

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DE
L'AGRICULTURE ET DE
L'AGROALIMENTAIRE**

May 26, 2017

The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
1341 Baseline Road
Ottawa, Ontario
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Minister MacAulay:

On March 23, April 4 and April 6, 2017, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food held three public hearings with officials of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), representatives of the livestock industry, veterinarians and animal rights groups to examine the proposed amendments to Part XII of the *Health of Animals Regulations*, Part XII, which deals with humane transportation of animals.

The CFIA indicated that the current *Health of Animals Regulations* has changed very little since they were adopted in 1977 and need updating. After 10 years of consultations with various stakeholders, including transporters, producers, processors, animal welfare organizations and the public, proposed amendments to the *Health of Animals Regulations* were published on December 3, 2016, in Part I of the *Canada Gazette*. According to the CFIA, the proposed amendments are intended to improve animal health, address public concerns and better align Canadian standards with those of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and those of Canada's international trading partners. Among other things, the new Regulations propose to reduce the maximum period during which animals can go without feed, water and rest, and to provide clarification by adding definitions for "compromised" and "unfit" animals. The new Regulations also establish standards for knowledge, skills and training.

During the meetings, the Committee heard two distinct points of view. On the one hand, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association and animal rights organizations support the proposed changes to the Regulations, but believe that the proposals do not fully reflect international standards. These witnesses believe that the proposed maximum period is still too long to reduce the risk of suffering. This maximum period should be more closely aligned with the standards in place in EU countries. Moreover, they believe that the transportation of animals over long distances should be carried out in specialized vehicles providing access to water and feed during transportation.

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On the other hand, the amendments to the Regulations have raised many concerns with various livestock-industry stakeholders who are concerned that the proposal to reduce the maximum period without water, feed and rest will have a negative impact on the industry. Standards in other countries, including EU countries, cannot always be applied in Canada because of geographical, climate and infrastructure differences. Livestock-industry stakeholders and Dr. Kenneth Metzger, veterinarian, mentioned that stops along the way could compromise biosecurity and increase disease transmission. The industry also noted that it is not always obvious when animals are compromised or unfit for transport, for example, animals suffering from heart disease. Industry stakeholders therefore recommend that these concepts be clearly defined and that the words “visibly observable” be added to assess whether the issue was visibly observable before the animals were loaded. As far as training is concerned, many livestock-industry stakeholders already require that anyone handling or transporting animals be properly trained. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) anticipates a significant demand for training following the adoption of the amendments to the Regulations. The CFA recommends that the CFIA give small businesses a sufficient time to ensure that those affected receive appropriate training.

Livestock-industry stakeholders reminded the Committee that the industry supports measures that are based on scientific evidence. The industry also recognizes the need for continuous improvement in animal health and welfare standards, but believes regulatory provisions must take into account not only Canada's realities, but also differences between species.

Animal welfare continues to be an important industry priority for strengthening public confidence, and the Committee hopes that you will consider the industry's concerns when developing the new regulatory framework for animal transport.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrice Finnigan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Patrice Finnigan, M.P.
Chair of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food