

VHS Achievements

Factory Farming – Egg Laying Hens

VHS launched its **Chicken OUT! campaign** in 2002. **Since 2002, the percentage of caged egg production in BC has dropped 15%.** This means hundreds of thousands of BC's hens now live in more humane, cage-free environments (free-run and free-range) rather than in cruel cages. Changes are happening in other provinces as well, but not as fast as in BC. This has been accomplished through the following corporate, government and consumer initiatives:

- **More Ethical Purchasing Policies:**
 - **Compass Group Canada** (Canada's largest food services company) adopted a cage-free egg purchasing policy as part of its corporate sustainability plan such that they will source cage-free eggs for any of their corporate clients that request them.
 - **16 post-secondary** institutions including the University of BC, BCIT, Langara College, SFU and UVic (plus 10 other universities across Canada including the universities of Guelph, McGill, Ottawa and Saskatchewan) have implemented VHS's recommendation to adopt policies that favoured the purchase of cage-free eggs over eggs from caged hens for campus-run food facilities.
 - **15 communities in BC and two in Ontario** adopted resolutions opposing battery cages, including Richmond, Vancouver, Victoria, and the Metro Vancouver Regional District, which purchase cage-free eggs for city-run food facilities.
 - **Over 80 Vancouver and 20 Victoria restaurants** now serve cage-free eggs. In 2009, after hearing a presentation from VHS, Vancouver-based artisan bakery **Terra Breads** became the first Canadian bakery to announce it will use only cage-free eggs.
- **Improved Egg Labelling in Grocery Stores:**

Following discussions with VHS since 2011, in June 2014 Overwaitea Food Group (OFG) became the **first grocery chain in North America** to feature 'Cage Eggs' signage on all of its stores' shelves. OFG operates 140 stores in B.C. and Alberta under the banners Overwaitea Foods, Save-On-Foods, Urban Fare, PriceSmart Foods, Coopers Foods and Bulkley Valley Wholesale.

The labels clearly indicate which eggs are free-run, free-range and certified organic, and how the label relates to the hens' housing and welfare. The first pilot of the labels began in 2011, and VHS has been working with OFG ever since to improve the wording and format of the labels.

- Following VHS submissions to the BC Farm Industry Review Board in 2011 and the ensuing media coverage, the BC Egg Marketing Board **transitioned an additional 3% of cage production to cage-free egg production**, taking BC's cage-free production from 12% (already the highest in Canada) to 15% - 90,000 more hens than the previous year.

That meant that of the 2.6 million chicks destined for B.C. egg farms, **390,000 hens would not spend their lives in a cage.**

- From 2009 to 2011, VHS participated in close to **100 events** including food exhibitions, tradeshow, farmers markets, parades, and community festivals. Some of the largest audiences were at the EAT! Vancouver Exhibitions (with 50k in attendance) and Vancouver's Pride Parade (with 600k in attendance). At all events, our message to the public was the same: Cages are cruel, choose cage-free eggs Instead.
- A 2010 VHS-commissioned Harris/Decima poll showed **21% of British Columbians now buy cage-free eggs** (compared to 10% of all Canadians) and are the most opposed to battery cages, with **69% saying they would support a ban on cages**, followed by Quebec (66%), Alberta (65%). The BC Egg Board confirmed that **in 2013, at least 22% of BC consumers buy cage-free eggs**, and that 5% of cage-free eggs are imported to BC from other provinces to meet BC's demand. Other studies suggest demand is closer to 30% given the rise in purchases of cage-free eggs at specialty stores, farmers markets, farm gate and from backyard producers.

Factory Farming - Animals Raised for Meat

- VHS collected **50,000 signatures for its online petition** in 2012 asking the **Tim Hortons restaurant chain to stop using eggs from caged hens and pork from crated sows**. Tim Hortons announced they would be working with their supply chain to favour eggs from enriched cages and crate-free pork. The signatures were presented at their AGM, which spurred the CEO to refer to the "egg situation", acknowledging that "These issues are not going to go away."
- A Harris-Decima poll commissioned by VHS in 2010 showed that B.C. residents lead the country in terms of compassion toward farm animals, with **80% saying they would pay more for farm animal products certified to humane standards**. (The national average was 72%). Results of the poll were published in numerous national and local newspapers.
- Originally launched in 2000, VHS's **transit ad campaign** posed the question "Who do you eat? Who do you pet? Why?" In 2010 we ran an ad showing a chicken with the words "Cages are Cruel. Buy Certified Organic Eggs Instead". It ran on the back of 10 city buses for 8-12 weeks. In 2013, we resurrected the campaign idea with a new ad showcasing a pig and a dog which asked "Food, Friend, Why?". The ad ran on the back of 10 city buses for approximately 8 weeks attracting media attention for the issue.
- **Media Exposure:** Over the years, VHS has successfully attracted significant media attention to and exposure of the cruelty issues related to raising farm animals for food. We have issued press releases, written Opinion Editorials and Letters to the Editor, and

