
Manitoba Veterinarian's Animal Welfare Handbook



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Preface

Veterinarians are animal health experts with extensive knowledge of animal health problems and their appropriate treatments. A veterinarian's expertise is essential for the prevention and relief of animal pain, distress and suffering. The role of veterinarians in discussing animal welfare issues with their clients is best approached in a positive, proactive way rather than a negative, reactive way. Animal owners need to see that animal welfare is important to their veterinarians, and promoting animal welfare should be a focus of veterinary practice.

The goal of this handbook is to provide veterinarians guidance when dealing with animal welfare cases. This guidance includes how to report animal welfare concerns appropriately, how to discuss welfare concerns with clients and how to fulfill their leadership roles as animal welfare advocates.

Veterinarians are encouraged to have a practice policy for how animal welfare issues are managed. Using a proactive approach allows veterinarians and other employees to ensure good welfare standards are upheld and to demonstrate their commitment to animal welfare to clients and the public.

CHAPTER 1

Manitoba's Animal Welfare Program



CHAPTER 1

Manitoba's Animal Welfare Program

The Manitoba government's Animal Health and Welfare branch, under the direction of the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO), in the department of Agriculture and Resource Development (ARD), is responsible for enforcing The Animal Care Act and the Animal Care Regulation. This animal welfare legislation was designed to protect the welfare of all animals under possession, care or control of people, including livestock, companion animals and non-domestic species (e.g., reptiles, pocket pets).

The ARD Minister appoints animal protection officers (APOs) to enforce The Animal Care Act throughout the province. APOs come from varied professional backgrounds, including:

- veterinarians
- veterinary technologists
- retired police officers
- zoo keepers
- animal control officers

These APOs are generally hired as independent contractors to enforce the act on an as-needed basis. Police officers are defined as APOs in The Animal Care Act. APOs employed with professional agencies, such as the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and the Winnipeg Humane Society (WHS), enforce The Animal Care Act in conjunction with their existing professional duties at their place of employment. The Animal Health and Welfare branch under the CVO is responsible for the actions of all APOs (with the exception of the police), when taking action under The Animal Care Act.

WHS employees appointed as APOs respond to the majority of animal welfare concerns in Winnipeg and work closely with the Animal Health and Welfare branch and the CVO regarding their activities under The Animal Care Act.

The Animal Care Act's objective is to protect the welfare of domesticated animals in Manitoba and enforce compliance with an acceptable standard for their care. These standards of care apply to:

- providing animals with adequate food, water, shelter, exercise and medical attention
- keeping animals in areas that are uncrowded, sanitary, have adequate lighting, and are well ventilated
- avoiding infliction of emotional or physical suffering, injury, harm, anxiety or distress

Potential abandonment of animals by their owners can also be addressed under The Animal Care Act.

Who to Contact for Animal Welfare Concerns

The ARD's Animal Care Line and the WHS Emergency Line are designated to receive reports of potential animal abuse or abandonment from the veterinary community, law enforcement agencies and the general public.

Animal welfare concerns in Winnipeg can be reported to the WHS Emergency Line at 204-982-2028.

Animal welfare concerns witnessed anywhere in Manitoba (including Winnipeg) can be reported to the Animal Care Line by phone at 204-945-8000 or 1-888-945-8001, or by email at animalcare@gov.mb.ca.

The Animal Care and WHS Emergency phone lines are monitored daily, including weekends and holidays, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The Animal Care Line email is monitored during regular business hours. For emergency animal welfare concerns that require immediate attention between 8 p.m. to 8 a.m., please contact local police.

Members of the veterinary community who wish to speak directly to staff on the Animal Health and Welfare branch regarding an animal welfare concern can contact the Animal Care Line. The concern will then be directed to the appropriate staff member who can address the concern.

An Animal Care Line poster that summarizes reporting of animal welfare concerns is available upon request from the Animal Health and Welfare branch. Once identified, animal welfare concerns should be reported directly to the appropriate authority as quickly as possible. First-hand eye witnesses are preferred over people with second-hand information.

