



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Newly released report provides a roadmap to a more humane Canada that is safer for animals, people and the environment

April 12, 2022 – Ottawa, Ont. A ground-breaking new report that highlights opportunities to correct deficiencies in the way our legal system addresses animal abuse has and is already attracting attention from lawmakers.

The release comes at a time of unprecedented legislative activity for animals on Parliament Hill, when at least three different bills addressing animal protection have been introduced in the past six weeks.

“The Legal Keystone Report, released by Humane Canada®, measures whether animals are adequately considered in the Canadian legal system. It’s part of a larger project to answer the question ‘*What does a humane country look like?*’” says project leader Dr. Toolika Rastogi, Senior Manager of Policy and Research at Humane Canada.

This research report assesses findings across 12 different indicators ranging from the way laws are enforced, the way crime statistics for animal abuse are gathered and tracked, and ethical questions like how animals themselves are recognized in the law. Only one of the indicators is ranked as good, while the remaining 11 show gaps where work is absent, insufficient or where there is not even enough data available to make an assessment.

“Canadians expect accountability in the law when animals are harmed, and our research across the indicators shows this is often lacking,” says Rastogi. “While this report has uncovered some serious problems, it also provides opportunities to develop a practical roadmap to a more humane Canada – one that is safer for animals, for people, and the environment.”

This is the first measurement report from the *Indicators of a Humane Canada* project, which will benchmark 40+ indicators to provide the pathway for integrating animal welfare into our legal system, social policies and individual behaviours. Humane Canada leads the way in providing credible, evidence-based animal welfare research, and this innovative project relied on contributions from more than 80 of Canada’s top animal welfare thinkers, including Crown Prosecutors, law enforcement, veterinarians and independent academics.

As Canada's federation of SPCAs and humane societies, Humane Canada advances the welfare of animals with a strong national voice, promoting the interests and concerns of animal welfare

to government, policy makers, industry and the public.

To view the report, please visit <https://humanecanada.ca/indicators/>

For more information or to speak with an approved Humane Canada spokesperson, please contact media@humanecanada.ca

Here is what experts are currently saying about the Legal Keystone Report:

“Toward a Humane Justice System for Animals is an important and timely report. Humane Canada has done significant work here in identifying important legal keystone indicators and ways of measuring progress in the years to come. It is telling that by their assessment, only one of the keystone indicators is rated as ‘good and/or trending in the right direction.’ We can do better in Canada, and I sincerely hope that the federal and provincial/territorial governments take note of all the opportunities for doing so that are concisely laid out in the report.”

- Dr. Amy Fitzgerald, Professor of Criminology, University of Windsor

“Humane Canada has built a solid foundation for multi-sector stakeholders to collaboratively address the important issue of how violence against women and children intersect with animal abuse. This requires a multi-prong approach to prevention, intervention and prosecution. Community and criminal justice partners need to recognize risks and make the connections, but also we need to ensure we work together to create systemic changes that support an integrated response to identifying, assessing and managing this risk to women, children and animals. We need to continue this work together to advocate for changes to our laws, and policies and practices, as well to ensure that adequate supports are in place for victims and their animals.”

- Donna Watson-Elliott, Manager Victim Support Unit, Ottawa Police Service

“This report provides a clear and comprehensive map that illustrates the highly uneven legal and policy landscape of animal protection in Canada. Crucially, these findings also help us see how to move forward by combining evidence with ethics to make a meaningful difference for animals’ lives and our shared communities.”

- Dr. Kendra Coulter, Associate Professor in Labour Studies, Brock University

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ABOUT HUMANE CANADA®

Humane Canada, the federation of SPCAs and humane societies, brings together organizations that work with and care for animals to end animal cruelty, improve animal protection and promote the humane treatment of all animals. For more information, visit <https://www.humanecanada.ca/>.