

Press release



Major disappointment for SPA Canada and for Quebec pets

For immediate release

Montreal, December 14, 2011

SPA Canada is shocked with the result of the filing of the Animal Health Protection Act on P-42 today.

For several years, SPA Canada is campaigning against cruelty to animals and more specifically against puppy mills. Following our political pressures we were able to rally people and get a paper petition of 55 000 names submitted to the Charest government in 2008. This action forced MAPAQ (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food of Quebec) to create a working group (Kelley group) on pets, who submitted nine recommendations to MAPAQ in 2009.

SPA Canada supports some of the new measures of legislation:

- Register of all owners with 5 or more animals;
- Animals shall be groomed to prevent discomforts and diseases;
- The development by the owner of an exercise protocol;
- Kittens and puppies can't be weaned before the age of 8 weeks;
- No animal may be euthanized in the presence of another animal;
- The maintenance of a register of information about each animal by the owner.

Yet we must make sure of the means put in place to enforce these laws.

"Despite the small positive changes, we cannot even call it a victory for the animals," says Gabriel Villeneuve, campaign director for SPA Canada. Considering that Quebec ranks last among Canadian provinces in terms of animal welfare, we must do more than what has been issued. "With this new law, Quebec will not lose its title regarding cruelty to animals and the incredible amount of puppy mills it produces in America. It's one of the least restrictive legislation of all industrialized countries.

According to SPA Canada, several sections are not specific enough in their recommendations, which leave considerable room for interpretation. For example, the types of dogs that can live outdoors in cold weather, the length of the tools of restraint to tie an animal outside, the duration of wearing a muzzle, isolation of sick animals, the need for exercise according to their age and physical condition, ...

One of the worst disappointments regarding the new regulation is that it will remain easy for all owners of puppy mills to operate. Indeed, nothing is specified relative to the maximum time that an animal can be kept in a cage or pen, no maximum number dictated in the amount of dogs and cats kept by one owner and no permits required for artificial insemination of animals. "This is a green light to puppy mills in Quebec! Villeneuve says, "Nothing in this law prohibits them, it is extremely shocking!"

List of gaps in MAPAQ according to SPA Canada:

- The dramatic increase in fines and imprisonment;
- (see next page)

For further information, please contact:

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- The prohibition of the sale or bequeathed stray dogs and cats for adoption or sold to research laboratories;
- The compulsory sterilization of all dogs and cats for adoption in shelters or for sale in pet stores;
- The prohibition of sale of animals in pet stores;
- The management by the cities of their own shelters to ensure that for-profit pounds like the Berger Blanc can not exist;
- The ban on gas chambers as a method of euthanasia;
- The illegality of puppy mills:

SPA Canada will continue to monitor and hound elected officials until all their demands resonate with governments, whether provincial or federal. "In summary, we believe that this law is a tiny step in the right direction as Quebec is still not a place of ethical and responsible animal management. We therefore demand a public consultation before the adoption of Bill 51 which will amend the articles of the law P-42,"said Mr. Villeneuve. SPA Canada will be happy to grant media interviews.

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