When reporting an animal welfare concern, it is important to provide:

- the owner's name, physical address and phone number
- the physical location of the animals
- a physical description of the animals involved, including numbers, species, breed, sex, age and colour
- directions on how to travel to the location of the animals and/or owner
- the nature of the animal welfare concern

- when, and over what period of time, the concerns were witnessed first-hand
- photos or video documenting the animal welfare concern, if possible

The individual reporting the concern, also referred to as the complainant, will be requested to provide their name, address and phone number in case more information is required. For example, if the animals of concern cannot be located by an animal protection officer, the complainant may be contacted to provide further descriptions of the animals and their location. Calls of concern may be made anonymously, but cannot be addressed if insufficient information is provided and the complainant cannot be contacted for additional information.

CHAPTER 2

Animal Welfare Veterinary Reporting



CHAPTER 2

Veterinary Reporting of Animal Welfare Concerns

Members of the veterinary profession are considered by the public and the courts as experts in animal health and welfare. Prompt action is needed to address situations where animal suffering is suspected.

A veterinarian may be confronted, either directly or indirectly, with animal welfare concerns, such as:

- While attending a call, the client comments about a neighbour who is starving his cattle.
- While tending to a client's animals, a veterinarian notices the general state of a group of animals borders on neglect (e.g., untreated illness/injury, emaciation, animals confined in significantly unsanitary conditions).
- A client agreed with the veterinary clinic to pick up his/her cat on a mutually agreed upon date after being treated for a urinary tract obstruction. Seven days have now passed, the owner has not picked up the cat and the owner is not returning phone calls from the clinic.

In an effort to co-operatively resolve the concern, the veterinarian may choose to address animal welfare concerns directly with the owner and attempt to educate him/her regarding responsible animal care.

A veterinarian who believes on reasonable grounds that an animal has been, or is subject to, neglect or abuse that compromises the animal's health, other than in the course of an accepted activity, has a legal duty to promptly report these concerns to the director.

This legal duty to report includes providing any information requested about the matter, even if it requires disclosure of personal, proprietary or confidential information, or disclosure of information that is restricted by legislation or otherwise. This information includes medical records, test results including radiographs or bloodwork, and other information required to determine owner compliance under this act. It also includes personal information about the owner to properly identify them, including a physical description, address, phone number or concerns for personal safety (e.g., prior history of verbal or physically threatening behaviour).

Under this act, no action or proceeding may be brought against a person (veterinarian) who in good faith complies with a request or requirement to report or provide information under this act.

If an animal welfare concern is identified while an animal is in care of a veterinarian, it is advantageous for the report to be made prior to the animal being released back to the owner. This will allow an APO to address animal welfare concerns with the owner in a timely fashion, ensuring the animal is in a safe location, and ensuring the animal receives the medical attention it needs, under direction of an APO. If the animal is discharged from the veterinarian's care prior to reporting the animal welfare concern, the file should be checked prior to releasing the animal. This will ensure the clinic has a complete medical record on hand, including:

- a physical description of the animal in question
- the correctly spelled first and last name of the owner/caregiver
- a current physical address for both the animal and the owner/caregiver
- a current phone number for the owner/caregiver

All animal welfare concerns remain confidential and the APO is instructed not to disclose the name of a complainant (e.g., the veterinarian) to the person(s) being inspected, even if the owner speculates as to the identity of the complainant. In rare circumstances where a case proceeds to prosecution, the identity of the complainant may be disclosed to the animal owner through legal disclosure.

CHAPTER 3

Animal Welfare Inspection and Cases



CHAPTER 3

Animal Welfare Inspection Process

When an animal welfare concern is reported to the Animal Care Line, Winnipeg Humane Society Emergency Line or a police agency, it must be determined whether enough information is available to identify and locate the animal and owner in question, and whether the concern falls under the enforcement authority of The Animal Care Act. If these criteria are met, the APO or police officer will meet in person with the owner of the animal and try to conduct an inspection of the animal in question. This will determine the validity of the complaint.

