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Alberta animal welfare concerns are down but SPCA official urges livestock owners to continue good management practices

It appears livestock owners across Alberta are heeding the message of the importance of proper animal care. Morris Airey, director of animal protection services for the Alberta SPCA, says they have not encountered serious problems comparable to what was the case last winter. However he adds, we still have a few months to go.

One of the main problems in the past has been created by those working off-farm and not regularly checking their livestock. "We have categorized some of the root causes that we feel constitute the problem. Livestock owners for one reason or the other may be away from the farm, whether it be working off-farm or living in an urban area. We see it as a problem when the owner is not monitoring his herd on a regular basis and not able to detect problems when they arise. Especially in the winter, people working long hours may not see their livestock for days or perhaps not in daylight hours," says Airey.

He points out that seizure action is the last resort. Everything is done to work with animal owners to try and encourage them to improve care. However, on occasion, a situation arises where they have not been successful in bringing the owner into compliance and usually after many warnings or meetings the animals may have to be seized and removed from the property. Without exception, a veterinarian is always on site to substantiate any case of improper care. Animals are held for 10 days. There is a possibility the owner can get them back if the SPCA and the veterinarian are satisfied that adequate provisions are going to be provided. The other alternative is to sell the animals, and after recovering transportation, veterinarian and caretaking fees, the remainder of the funds are turned over to the owner.

Airey says that in the past there have been animal welfare concerns over swath grazing. "We know swath grazing can be carried out quite successfully but it does take management. We've worked diligently with the industry to try to make producers aware of the problems that can be encountered. I think industry has done a good job in alerting producers what to look for and problems that can arise."

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Clip No. 1:

It appears livestock owners across the province are heeding the message of the importance of proper animal care. Morris Airey is the director of animal protection services for the Alberta SPCA:

(15... "winter.")

Clip No. 2:

One of the main problems involving animal welfare has been the result of livestock owners working off-farm and not checking their livestock regularly, says Airey:

(21... "arise.")

Clip No. 3:

Airey says the seizure of livestock is the last resort and everything is done to work with the owner of the animals to try to encourage them to improve care. However, on occasion a situation develops where this is unsuccessful in spite of many warnings or meetings with the owner. It's then decided to place the animals under seizure and remove them from the property if necessary:

(20... "animals.")

For further information contact:

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