## Press release



## WILL NEW STATUS FOR ANIMALS REALLY STOP ANIMAL CRUELTY?

For immediate release

Montreal, June 5 2015 – Today Mr. Pierre Paradis, minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ) announced bill 54, his draft legislation amending the Civil code to grant animals the status of living sentient beings. This good news still raises many questions. What amount of money will be invested to properly establish this new draft law? What will be the keeping conditions pertaining to mandatory permits for breeders? What is the meaning of the phrase « biological needs of animals »? It is unacceptable to keep an animal in a cage or an enclosure for the remainder of its life, and this is a common practice in intensive livestock operations. "If the biological needs of animals were respected, all the industries that exploit them would go bankrupt!" remarks Dominique Routhier, a biologist for SPA Canada.

Contrary to what Mr. Paradis says, the number of inspectors is insufficient. There are currently 150 inspectors for all of Quebec and the MAPAQ receives a hundred calls every day on its hotline 1-844 ANIMAUX.

Ms. Routhier deplores that "No status will have an impact if officials do not enforce their own laws". It is imperative to define the implications of animal welfare in order to establish mandatory norms for incorporation into daily practices and to issue tougher court rulings.

The law would also apply to farm animals in varying degrees. It will be important to define these variations. SPA Canada makes the point that all animals should be placed on an equal footing and receive equal protection under the act.

Although the proposed consequences are stricter in this new draft, the worst cases of animal cruelty remain unjustly unpunished. Furthermore, there is no mention of the sale of animals in pet stores. This shortcoming continues to strengthen the demand for animals that come from puppy and kitten mills.

Even though this new draft law will greatly advance the cause in Quebec, the MAPAQ would have benefited if it had taken a strong position and used the opportunity to make Quebec the leader among Canadian provinces in terms of animal welfare by introducing a more coercive law. If the bill should become law, there will still be much room for improvement. Given the current pace of legislative change, we are unlikely to see a new version of the law anytime soon. Meanwhile, animals, "now" sentient, are paying the price.

- 30 -

SPA Canada will be happy to grant media interviews.

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