As part of the inspection process, an APO may contact a veterinary clinic requesting information about the animal/owner of concern. If the APO requesting information is not known to veterinary staff, staff should ask the APO for proof of identity. APOs are required, by law, to carry a certificate of appointment on their person, and present it when requested. APOs can also identify themselves with a photo identification card, a metal badge, or a patch placed on their clothing.

If, at the time of inspection, the owner is found to be providing care in compliance with The Animal Care Act, the case is closed.

If a valid animal welfare issue is identified at the time of inspection, the nature and severity of the issue is evaluated.

If the owner is not providing animals with care in compliance with The Animal Care Act (e.g., there is inadequate food, water, shelter or medical attention), the APO will attempt to resolve the concern co-operatively with the owner. This is usually achieved through discussion and education regarding the owner's responsibilities under The Animal Care Act, and by providing verbal and/or written recommendations to achieve compliance. Follow-up inspections are conducted over time to confirm that compliance has been achieved.

If the APO needs expert advice regarding animal care, a veterinarian is often the first to be contacted. Feed specialists, regional livestock specialists, animal agriculture specialists, social services personnel or police officers may also be contacted.

If required, an APO has the authority to pursue further corrective actions, including:

- orders to provide care or restrict animal ownership
- taking animals into care to relieve or prevent distress
- taking abandoned animals into care
- seizure or voluntary surrender of animals

The APO may enter public and private properties:

- to determine compliance under The Animal Care Act
- with a search warrant for investigation
- to seize and remove animals
- to euthanize animals in certain conditions
- to otherwise act to relieve the animals of their distress, pain and suffering

When animals are taken into care by an APO, a medical evaluation by a veterinarian may be required.



Veterinary Expertise for Animal Welfare Cases

While carrying out their duties under The Animal Care Act, the Animal Health and Welfare branch under the CVO direction or an APO may contact veterinarians to request examination of animals or provide expert advice for the following:

- nutritional requirements for animals
- identifying and managing injury and disease
- recommendations for euthanasia
- assessment before or after seizure of animals
- humane transport decisions
- expert testimony at trial

To understand the animal's current condition and develop recommendations for ongoing care, veterinarians can request to review background information about the circumstances that led to the animal being presented for veterinary evaluation. The veterinarian can ask the Animal Health and Welfare branch or APOs to review existing written documents, photographs or videos regarding the case. Examples may include:

- descriptions of housing conditions
- previous veterinary care and medical records
- previous or current information about medical history disclosed by the owner

Animal Welfare Case Examples Where Veterinary Expertise Is Valuable

Inadequate Medical Attention

Examples include:

- cattle with severe, untreated, ulcerated and infected cancer eye
- a horse with an untreated traumatic wound, resulting in infection or bone injury
- any animal with overgrown hooves causing lameness
- a dog with an untreated broken leg requiring surgical stabilization

In these cases, the APO, based on veterinary evaluation, may provide verbal and written recommendations and timelines for the animal to receive appropriate medical attention for the conditions noted. The APO may also take the animal into custody to provide it with veterinary medical attention if the owner is not able or willing to do so.

Deficiency of Feed, Water, Shelter

Examples include:

- a herd of very thin horses deficient in feed and water, where the majority of animals are emaciated or underweight
- dogs not provided with adequate outdoor shelter in winter to protect them from cold stress

In these cases, the APO may seek veterinary advice on the body condition of animals and their overall health status, to determine what corrective action is most appropriate. Body condition scoring is an excellent hands-on method to objectively assess the nutritional state of animals and their ability to withstand ongoing nutritional or environmental stressors.

The APO will consider this veterinary expertise when determining the appropriate corrective action recommended, which may include:

- volume/frequency/quality of feed and water
- the type and location of shelter/bedding best suited for the animal
- whether it is safe for the animal to remain in its current place of residence
- reasonable timelines to expect compliance

Transport Concerns

If animals are to be transported by their owner or are taken into APO custody, veterinary advice may be sought regarding the ability of the animals to withstand handling, loading and transport to another location.