been interviewed for hundreds of newspapers, radio, TV and magazines. The list is too extensive to include here. For more information, please see our website's [Media Centre](#) or [contact VHS](#) directly.

- In 2004, VHS publicly criticized the **inhumane culling of 1.3 million chickens** by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) during a major avian flu outbreak in B.C.'s Fraser Valley. VHS's concerns attracted major national and local media coverage and resulted in an invitation to meet with B.C.'s agriculture minister to discuss the issue and a meeting with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). After meeting with VHS, CFIA agreed to set up a working group to establish new procedures for animal culls during disease outbreaks. The CFIA also agreed to videotape all such culls in future.
- In 2001, VHS became a founding member of the **Canadian Coalition for Farm Animals (CCFA)**, a national organization devoted to factory farming issues; in particular battery hens and sows in crates. In 2005, VHS (with CCFA) launched a major media exposé of **shocking video footage of poor animal welfare** taken at an Ontario battery egg farm belonging to a poultry scientist, generating 68 pieces of media coverage in regional and national outlets, including the Globe and Mail, National Post, Toronto Star and CTV. In 2007, VHS assisted in another national expose of a battery hen farm in Ontario.
- In 1999 VHS attended and documented the trial of Lori Stevens, Crown Counsel. She and her husband Ken Roos, were charged with animal cruelty after **deliberately starving a herd of 100 dairy cows, half to death**. Roos was sentenced to 2 months in prison, and Stevens fined \$1500. A subsequent Law Society hearing resulted in a 'note' on her file. The BC SPCA released footage of the barn to a local television station, and between our two organizations, we generated an unprecedented amount of media.
- In 1998, VHS exposed the **sale of flesh sliced from the bodies of live turtles** in Vancouver's Chinatown. This resulted in the provincial government enforcing regulations prohibiting the import of live soft shell turtles for human consumption.
- VHS joined an intensive campaign to expose the **appalling conditions on pregnant mare urine (PMU) farms** where row upon row of horses were hooked up to urine-collection devices to make the estrogen replacement drug Premarin. The industry in Canada has since collapsed.

Emergency Veterinary Assistance & Companion Animals

Since VHS obtained charitable status in 1984, we have helped thousands of individual animals:

- Nearly **4000 cats, dogs, rabbits and pigs** spayed and neutered;

- Over **1000 animals saved** by emergency veterinary care;

- Over **170 animals adopted** out to forever homes (even though we do not operate a shelter)
- VHS assisted in the rescue of **dozens of sick cats from a private 'shelter' in Delta**, spending more than \$8000 to cover veterinary costs of cats suffering from malnutrition, dehydration, dental disease and untreated wounds.
- In 2011, VHS began an ongoing research project on **genetic disease in purebred dogs**, revealing dozens of diseases caused by breeding animals for desired traits.

Exotic Pets

- When **Petcetera** opened stores in BC in 1998 with a contract with the Vancouver branch of the BC SPCA agreeing to adopt out shelter dogs and cats rather than selling their own, VHS protested the arrangement. VHS argued that since **Petcetera still planned to sell exotic animals such as iguanas and snakes**, the BC SPCA should not enter into an agreement with them. After VHS pressure, Petcetera agreed to restrict the sales to birds and rodents.
- VHS convinced Brentwood Mall in Burnaby to prohibit the **exhibition of exotic animals** on the premises after VHS was alerted to a Siberian tiger display.
- In 2003, the City of Surrey became the first city in Canada to **ban the sale of some exotic pets** after a 4-year campaign by VHS. In 2006, City of Vancouver passed its **exotic pet bylaw** following VHS research and presentations

Animals in Entertainment - Rodeo

- In 1990, the VHS convinced a majority of City of Vancouver Councillors to **ban rodeo** in the city, but because the vote was not unanimous, it was not enacted. The following year, the **Cloverdale Rodeo** in Surrey (third largest in Canada) threatened VHS with a lawsuit over our ban calf-roping radio ads. After many years of pressure and a compelling presentation to Surrey City Council, in 2007 Cloverdale became the first rodeo in North America to **ban the four most egregious events**: calf-roping, steer-wrestling, team-roping and wild-cow milking.
- VHS represented Canada at an international meeting in Salt Lake City with Mitt Romney in 2001 regarding the **2002 Olympics** which was featuring a rodeo as a 'cultural' event.

