

Toward a harmonized approach to animal welfare law in Canada – A comment

Dear Editor,

I wish to commend David Fraser, Katherine Koralesky, and Geoff Urton, the authors of “*Toward a harmonized approach to animal welfare law in Canada*” (Can Vet J 2018;59:293–302) for accomplishing a truly herculean task in summarizing the plethora of animal welfare laws and regulations in Canada. They have captured the essence of the regulatory and legislative challenges, namely: the lack of standardization of terms, the multiplicity of stakeholders, and the absence of a national template to guide provincial legislation. As someone who was formerly responsible for enforcing provincial animal welfare standards, I understand the complexity of creating and modifying legislation and then shepherding it through the legislative agenda within the context of shifting provincial priorities.

Nevertheless, I am encouraged by the progress that I have witnessed over the last number of years. As public interest in animal welfare has increased, provincial and territorial statutes have been modified to address gaps that have come to light. This might have been a somewhat *ad hoc* process, but I think that over the years there will be a gradual movement towards

a more standardized legislative approach as statutes come up for review. A national consultation as suggested by the authors would facilitate this process.

However, there is another important component of animal welfare outside the scope of the paper that also needs to be addressed — the separation of advocacy from enforcement. I see a real conflict of interest when the enforcement of animal welfare laws is delegated to animal welfare advocacy groups, especially those that rely on public donations for their funding. The temptation to create high profile “busts” and then cash in on the resulting public outcry leaves little room for the due process of justice. It is time to end this practice and ensure that animal welfare enforcement is delegated only to government-funded departments and agencies. This will be one of the next major advancements in harmonizing animal welfare outcomes across Canada.

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Veterinary school admission – A response

Dear Editor,

It is interesting to note the amount of response to my short note several months ago, (Can Vet J 2017;58:1145–1146), regarding OVC. To clarify the comment made in the March 2018 issue (Can Vet J 2018;59:217), a second career person is not a student who has completed an undergrad degree, or MSc, or PhD; it is an individual who has been out in the real world working. I had several classmates with advanced degrees who progressed through OVC and have had wonderful careers. However, people try to justify the admissions process using neuro-research and behavioural studies, it does not address the concerns many

practise owners across Canada have. Why is the Multiple Mini interview format being used with final year students involved in the selection process? It seems unlikely the process will change as long as prefrontal cortex comes into the discussion about veterinary school admissions.

Paul Francis, DVM, OVC graduate, 1983.

P.S. I hired a 2017 graduate who is a terrific person and excellent veterinarian, so OVC does/can get it right.