Serious Animal Welfare Situation Requiring Immediate Corrective Action to Relieve Distress

Examples include:

- starvation of a herd of cattle, where the majority of live animals are emaciated
- 10 per cent of total animals are found deceased and appear emaciated, and no feed or water is seen on site
- cats living in conditions of severe squalor, with extremely offensive odour of ammonia in the air, and showing signs of severe upper respiratory infection
- a sheep is found in a barn in severe respiratory distress and unable to stand

In these cases, veterinary advice may be sought:

- to determine the health status of animals that are alive
- to determine the possible cause of death for deceased animals
- to provide veterinary treatment to relieve animal distress
- to provide assistance with euthanasia of animals for humane reasons

If an animal is found to be in such distress that it is considered inhumane for that animal to continue to live, an APO has authority to seize that animal, and the decision to humanely euthanize that animal is ideally made jointly between a veterinarian and the APO.



CHAPTER 4

Sample Submission and Documentation



CHAPTER 4

Submission of Samples/Carcasses to Veterinary Diagnostic Services

APOs may request that a veterinarian collect samples for testing on live animals or that they complete a post-mortem examination. The post mortem exam involves careful sample collection and photographs to aid in determining the cause of death. In cases where animals are euthanized for humane reasons, under The Animal Care Act, the illness or injury causing distress is determined. Submission of the entire carcass to a diagnostic laboratory for a more comprehensive post-mortem is also common. If an animal suspected of being abused or neglected is to be euthanized, it is of benefit to collect blood, urine and fecal samples prior to euthanasia, for possible future testing. These samples are valuable to understand the full scope of the animal's condition.

Radiographs taken prior to, or immediately following euthanasia, may also help to identify the extent of an animal's illness or injury.

Manitoba's Veterinary Diagnostic Services (VDS) case submission forms can be found at www.manitoba.ca/agriculture/animal-health-and-welfare/vds/submission-forms.html

When submitting samples for testing, APOs may request veterinarians complete or sign a chain of custody form for legal purposes. Laboratory submission forms and test results may become court documents if the case proceeds to trial. Therefore, forms must be completed fully and correctly. Please consult with the Animal Health and Welfare branch for assistance completing laboratory requisition forms for animal welfare cases. Important information required in these forms include:

- the referring veterinarian and/or clinic
- who will be paying for tests requested
- the owner's name and address
- the case number
- related case numbers
- animal description
- thorough history
- tests to be completed

Veterinary Documents for Animal Welfare Cases

Veterinary documents include the notes and medical records created by the veterinarian during evaluation and treatment of an animal, as well as diagnostic tests and results, such as radiographs and lab results. These documents are important to APOs to determine whether the care of animals meet criteria for compliance or distress under The Animal Care Act, and what type of action is appropriate to ensure animals are provided with adequate care. Veterinary documents may also be used to determine whether prosecution is appropriate and what charges should be laid. Veterinary documents may be used as evidence if prosecution is pursued, in which case these documents are disclosed to the court and used by prosecutors to determine what the veterinarian may testify to at trial.

It is important for the veterinarian's medical records to be written as immediately and as accurately as possible. The veterinarian may document records electronically, in writing on their own or by dictating to an assistant, or by dictating into a voice recorder and then transcribing into writing. All medical records should be signed by the veterinarian and the assistant creating them, if applicable.

It is important for veterinary records to be complete, concise, legible, professional, documented in ink of a consistent color (blue or black), and signed by the author(s). The veterinarian may be requested to give a detailed assessment of the animals and the environment where the animals are kept.

When inspected by APOs, all animal welfare cases are assigned a unique case number. This case number is formatted by year-month-unique chronological number (xxxx-xx-xxxx such as 2020-11-0700). The first four numbers indicate the year the case was created (e.g., 2020), the next two numbers indicate the month the case was created (e.g., 11 for November), the last four numbers indicate the case number assigned in chronological order for that year (e.g., 0700, the 700th case of that year). Recording this in the corresponding medical record allows for easy cross reference between agencies and demonstrates continuity of information for legal purposes.

