



THE COLLEGE OF
VETERINARIANS
OF ONTARIO

POSITION STATEMENT

Animal Welfare

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Introduction

Matters pertaining to animal welfare are increasingly receiving public attention and garnering strong emotional reactions. When these issues involve veterinary services, the public understandably looks to the College of Veterinarians of Ontario for a response. This statement has been developed to assist the public in understanding the College Council's position related to animal welfare in general.

Position Statement

The welfare of animals is a societal matter grounded in moral and ethical obligations. The veterinary profession swears its overarching commitment to animal health and wellbeing in the Veterinarians Oath.¹ While the College of Veterinarians of Ontario (the College) focusses its public interest mandate on the quality and safety of the practice of veterinary medicine in the province, it does so recognizing this critical aspect of veterinary responsibility.

When matters involving animal welfare and the practice of veterinary medicine are brought to the attention of the College, the Council of the College acknowledges its responsibility to debate, consider, and offer its perspective. In deciding whether to provide guidance to the profession and the public on topics impacting animal quality of life, the Council focusses its review on the relevant risks and consequences of the problem in relation to veterinary medicine. In particular, Council considers how its role in the licensure, accreditation, quality assurance and/or complaints management of veterinarians could be leveraged to positively influence

¹ "As a member of the veterinary medical profession, I solemnly swear that I will use my scientific knowledge and skills for the benefit of society.

I will strive to promote animal health and welfare, relieve animal suffering, protect the health of the public and environment, and advance comparative medical knowledge.

I will practise my profession conscientiously, with dignity, and in keeping with the principles of veterinary medical ethics.

I will strive continuously to improve my professional knowledge and competence and to maintain the highest professional and ethical standards for myself and the profession."

outcomes that support animal health and wellbeing. Further, in determining any final decision on a College position on such important matters, the College is respectful of the leadership roles of the government agencies charged with monitoring animal welfare in the province of Ontario.

Resources

Animal Health Act (<http://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/09a31>)
Canadian Council on Animal Care (<http://www.ccac.ca/en/>)
Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (<http://cfhs.ca/>)
CVMA Position Statements on Animal Welfare
(<http://www.canadianveterinarians.net/policy-advocacy/animal-welfare-position-statements>)
Canadian Virtual Centre for Poultry Welfare (<http://poultrywelfarecentre.ca/>)
Colonel KL Campbell Centre for the Study of Animal Welfare
(<http://www.uoguelph.ca/csaw/>)
National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Council (<http://www.ahwcouncil.ca/>)
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs – Animal Health and Welfare Branch (http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/ahwb_structure.htm)
Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/19p13>)

College publications contain practice parameters and standards which should be considered by all Ontario veterinarians in the care of their patients and in the practice of the profession. College publications are developed in consultation with the profession and describe current professional expectations. It is important to note that these College publications may be used by the College or other bodies in determining whether appropriate standards of practice and professional responsibilities have been maintained. The College encourages you to refer to the website (www.cvo.org) to ensure you are referring to the most recent version of any document.