



Animals Used in Entertainment

Position

Calgary Humane Society opposes the use of animals in entertainment where their welfare is compromised or where they are exposed to stress, pain, injury, or risk of death.

This position applies to, but is not limited to, rodeos, circuses, exhibitions, competitive events, film and television production, and animal-based attractions.

Where animals continue to be used in entertainment, Calgary Humane Society advocates for the highest standards of care, oversight, and regulation, including continuous, evidence-based evaluation to eliminate practices that cause unnecessary suffering.

No cultural, economic, or entertainment value should outweigh an animal's welfare. Activities that result in preventable injury, distress, or death must be critically examined, modified, or discontinued.

Calgary Humane Society recognizes that some regulated activities (e.g., equestrian sports, dog sports) may present lower risks when strong welfare standards, humane training methods, and appropriate oversight are in place. However, all such activities must be subject to ongoing evaluation to ensure that animal wellbeing is not compromised.

The organization supports evidence-based reforms that reduce risk, improve accountability, and prioritize the physical and psychological wellbeing of animals. It also advocates for the development and promotion of alternatives to animal-based entertainment that do not compromise welfare.

Rationale

Animal welfare encompasses physical health, psychological wellbeing, and the ability to express natural behaviours, as reflected in recognized frameworks such as the Five Domains Model.

Animals used in entertainment are often exposed to conditions that conflict with these needs. They may experience prolonged confinement, frequent transport, unnatural social groupings, and inadequate space or enrichment. These conditions can lead to chronic stress, behavioural abnormalities, illness, and injury.

Performance demands may require animals to engage in unnatural behaviours, sometimes through coercive or abusive training methods, or under schedules that do not allow for adequate rest, social interaction, or species-specific behaviours.

Many entertainment activities also involve high physical demands, environmental stressors, and competitive pressures that carry inherent risks. While regulation and veterinary oversight can mitigate some harms, these measures do not eliminate risk.

For this reason, Calgary Humane Society supports:

- Ongoing research into animal welfare impacts
- Transparent public reporting of injuries, incidents, and outcomes
- Stronger regulatory frameworks and enforcement
- Collaboration with veterinary professionals, regulators, and stakeholders
- Continuous improvement and, where necessary, the phased reduction of high-risk practices

References

[Criminal Code of Canada – Animal Cruelty Provisions](#)

[Alberta Animal Protection Act](#)

[Canadian Council on Animal Care](#)

[Five Domains Model of Animal Welfare](#)