When creating a veterinary file for an animal that may be abused or neglected, it is extremely important to document both the owner's physical and mailing address. In many rural communities clinics record client mailing addresses, but not physical address, which may make it impossible for an APO to locate an animal and/or its caregiver at a later date.

A thorough physical description of the animal should be included as part of each individual animal record. Descriptions should include:

- species
- breed
- date of birth
- gender
- whether the animal is altered or intact
- colour
- unique identification, including tags, tattoos, brands, microchips and scars

Medical records for individual animals should also include:

- a complete physical exam, noting both normal and abnormal findings
- a list of differential diagnoses, if applicable
- recommended and administered treatments
- recommendations for short and long term ongoing care
- what treatments the owner consented to or declined, and why

If certain animal systems were not examined, make note of this and document why (e.g., an oral exam was not completed because the animal was trying to bite and had to be muzzled for personal safety). Failure to do so can be interpreted by lawyers as failing to complete the physical exam, or forgetting what was seen at the time of exam. Veterinary medical evaluation templates that include all body systems are available from the Animal Health and Welfare branch upon request. Medical records should also include test results such as radiographs, blood results, fecal/urine results and histology/cytology.

Body Condition Scoring (BCS) is a hands-on and relatively objective method of assessing the amount of fat and muscle cover on an animal. It is an important tool for APOs when assessing the nutritional status of animals. There are numerous body condition score systems, most of which use a scale ranging from one to five or one to nine, where the lowest number indicates emaciation and the highest number indicates obesity. It is important for BCS and weights (when a scale is available) to be documented as part of the medical record for all animal welfare cases. When assigning a BCS to an animal, the medical records should note whether a five or

nine point scale is being used and what the extreme end of either scale represents (e.g., this animal had a BCS of three on a scale of one to five, where one is emaciated and five is obese).

Documentation of animal behaviour is also important, including signs of pain, aggression, fear, friendliness, agitation, and reluctance to move, stand or sit. The animal may act differently with one person versus another, which should be noted and may be an indication of maltreatment.

It is extremely valuable for medical records to include recommendations made to owners for care, what the owner did or did not agree to provide, what timelines are recommended to provide care, and whether the owner complied with the recommendations the veterinarian made.

Itemized estimates and invoices describing cost of care recommended and provided is valuable to illustrate compliance to providing an animal with appropriate care. They are considered part of a complete record. These documents may be used to support legal action and prosecution, so ensure accurate dates are recorded regarding when the documents were created and when the service listed was provided. Sentencing decisions may include a requirement for the offender to pay for cost of care. If a veterinarian provides professional services to the Animal Health and Welfare branch, as requested by an APO, an itemized invoice and complete medical record will be required by the branch to process payment.

Veterinarians can use photos and videos to support observations. When taking photos to document observations, both far away and close up views should be taken to capture the general appearance of the entire animal as well as the abnormality. Notes should be kept as a future reminder of what each photo or video represents. Including a ruler for scale may be useful, to document the size of objects. Videos and photos can be valuable to:

- document neurological, musculoskeletal, behavioural abnormalities
- document changes in appearance/behaviour over time
- differentiate one animal from another

If taking photos or video, ensure that programmed time stamps on your device are current. If submitting photos to an APO or the Animal Health and Welfare branch, **do not** change the number/letter identification (e.g., img0392) assigned to the photo by your camera/recorder prior to submission, and provide the make and model of the device used (e.g., Canon SX40HS Camera, iPhone 6 cell phone).

If a veterinarian is on site at an animal welfare incident, they may be asked by APOs to provide a veterinary site report. This report should document:

- both normal and abnormal animal and environmental observations
- the physical location of the animals and owner (which may be different) and the name of the owner of the premises/animals if known
- the location, number and type of live and deceased animals observed, including their physical descriptions, body condition scores, injuries and illnesses, and whether animals were provided with appropriate overall husbandry care and medical attention as required
- field necropsy findings and samples collected for laboratory diagnostics
- a description of food and water provided, including whether food and water was present or absent; its location and accessibility to animals; the type, quantity, quality and appropriateness of food present; and the storage method, frequency and volume of feeding/watering provided and recommended
- shelter and bedding provided, including location, appropriateness for weather conditions, size and amount relative to animal's needs, ability to keep animal warm and dry and protected from inclement weather, and cleanliness
- husbandry practices, including animal identification, castration, weaning, grooming, record keeping and presence of hazards that could cause injury to animals; presence, size and condition of containment areas and devices (e.g., barns, paddocks, fences and tethers)
- professional opinions on whether animal care and conditions were acceptable, and how management practices compare to minimum accepted standards.

