



MEMORANDUM TO: All Chiefs of Police and
Interim Commissioner G.J. (Gary) Couture
Chairs, Police Services Boards

FROM: Stephen Waldie, for
Stephen Beckett
Assistant Deputy Minister
Public Safety Division and Public Safety Training Division

SUBJECT: Update on Animal Welfare

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As you may know, the Superior Court of Justice recently issued a decision in *Bogaerts v. Attorney General of Ontario* in relation to portions of the *Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act*, the province's main legislation related to animal welfare.

The court suspended the declaration of invalidity for one year to provide the government an opportunity to review the legislation and make any necessary changes, before the decision takes effect. The government has appealed the decision. During this time, the province will continue to explore options to strengthen and improve the animal welfare model in the province and ensure appropriate measures are in place to protect animals

The OSPCA and the Ontario government have entered in to an agreement whereby the OSPCA will continue enforcement of animal welfare laws in Ontario, until June 28, 2019. However, the OSPCA has indicated that they will not be responding to calls related to livestock or horses as of April 1, 2019. As a result, **police services may see an increase in calls for service related to these matters.**

For context, the OSPCA has estimated that they received approximately 1,650 calls related to livestock and horses last year, translating to under 5 calls per day, province-wide.

In the event that expertise is required to support police services when responding to livestock or horse related animal welfare calls, the following resources are available:

- To locate a local veterinarian, the College of Veterinarians of Ontario offers the following Find a Veterinarian Tool:
 - <https://onlineservice.cvo.org/webs/cvo/register/#/>.
- The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) will be able to provide advice or connect police services with agricultural sector stakeholders who have specific expertise and who may be able to assist by providing education and advice to owners of livestock.
- If specialized veterinary expertise is required, you may contact the Office of the Chief Veterinarian for Ontario, OMAFRA at 519-826-3577.

In addition, the OSPCA has advised that they will offer an Enforcement Support Services Program on a fee for service basis. You may contact 310-SPCA and speak with an OSPCA representative for further information.

As part of our work to develop a new animal welfare enforcement model, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services will be seeking engagement with a diverse range of interested individuals and groups, including police services. This will begin with a short survey you will receive in the coming days. The survey will include questions about calls for services relating to animals, including any investigations and referrals these calls generate.

Sincerely,



Stephen Waldie, for
Stephen Beckett
Assistant Deputy Minister
Public Safety Division and Public Safety Training Division