

Ottawa

Room 349, Confederation Building
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Tel.: 613-996-1119
Fax: 613-996-0850



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Ottawa

Pièce 349, Édifice de la Confédération
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0A6
Tél. : 613-996-1119
Télééc. : 613-996-0850

Constituency

9711 Fourth Street Suite 1
Sidney, British Columbia V8L 2Y8
Tel.: 250-657-2000
Fax: 250-657-2004

Elizabeth May

Member of Parliament / Député(e)
Saanich — Gulf Islands

Circonscription

9711, rue Fourth suite 1
Sidney (Colombie-Britannique) V8L 2Y8
Tél. : 250-657-2000
Télééc. : 250-657-2004

The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
House of Commons of Canada

April 16, 2024

Dear Minister,

I am writing on behalf of constituents who are concerned about the Pig Code of Practice established in 2014. As the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) of Canada is now in the process of updating the Code, there is a significant and urgent opportunity to improve the living conditions and treatment of pigs in Canada.

Canada slaughtered nearly 22 million pigs in 2021 and exported over 6.5 million live pigs to other countries for slaughter. This makes Canada the third largest exporter of live pigs. While protections for domesticated pigs have improved in recent years, albeit with many protections being recommended and not necessarily enforced, the same cannot be said for pigs raised for slaughter.

Canada's current standards for pig treatment have left gaps for substantial welfare abuses, including but not limited to:

- painful practices being performed on piglets like castration, ear notching, tail-docking and teeth trimming;
- keeping pregnant pigs and sows that have recently given birth in gestation stalls that are typically about two feet wide by seven feet long, allowing them no space to turn around and depriving them of the ability to express important natural behaviours;
- forcing pigs to live on cold, damp and slatted floors because bedding is harder to clean, which prevents pigs from expressing natural behaviours like rooting, exploration and nesting and encourages boredom and aggression;



- transporting and exporting live pigs in unsanitary and tightly confined spaces.

There are successful examples of standards that could be replicated to support the welfare of pigs. A law came into effect in 2022 in California that requires more space for breeding pigs. Here in Canada, we are moving forward with banning the live export of horses for slaughter. This should apply to pigs and all other animals that Canada exports for slaughter. In addition, the export of dead pigs to other countries is unethical and should be prohibited.

As well, the 2014 Code requires that by July 1, 2024, mated gilts and sows must “be housed in groups, or individual pens, or in stalls if provided with “periodic exercise.” While not defining “periodic exercise” is concerning, I remain hopeful that this requirement will come into force on schedule and will help pigs in these confined conditions. This needs to be on schedule to ensure that all farms will be converted to enable housing in groups by 2029.

I strongly support updating the Pig Code of Practice to address these significant welfare concerns. I encourage the government to look to the European Union standards on the humane treatment of livestock for examples of how to improve the Code. Canada must commit to the humane treatment of pigs.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these requests. I am happy to meet with you to discuss these issues and solutions further.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth May, O.C.
Member of Parliament
Saanich-Gulf Islands
Leader of the Green Party of Canada