When applicable, reference the National Farm Animal Care Council or Canadian Veterinary Medical Association's Codes of Practice for specific species and types of animals.



CHAPTER 5

Trial Role and Sensitive Considerations



CHAPTER 5

Veterinarian's Role at Trial

Each animal welfare case should be considered one that may lead to prosecution, regardless of whether the veterinarian is acting as the complainant or veterinary consultant. For this reason, it is extremely important for veterinarians to maintain copies of all documents created when involved with an animal welfare case. These documents are referenced by prosecutors to determine whether to proceed with charges and what the veterinarian can testify about. They are also used to formulate court briefs, and are used by the veterinarian to refresh their memory if testifying in court.

In court, the veterinarian can give his or her professional opinion if they are qualified by the courts as an expert witness. To be qualified as an expert witness, prosecutors will require a professional resume (also referred to as a curriculum vitae), which details professional education, training and experience. The Animal Health and Welfare branch can provide guidance to members of the veterinary community regarding formatting of resumes and reports, in preparation for court.

If a veterinarian is required to testify as a witness at a court trial, they will be served with legal documents (a subpoena) detailing:

- the time, date, and location of court appearance
- the nature of the charges laid
- the prosecutor contact information

Contact the prosecutor when these legal documents are received. Prior to the trial date, the prosecutor should review veterinary records with the witness, discuss general court procedure and etiquette, confirm when the veterinarian will be required to testify, and provide questions likely to be asked by the Crown prosecutor and defence counsel.

When providing testimony at trial, the following should be considered:

- It may take months to years from the date of the alleged offense for which charges are laid, for a case to proceed to court. Therefore, veterinary records should be thoroughly reviewed prior to the date of testimony, and a copy of all records should be brought with you to court. You may have to request permission from prosecutors or a judge to reference these records while testifying.

- Be sure you know the applicable Codes of Practice and bring a copy with you for reference.
- Evidence can take hours to days to present, so dress comfortably, and stay well fed and hydrated.
- When testifying, the veterinarian should try to explain everything in plain language, including the scientific language in veterinary records.
- The veterinarian must practice full disclosure, including normal and abnormal findings, original notes and records, and photos and video, including those that are poor quality.
- Record and recall as much detail as possible. Remain objective and professional. Do not provide personal comments or opinions, either verbally or in writing.
- Remain calm. If you don't understand a question, ask for clarification. If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. If you need a moment to formulate a response, take your time. There's no rush.

Sensitive Considerations for Animal Welfare Cases

Veterinarians may hesitate to report or provide assistance to APOs, for animals that are the subject of animal welfare concerns. This hesitation may be due to:

- conflict of interest concerns, including an existing relationship with the animal owner
- concerns for personal safety
- concerns for retaliation by the owner that could compromise the veterinarian's business.

These events are rare. If veterinarians are concerned that a conflict of interest may exist, this should be immediately disclosed to APOs, prior to further involvement in a case.

What the general public may consider signs of maltreatment of an animal, may be considered acceptable by a veterinarian or an APO, based on underlying medical conditions, the life stage or the purpose of that animal. For example, an adult female animal that has recently given birth or has weaned offspring, may be in lower body condition due to higher metabolic needs. A lame animal may have had a previous limb injury, which has healed, but has resulted in permanent lameness, without compromising quality of life.

Appropriate compensation for providing veterinary care with animal welfare cases can sometimes be disputed, due to uncertainties about whether the owner, the veterinary clinic or Animal Health and Welfare branch is responsible for the cost of care. When working with the Animal Health and Welfare branch or APOs on animal welfare cases, veterinarians should consult with the branch's animal welfare veterinarians at the onset of animal evaluation. This will help to determine what authority the Animal Health and Welfare branch has to compensate veterinarians for cost of care and to whom medical records and invoices should be forwarded.

