

March 27, 2025

Dear Melissa,

Thank you for writing and for providing us with the opportunity to speak on animal welfare issues and share the Green Party of Canada's platform. We value your continued advocacy.

Please find our response below.

Best regards,

Karine Cambron
Coordinator, Survey and Questionnaire Response Team
Green Party of Canada

The commercial wildlife trade

The use and trade of wild animals and products made from them has taken place for centuries, however the exponential growth in this trade is one of the top two direct drivers of biodiversity decline. The trade is also responsible for the spread of invasive species, zoonotic disease outbreaks, and declines in soil fertility, food security, habitat integrity and climate stability. This in turn impacts human health and our economy, both of which heavily rely on healthy and intact ecosystems. Canada imports, exports, breeds, and trades millions of live wild animals and their derivatives annually and has been identified as a wildlife trade hotspot. No one knows exactly how many individual animals or which species are traded because the legal and illegal trade are largely unmonitored and lack traceability. Canada does not have a comprehensive or reliable system for collecting data on important aspects of the legal and illegal wildlife trade. Currently the Nature Intelligence System (NIS), is under development by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). This system allows for analyzing digital and paper wildlife shipment documents and can identify inconsistencies and questionable shipments of wildlife and their products. However, it lacks funding for a comprehensive rollout, despite public support. A 2024 Nanos poll found that 81% of Canadians support or somewhat support federal funding for more stringent tracking and monitoring of Canada's commercial wildlife trade; and 82% of Canadians support or somewhat support increasing the number of field enforcement officers.

Canada also has commitments under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Biodiversity and its Global Biodiversity

Framework (Target 5), Sustainable Development Goals (Goals 1, 2, 4 & 15) and WHO Pandemic Agreement negotiations to address unsustainable legal and illegal wildlife trade. Canadians largely support stronger laws to reduce the commercial trade in wild animals to reduce animal welfare, environmental and health risks, with 84% expressing support or somewhat support.

- 1. Would your party fund the national rollout of the Nature Intelligence System – estimated to cost \$500K in its first year and \$1 million annually in subsequent years – to increase efficiencies at Canada’s borders to detect and curb the illegal and unsustainable legal import and export of wild animal species?**

Yes

No

Additional comments:

- 2. Would your party support stronger laws to reduce the commercial trade in wild animals to reduce animal welfare, environmental and health risks?**

Yes

No

Additional comments:

We support stronger laws to stop the commercial trade of wild animals, wild animal parts, and improving enforcement to protect wildlife and public health. This reflects our commitment to protecting nature, treating animals humanely, and making sure laws are followed to keep people and the environment safe.

- 3. Would your party support increasing the number of enforcement officers to crack down on the illegal wildlife trade and improve monitoring of the legal trade?**

Yes

No

Additional comments:

We support increasing enforcement officers to combat illegal wildlife trade and enhance monitoring of legal trade. Our G08-P105 policy calls for increased enforcement budgets, and G08-P085 commits to global biodiversity protection.

The use of wildlife for entertainment

In June 2019, Canada passed legislation to ban the breeding, display and trade of whales, dolphins and porpoises for entertainment. However, there are no other provisions at a national level restricting

the use of other species of wildlife that similarly suffer for entertainment. In 2020, the late former Senator Murray Sinclair introduced the Jane Goodall Act to end the captivity of great apes and elephants. In 2022, that bill was reintroduced and expanded by Senator Marty Klyne to include protection for more than 800 species, receiving widespread support from animal welfare organizations and Canada's top zoos. When efforts to pass this bill were stalled in the Senate, Senator Marc Gold introduced Bill S-15 on behalf of Minister of Environment, Steven Guilbeault. While the unlikely alliance of animal welfare groups and Canada's top zoos still supported Bill S-15, we were disappointed that the "Noah's Clause" was removed which would have allowed more species to be added for legislative protection in the future if science-based animal welfare criteria were met. With the Prorogation of Parliament, Bill S-15 has now been terminated.

4. Would your party support legislation to protect elephants, great apes and big cats and/or other wild animal species from exploitation for public entertainment?

Yes

No

Additional comments:

We strongly support laws to protect elephants, great apes, big cats, and other wild animals from being exploited for entertainment. Policy G08-P100 bans using wild animals in circuses, shows, and other harmful events. We also support stopping the import of wild animals for entertainment and breeding them in captivity unless it's for conservation.

Intensive animal agriculture

Climate change

There is compelling scientific evidence to support a shift away from a high animal protein diet to one that is primarily plant-based for reasons of public health, environment, and animal welfare. Navius Research found that a 50% reduction in animal food consumed in Canada would reduce Canada's emissions by 16% (13.5 Mt) by 2030, enough for Canada to meet its climate targets. This approach would cost 11% less than the other available options. Animal agriculture accounts for about 10% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions and is Canada's most emissions-intensive sector. Canada's agricultural emissions have grown significantly, mostly from farmed animals, exceeding all other sectors except oil and gas, and Canada's Environmental Commissioner recently called out Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for not having a meaningful climate strategy, having met less than 2% of its emissions reduction target.

