

FARM ANIMAL CARE HELPLINE SERVICE

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A farmer helping farmer
approach to animal care

What is the Farm Animal Care Helpline Service?

The Helpline is a confidential "farmer helping farmer" approach to advice and referral on animal care. The Helpline service is provided by Farm & Food Care Ontario to assist people in providing good care for their farm animals.

It provides a confidential way for people to report situations of farm animals that they feel require better care or for farmers themselves to call if they need some help.

How does the Farm Animal Care Helpline Work?

The Helpline accepts calls about most types of farm animals: beef cattle, dairy cattle, pigs, rabbits, goats, veal calves, sheep, chickens and turkeys.

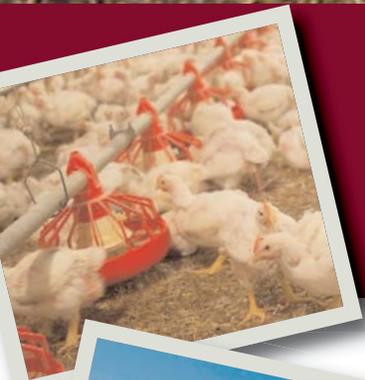
Helpline calls are accepted at the Farm & Food Care office at (519)837-1326, during regular office hours, typically Monday to Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Callers are asked to provide specific and detailed information necessary to pursue the case. The information about the case, but not the name of the caller, is then passed on to the appropriate commodity group(s) for follow-up and/or visit. For example, the Helpline is set up to take calls about thin animals to send a representative in to discuss better feed and nutrition options - not starving animals that need immediate attention.

Helpline representatives are farmers or experienced staff people who can assess the situation and offer practical advice or necessary assistance to correct the situation if there is a problem. The Helpline representative then reports back to Farm & Food Care who, in turn, will relay this information back to the caller if they are interested. Callers to the Helpline are asked to identify themselves for purposes of follow-up, but such information is kept strictly confidential with Farm & Food Care.



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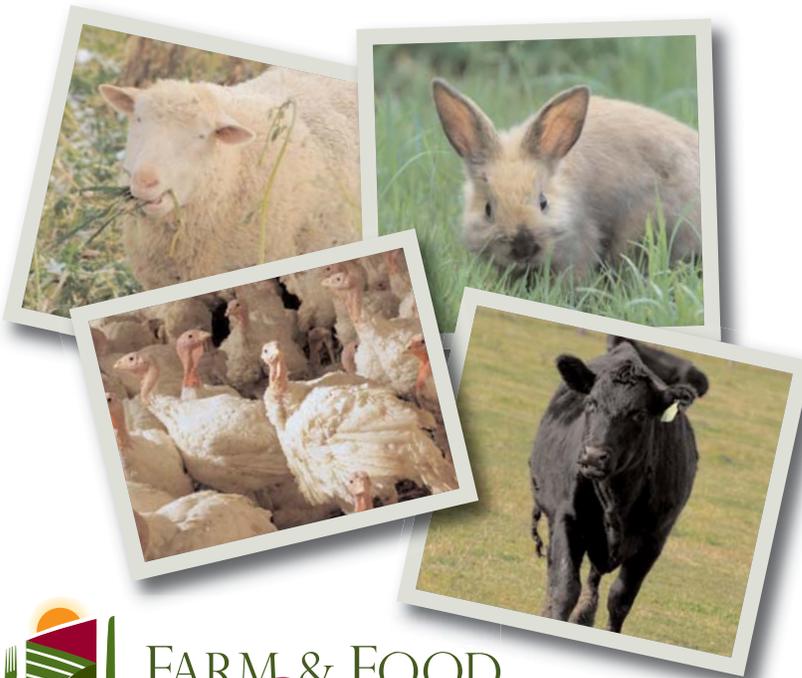
What's the difference between the Helpline and the Humane Society?

Here's a good way to explain the difference between the Helpline and the OSPCA service: the Farm & Food Care Helpline deals with thin animals, not starving animals. The idea is to try and reach those cases and animals before the situation worsens. The Helpline is a volunteer service; Humane Societies have legal authority. Sometimes Helpline representatives find the case needs to be turned over to the humane society, and in reverse, sometimes Humane Society representatives call the Helpline.

Why is the Helpline service needed?

The Helpline was started by the Ontario Farm Animal Council (OFAC) in 1992 as a way to help improve farm animal care. The Helpline service came about because people within the farm community felt such a service was needed to allow farmers to get involved.

The Helpline is one more way for the farming community to work together to help fellow farmers and farm animals. It's also yet another good example for the public that demonstrates that if there's a problem with animal care, farmers want to be part of the solution. It's good for agriculture, it's good for the farmer, and most importantly, it's good for the animals.



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Farm & Food Care is the first coalition of its type in Canada, bringing together tens of thousands of farmers and related businesses with a mandate to provide credible information on food and farming in Ontario. Farm & Food Care has a Farm Animal Care Advisory Council which has an objective to continue to advance responsible farm animal care. The Farm Animal Care Helpline is one service which helps achieve that goal.

Who can use the Helpline?

Anyone who is having difficulties meeting acceptable levels of care and management for their farm animals and anyone else who witnesses situations where animals are not being properly cared for.

What doesn't the Helpline cover?

- Other farm animals: Other than beef cattle, dairy cattle, pigs, rabbits, goats, veal calves, sheep, chickens and turkeys. Calls relating to other types of livestock can be reported to the Helpline and may be referred to the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) or the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for investigation. You could also call the OSPCA directly at 1-888-ONT-SPCA (1-888-668-7722).
- Pets or horses: Concerns about pets or horses should be reported directly to the OSPCA, a local Humane Society or a local animal control officer.
- Illegal Activities: The Helpline is a volunteer service. If any laws are broken, the call must be forwarded to the appropriate authorities.
 - Deadstock: Farm animals need to be disposed of in accordance with regulations. Deadstock violations should be reported directly to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs at 1-877-424-1300.
 - Neglect, Cruelty or Abuse: If a particular case involves obvious abuse or neglect which warrant enforcement, the local humane society or Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) should be called directly. Calls to the OSPCA are also confidential. The OSPCA service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Phone: 1-888-ONT-SPCA (1-888-668-7722)
 - Emergencies: The Helpline is designed to provide helpful advice, but not to deal with emergencies. If there are animals in immediate distress or it's a weekend and you feel it needs attention right away, please contact your local humane society or the OSPCA.
 - Dangerous situations: Helpline representatives should not be involved in any situation that has potential risks to personal safety. Please contact your local police or the OPP if you feel a case may have potential safety risks.

For more information on Farm & Food Care or the Helpline Service, contact our office at:

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