If veterinarians offer owners discounted professional fees to address animal welfare concerns directly, they should make it clear to clients:

- whether they are willing to provide care to a pre-determined financial limit before re-evaluating the case for ongoing financial compensation

- whether a mutually agreed upon payment plan has been established, including when payment is due and in what amounts and/or payment method

Correspondence related to payment for cost of care should be included in the medical record.

Animal welfare cases may be more prone to attracting media and public attention, especially in small communities. If the public or media contact a veterinarian to enquire about an animal welfare concern they are actively involved with in conjunction with APOs, those enquiries should be redirected to the APO and the veterinarian should refrain from providing any comment. Providing comment to the public or media could compromise the integrity of a case.

Local police departments are generally supportive of veterinary efforts to address animal welfare concerns and have a responsibility to protect the public. Therefore, police should provide support to keep the peace, if required. As a safety measure, veterinary clinics can post emergency police contact information beside all telephones and notify police in advance if they have concerns for personal safety when dealing with clients.

Conclusion

Veterinarians provide a valuable community service in ensuring the prevention and relief of animal suffering. Animal welfare cases can be frustrating and emotionally draining, but also rewarding. Rewards include:

- benefits in public health when identifying and treating animals that may be infected with zoonotic or infectious disease
- benefits to public safety when identifying animal abuse that may be occurring in conjunction with domestic violence
- identifying and addressing severe animal behavioural impairments that may be a consequence of neglect or abuse
- educating owners about responsible and humane animal care

The public places an ethical expectation on veterinarians to ensure the health of animals in their care, and to take action to prevent or relieve animal suffering, including abuse. Veterinarians are legally obligated to report concerns of animal abuse to the proper authorities. By respecting this public expectation and legal obligation, veterinarians contribute positively to a stronger society that respects the need to treat both humans and animals with respect and dignity, for the betterment of communities as a whole.



Appendix

Obligations and Legal Authority - The Animal Care Act

The Animal Care Act C.C.S.M.c. A84 (ACA) is available at <http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/a084e.php>.

Codes of Practice & Guidelines for Care and Handling of Animals

The Codes of Practice for the care and handling of farm animals, led by the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC), serve as a national standard of animal care requirements and recommended practices. They provide recommendations and requirements for practices related to animal housing, care, transportation and processing. The Codes of Practice also serve as educational tools and enforceable reference materials for regulations, as well as the foundation for animal care assessment programs.

The updated Codes of Practice, including body condition score, can be found on www.nfacc.ca.

Federal Animal Cruelty Legislation

The Criminal Code of Canada (sections 444 to 447) prohibits anyone from willfully causing animals to suffer from neglect, pain or injury. In Manitoba, the Criminal Code is enforced by police services.

The Cruelty to Animals section of the Criminal Code is found at <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-46/page-91.html#h-123162>

Government Resources

Animal Health and Welfare branch: 204-945-7684
www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/animal-health-and-welfare/index.html

The Agriculture and Resource Development (ARD) web page provides information about animal care, animal husbandry and animal welfare at www.manitoba.ca/agriculture/animalwelfare.

Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA): 204-259-1400 (Manitoba Office) or www.inspection.gc.ca

The Manitoba Farm, Rural & Northern Support Services: 1-866-367-3276 or www.supportline.ca

Additional Animal Welfare Related Resources for Veterinarians

Humane Societies: 204-982-2021 or <https://humanecanada.ca>

Veterinary forensics expert Dr. Melinda Merck provides veterinarians with multiple resources to assist veterinarians with animal welfare cases:
www.veterinaryforensics.com

Manitoba Veterinary Diagnostic Services (VDS): 204-945-8220 or
www.manitoba.ca/agriculture/vds

Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA): 204-832-1276 or
www.mvma.ca

Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA): 613-236-1162 or
www.canadianveterinarians.net/policy-advocacy/animal-abuse