5. Would your party support initiatives to increase consumption of plant-based foods, as recommended by Canada's Food Guide and other experts?

Yes No

Additional comments:

We strongly support initiatives to increase the consumption of plant-based foods, as recommended by Canada's Food Guide and experts. We promote plant-based eating to improve health, reduce environmental impact, and support animal welfare. The Green Party advocates for revising the Food Guide to highlight plant-based foods as a complete, healthy alternative to meat, and supports policies that expand the plant-based protein industry.

6. Would your party support requiring federal institutions and programs like the National School Food program to procure more plant-based foods, in line with Canada's Food Guide recommendations?

 Yes No

Additional comments:

We strongly support requiring federal institutions and programs like the National School Food Program to procure more plant-based foods, in line with Canada's Food Guide. The Green Party advocates for climate-conscious purchasing policies that prioritize local, organic, and plant-based foods. We also support a universal school food program that reflects the Guide's emphasis on plant-based eating, and we aim to redirect subsidies towards sustainable agriculture. This aligns with our commitment to public health, sustainability, and supporting local food system.

7. Would your party support increasing investments in the Protein Industries Cluster to meet the growing demand for plant-based proteins and facilitate growth, innovation and competitiveness of Canadian farmers?

 Yes No

Additional comments:

8. Would your party commit to financial incentives to encourage and support small to midsized family farmers to transition away from intensive farming practices and towards more humane and sustainable, low carbon, climate-resilient farming practices (including plant-based agriculture)?

 Yes No

Additional comments:

The Green Party is committed to providing financial incentives for small to mid-sized family farmers to transition to humane, sustainable, low-carbon farming practices. This includes redirecting \$3 billion from industrial agribusiness subsidies to support regenerative, organic, and localized farming and investing \$2 billion in organic farming research, and supporting climate-resilient, plant-based agriculture.

9. Would your party support implementing an emissions cap on agriculture to reduce emissions from the sector and to encourage a shift to more plant-based agriculture?

Yes

No

Additional comments:

We are committed to taking bold action on climate change, and this includes addressing emissions from all sectors, including agriculture. We support implementing emissions reduction targets for the agricultural sector, with a focus on sustainable practices like regenerative and organic farming. We believe that a shift towards plant-based agriculture is essential in reducing emissions from animal agriculture.

Antimicrobial resistance

Almost ¾ of antibiotics in Canada are used in farm animals, most often to prevent disease in healthy animals rather than treat illness. This overuse fuels antimicrobial resistance (AMR), identified by the World Health Organization as a significant public health threat. In 2018, approximately 26% of infections were resistant to the drugs generally used to treat them, costing the Canadian healthcare system \$1.4 billion per year. This is estimated to increase to \$7.6 billion per year in 2050 when resistant infections are projected to reach 40%, unless swift action is taken to tackle this problem.

Our report, “Reducing antibiotic use in farming through improvements to animal welfare” highlights the low welfare practices common to intensive agriculture that are associated with high antibiotic use. Adopting better animal welfare practices can minimize stress and illness in animals, reducing the need for prophylactic antibiotics. Canada’s *Pan-Canadian Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance* is a positive step, but further action is needed to address the root causes in farming practices. Quebec’s policy of forbidding Category 1 antimicrobials for preventative purposes in food animals is a good starting point but stronger policy to restrict all prophylactic use is needed to protect both human and animal health. Prophylactic antibiotic use has been banned in the European Union as of 2022.

10. Would your party support phasing-out the prophylactic use of antibiotics in animal farming alongside the necessary animal welfare improvements on farms?

Yes No

Additional comments:

Farming disasters

The past decade has demonstrated the vulnerability of animal agriculture to climate change through droughts, extreme heat, fires, and floods. The 2021 floods in Abbotsford, BC resulted in the largest agricultural disaster and animal welfare crisis in the province's history. The high concentration of animals due to intensive animal agriculture in the region, amplified the scale and severity of the disaster.

11. Would you mandate that animals be included in disaster preparedness, response and risk reduction strategies-?

 Yes No

Additional comments:

We support including animals in disaster preparedness, response, and risk reduction strategies. While there is no explicit mandate, we advocate for stronger animal protections, including improved transport regulations relevant to evacuations. Green MPs, including Elizabeth May, have championed animal welfare through legislation like Bill S-203 and amendments to Bill C-84. Recognizing animals as sentient beings aligns with our core values of fairness and compassion, ensuring their protection in all circumstances, including emergencies.