

# Meat Trade News Daily



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## Canada - Prison should be penalty in pig cruelty case

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An investigation that involves the death of hundreds of pigs may prove to be the largest animal cruelty case ever seen in Manitoba.

RCMP officers and staff from the provincial Agriculture Department were called to a farm near Notre Dame de Lourdes Friday, where they found hundreds of dead hogs decomposing inside a barn and about 2,000 more alive, albeit in various states of health. RCMP Sgt. Line Karpish said there was "clear evidence of severe neglect."

"The feeding, watering and ventilation systems in the barn were not functioning properly," said Dale Douma, the lead veterinary inspector from the Agriculture Department's animal welfare program.

Douma said there were about 2,400 pigs in the barn and between 300 and 500 were already dead. Provincial staff moved more than 2,000 live pigs to an undisclosed facility to receive veterinary assessments and care. Several had to be put down due to poor health, but Douma was unsure how many. The others are now in good condition, he said.

A source said Tuesday the case could be by far the largest of its kind in Manitoba.

"This thing is going to be off the charts," the source said. "If the numbers are what (the Department of) Agriculture is saying it will be, then this would be the biggest we've seen."

The Agriculture Department is now conducting a full investigation. "Basically, we want to know exactly what happened, what went wrong and why, and who holds responsibility for what happened," Douma said.

Rheal Lesage, who lives next door, said he never expected something like this. "I grew up with him," Lesage said of the man who was supposed to be caring for the pigs, which belonged to a Hutterite colony. "To see something of this magnitude is very surprising."

Lesage said he noticed "a very bad smell" coming from the property recently and asked his neighbour about it, but the man told him there was nothing to worry about.

No one has been arrested or charged as of yet. The investigation is expected to take quite some time.

Charges could be laid under either the provincial Animal Care Act, the federal Criminal Code or both.

Possible penalties include fines, bans on animal ownership, and jail sentences of up to five years, depending on the charges laid.

Karl Kynoch, chair of the Manitoba Pork Council, condemned the situation. "We will definitely be looking to see if there are any areas we can improve upon to try to prevent anything like this from happening again," he said.

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