

June 9, 2014

To milk producers and dairy industry partners

Video of animals being mistreated on a British Columbian farm

Context

We have learned that Mercy for Animals Canada (MFAC), an organization that advocates veganism and animal rights, released an undercover video of a dairy farm in British Columbia on June 9.

This video shows animals being treated cruelly by the individuals working on that farm. British Columbian authorities, such as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), took immediate action after being informed of the situation and launched an investigation of the farm concerned on Friday, June 6. The BC Dairy Association is fully cooperating with the SPCA.

We are taking this situation very seriously and absolutely condemn any mistreatment of animals.

Milk producers across Canada must comply with animal care laws and procedures. Animal negligence and mistreatment are not acceptable and simply cannot be tolerated.

Milk producers care about the welfare of their cows. They have chosen to work with animals because they truly enjoy it. They rise early 7 days a week to take care of their animals. They know that a happy and comfortable cow lives longer and produces more milk.

Every year, tens of thousands of Quebecers and many media representatives visit dairy farms, which are very accessible, especially at the open farm event organized by the UPA. They can see for themselves that milk producers take very good care of their animals.

We find this type of incident deeply disconcerting since we know just how committed producers are to improving their practices in an effort to make their animals more comfortable and take better care of them.

Unfortunately, some individuals break the laws, do not follow the best practices and mistreat their animals. We are convinced that these behaviours are very rare, and the measures set out by law to crack down on them should be strictly applied.

We strive to promote best practices and prevent abuse.

In recent years, we have worked with scientists, government experts, the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies and the National Farm Animal Care Council to update and strengthen the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle. Published in 2009, this code has been distributed to all producers and its exemplary practices have been widely promoted and communicated ever since.

We are now working on developing a procedure to check whether the code is being applied. Dairy production will be the first type of production in Canada to implement this kind of procedure. The entire effort is aimed at obtaining certification for animal welfare across Canada.

Les Producteurs de lait du Québec

To consult the code: <http://www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/dairy-cattle>

To watch some videos about the measures taken by producers:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5MkcuUyt6c>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S96Gup4A43o>