- Becoming the first Canadian city to do so, the City of Vancouver banned 'cruel rodeo activities' using animals, **effectively banning rodeos**, following VHS's presentation of research to Council.
- VHS became the first animal protection organization in Canada to launch a campaign revealing **animal abuse at the Calgary Stampede**, raising national awareness of rodeo cruelty. During the first year, coverage was achieved in more than 40 major media outlets, including CBC TV's The National, CTV National News and The Globe and Mail.

In 2010, more than 50 British Members of Parliament signed a motion condemning the Calgary Stampede rodeo and commending VHS's campaign. VHS urged Bell Canada to stop sponsoring rodeo with the result that in 2012 **Bell announced it would no longer sponsor rodeo events.**

As a result of VHS pressure, by 2013 the Calgary Stampede has **instigated changes in policy** to chuckwagon racing, calf-roping and steer-wrestling.

Animals in Entertainment – Circuses

- After a long campaign by VHS, in 1991 the City of Vancouver became the first major city in North America to enact an **animal performance bylaw** prohibiting exotic or wild animals from performing in circuses and other modes of entertainment. VHS systematically campaigned successfully in other major cities, obtaining victories in **Coquitlam, Surrey, Langley**, and many other cities in BC, subsequently closing the most populated areas of the province to travelling circuses with exotic or wild animal acts.

Animals in Entertainment – Zoos & Film industry

- A referendum on shutting down the **Stanley Park Zoo** was held in 1994 in which 54% voted in favor of closing the zoo. VHS campaigned in the city carrying a life-sized plush gorilla in a cage in the bed of a truck.
- In a 1994 undercover investigation with a Vancouver Sun reporter, VHS revealed the **Vancouver Game Farm** (now renamed the Greater Vancouver Zoo) admitting to killing young animals as a way of managing overpopulation of some species that permitted to breed.
- In 2003, VHS and Zoocheck Canada launched a successful campaign to have **Tina, an aging elephant**, moved from the Greater Vancouver Zoo to a sanctuary in Tennessee rather than sold to another zoo in Ontario. Tina had been at the zoo for 30 years and her health was rapidly deteriorating. The campaign sparked massive public outrage.

In 2006 the Greater Vancouver Zoo (GVZ) **built a new hippo facility** following a two-year VHS campaign citing poor housing conditions. In 2004, it lost its accreditation with the Canadian Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria (CAZA) after VHS drew attention to its **unheated enclosure for hippos**. In 2005, Harvie the hippo died. Again after VHS involvement, in 2006 **GVZ was charged with cruelty to animals** after keeping a baby hippo in a concrete building for 13 months.

In 2009, VHS exposed the unreported deaths of four zebras at GVZ, prompting an investigation by the BC SPCA. The same year, VHS exposed the mistreatment of animals at the **Mountain View Conservation centre in Langley**, prompting an investigation by the BC SPCA, which recommended animal cruelty charges. Crown Counsel declines to proceed but Mountain View divested itself of exotic species.

VHS was **threatened by GVZ with legal action** in 2012 after comments were made on television about the number of deaths of giraffes at the facility.

- In 2004, VHS & Zoocheck Canada investigated “Primate Estates” - an animal collector and breeder of primates on Vancouver Island.
- After years of providing information to the BC government including several reports and a submission to the government’s consultation on exotic animal regulation, **BC introduced provincial exotic animal regulations**.

Animals in Entertainment – Sled Dogs

- VHS launched campaign in 2011 (with cosmetics company Lush) to **ban sled dog races** and tours in B.C. after shocking revelation of slaughter of more than 50 sled dogs by an employee of a sled dog tour company in Whistler, B.C. Provincial government ultimately declines to go forward with a ban but agrees to set **standards of care of sled dogs** and increases penalties for animal cruelty charges.

Wildlife

- In 2012, **Global Television canceled three hunting programs** after VHS wrote to the network complaining about their graphic nature and asked supporters to write to the company about the issue.
- The Canadian Wildlife Federation threatened VHS with a lawsuit after a 2012 VHS blog about their pro-hunting policy.