



**BRITISH COLUMBIA
DAIRY COUNCIL**

June 25, 2014

Hon. Norm Letnick
Minister of Agriculture
PO Box 9043
Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Via e-mail: AGR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister:

Re: Response to Animal Abuse on a BC Dairy Farm

The British Columbia Dairy Council is the trade association for the province's dairy processors, the companies that manufacture and market finished dairy products for sale to consumers.

Like others, we were shocked and sickened by recent media reports showing incidents of animal cruelty on a Chilliwack dairy farm. The abuse of farm animals is unconscionable and unjustified in any circumstances and the Council absolutely condemns such actions.

The reports have shaken the entire dairy industry. In the case of dairy processors, our members have suffered reputational damage and loss of business as a result of advocates' inferences that individual companies have the choice of and control over the dairy farms from which they receive raw milk. As you know, this is a misrepresentation of the facts which, we submit, is deliberately intended to inflame public opinion and provide a target for public outrage. Dairy processors have borne the brunt of public attacks resulting from these tactics.

The overarching issue is the need to ensure the humane treatment of animals on dairy farms at all times. Preventing incidents such as those that occurred on the Chilliwack farm is essential to protecting the reputation of the province's dairy industry, including the processors whose brands are the primary interface with the vast majority of consumers.

Accordingly, the Council seeks your support and leadership in implementing enforceable legal measures to prevent similar cases of animal abuse in the future and in ensuring that severe consequences await those who allow such incidents to occur.

c/o 207 - 288 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Y 1N5

Such measures must protect the welfare of all animals and include substantial penalties for offenders in order to assure compliance levels beyond reproach. In light of the recent incidents in Chilliwack we urge your Government to vest the necessary legal authority in the BC Milk Marketing Board (or other government-specified agency as appropriate) to implement, monitor and enforce appropriate dairy cattle welfare standards at the farm level.

These measures are just a start. One positive outcome of this tragic state of affairs has been to unite the entire dairy industry -- producers, processors, regulators and other stakeholders -- in support of proactive measures to prevent any future incidents of animal abuse on dairy farms. We need to build on this unity to ensure ongoing vigilance against such horrific incidents of animal abuse and to maintain the trust and confidence of British Columbia consumers.

We look forward to your support and are prepared to work with you and other industry stakeholders to implement the necessary measures to safeguard the welfare of farm animals and ensure the dairy industry recovers from this crisis. We would be happy to discuss these matters with you at any time. Please feel free to contact me at 604-524-4491 to follow up.

Sincerely yours,

BRITISH COLUMBIA DAIRY COUNCIL



Jeff Zonneveld
President

cc. BC Dairy Council Directors
British Columbia Dairy Association
BC Milk Marketing Board
BC Farm Industry Review Board
Dairy Processors Association of Canada