



# FARM ANIMAL CARE NEWS

## Farm Animal Care Code of Conduct

Having a farm animal care code of conduct is a good idea on your farm because it provides everyone in your farm or company with an understanding of company policy and values.

It also acts as a reminder from owner, to management, to staff, about what is important to the daily operation of your company. A code of conduct is not a secret. It should represent your company's values and expectations of itself and its employees, and you should be ready to share it publicly on a sign or on your website. A customizable version is available at <http://farmfoodcare.org/animal-care/335-animal-cares-code-of-conduct>

Don't have employees on your farm? There is also a sign in sheet version for people who visit your farm on a regular basis like chicken catchers or truckers or for someone only visiting once. Find a link to the sign in sheet at <http://farmfoodcare.org/animal-care/335-animal-cares-code-of-conduct>

## What's new at Farm & Food Care?

### Farm Animal Care Conference & Annual General Meeting

Farm & Food Care hosted a very successful half day conference as part of the Annual General Meeting on April 15, 2014 focusing on Sustainable Food and Farming. Highlights included:

- Terry Daynard's insights into what sustainability really means. When we think about what sustainability means, it changes from person to person. Sustainability has become a huge network in agriculture and food and many companies have come out with labels, which ultimately creates further confusion. We need to do a better job of communicating what sustainability means.
- The Ag & Food Exchange provided an update on its continuous monitoring of special interest groups and their tactics across Canada.
- Dr. Becky Tilley of Butterball Turkey LLC shared lessons learned from an undercover video shot at a company facility by Mercy for Animals in 2011. She explained the extensive action plan that Butterball enacted to prevent further incidents. Butterball refocused its efforts and retrained all employees, whether they work with birds or not and added additional training on a yearly basis. Things like audits, video monitoring and becoming American Certified Humane have followed. "It's making the program stronger and making sure all employees are on board to prevent any welfare issues to ever arise in the first place," said Tilley.

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## Upcoming Events & Meetings

### ⇒ Farm Innovation Tours

June 12, 2014 departing from London

### ⇒ Breakfast on the Farm:

Stanlee Farms Avenmore, ON

August 2, 2014

### ⇒ Find Farm & Food Care at:

♦ Pork Congress June 18 & 19, 2014

♦ Canada's Outdoor Farm Show

September 9-11, 2014

### ⇒ Harvest Gala October 30, 2014

## LivestockWelfare.com

Livestockwelfare.com is a Canadian farm animal welfare resource centre.

You can find a research database that links to thousands of journal articles relating to farm animal welfare, as well as information for first responders and all of Farm & Food Care's animal care resources in downloadable pdf versions. This website aim to enhance communication and advance farm animal welfare knowledge.



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## Past Meetings & Conferences Attended

### Ontario Bar Association (OBA) - February 6, 2014

On February 6, 2014, the OBA's first-ever session discussing current trends and important developments in animal law was held. The half-day session was attended by 30 people, including speakers and lawyers.

Farm & Food Care attended this meeting on behalf of our members to gain a better appreciation of animals and the law from a lawyers' perspective.

It was an interesting session, but as the morning progressed it became apparent that, unfortunately, the discussion and presenters only represented one side of the animal welfare perspective, well into the animal rights realm. Speakers included Lesli Bisgould, Adjunct Professor at University of Toronto; Ziyaad Mia, Adjunct Professor at Osgoode Hall Law School; Nicholas Wright, Animal Justice Law; Peter Newell, Toronto Humane Society; Todd Orvitz, City of Toronto and Anna Pippus, Mercy for Animals Canada.

The tone of the conversation turned from a legal and business focus to a detailed account of an undercover investigation done by animal rights group Mercy for Animals at a hog farm in Manitoba in 2013. Throughout the review, bold blanket statements were made by several speakers about animal agriculture, painting farming and livestock farmers in a very negative and uncaring light. Often inflammatory comments set the tone such as, "nobody wants to add animal welfare if they don't have to, it's expensive", "agriculture is heavily subsidized" and "95-98 per cent of animals are on factory farms."

If the OBA wanted to give lawyers a balanced look at how animals are actually cared for or managed in the Canadian legal system, they failed. Although dwindling in numbers, there are lawyers with farm backgrounds and those who have worked on actual legal cases involving farm animals. For example, Kurtis Andrews of Green & Associates, was in attendance and tried to refute from the audience as an attendee, but would have been much more impactful as a panelist to provide different perspective.

It's important for the farm community to note that there is an increasing trend in animal law specialization and interest throughout North America, often driven by well-funded animal rights groups or dedicated individuals. For example, the Animal Legal Defense Fund website claims to have more than 100,000 members with examples of their work including "filing ground breaking lawsuits to stop animal abuse and expand the boundaries of animal law; providing free legal assistance to prosecutors handling cruelty cases; nurturing the future of animal law through Student Animal Legal Defense Fund chapters; and providing public education through seminars, workshops and other outreach efforts."

While this was the first session hosted by the Ontario Bar Association, we hope this is not indicative of other law schools' or associations' attempts at teaching lawyers about animals and the law without the factual information, balance and critical thinking we would expect.

### OMAF Animal Care Conference—January 30, 2014

OMAF hosted an Animal Care Conference in Guelph where featured speaker Mike Siemens from Cargill discussed Cargill's approach to animal welfare in a continuous improvement model. Video auditing was presented as a way to help create pride among employees to do a better job when handling animals everyday. This conference attracted over 100 people across the supply chain from farmers to food service, with a vested interest in farm animal care.

## Current Issues

The following are current issues to be aware of:

- W5- Undercover video on Quebec veal farm  
<http://www.ctvnews.ca/w5/veal-industry-under-scrutiny-after-hidden-camera-footage-reveals-horrific-conditions-abuse-1.1782580>
- Oxford County veal cattle farmer disappointed by animal abuse in Quebec  
[http://www.woodstocksentinelreview.com/2014/04/22/oxford-county-veal-cattle-farmer-disappointed-by-animal-abuse-in-quebec?utm\\_source=hootsuite&utm\\_campaign=hootsuite](http://www.woodstocksentinelreview.com/2014/04/22/oxford-county-veal-cattle-farmer-disappointed-by-animal-abuse-in-quebec?utm_source=hootsuite&utm_campaign=hootsuite)
- Mercy for Animals—Undercover investigation in Maple Leaf hatchery  
<http://www.mercyforanimals.ca/hatchery/>

Have a friend or family member who is interested in visiting a farm? Did you know you can from the comfort of your own couch? Visit Virtual Farm Tours today.



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