterhouses consolidating, farms consolidating. The landscape has been chan-

ging, but that doesn't change the fundamental reality that [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

Again, the regulatory needs to answer to the public. We have all kinds of indicators—a study referred to earlier, general trends changing, lots of polling—showing that the public wants animals to be protected in transport, and there's not—

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Pippus.

I'm going to allow a short question from Mr. Nater just to finish the day, if you want.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm proud to be the son of pig farmers and the son-in-law of dairy farmers, and I simply cannot let the statement stand that there's some kind of systemic abuse of animals on Canadian farms. That's simply not the case.

I'm very proud of the 5,600 farmers in my riding. We have more than half a million pigs, more than 50,000 cattle. They are not being abused. They are not subject to undue abuse by farmers. I'm proud of our Canadian farm families. I'm proud of the work they do. I think it's a slap in the face to the hard-working farm families to imply, even make an implicit statement, that there's abuse going on in these farms and in the standards. It's simply not happening. I think that's a slap in the face of so many farm families.

My question is to Dr. Cockram. In your comments you mentioned that loading and unloading increases the stress and the opportunity for harm and pain to animals, yet you're at the same time advocating a decrease in the amount of time that an animal can be on this truck, thereby increasing the number of times that an animal is going to be unloaded and reloaded.

How do you justify that statement, where on the one hand you're saying it increases the risk, and on the other hand you're saying we should have more loading and unloading?

Dr. Michael Cockram: Yes, transportation is a complicated issue, and you have to look to see where the largest risks are.

The solution to journey times is to improve or optimize the quality of the journey and the management of the animals before and after the journey, so there's less need to put the emphasis on the journey times.

As we mentioned, in Europe, the way they manage these long-distance transport and feed and water intervals is through the legal requirement to have specialized vehicles that enable the animals to be fed, watered, and rested on the vehicle.

The Chair: Thank you, and thank you, Mr. Nater.

That will wrap up our session today. I want to thank the panel for coming, and Ms. Pippus for appearing by video conference. Again, thank you for contributing to our report.

The meeting is adjourned.

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