



Canadian Veterinary  
Medical Association  
Association canadienne  
des médecins vétérinaires

July 11, 2022

Environment and Climate Change Canada  
200 Bd Sacré-Coeur,  
Gatineau, QC J8X 4C6  
CANADA

To whom it may concern,

**Re: Submission from the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association on Canada's National Adaptation Strategy (<https://letstalkadaptation.ca/>)**

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) is the voice of the Canadian veterinary profession and has been since 1948. The CVMA promotes One Health and One Welfare (1) to ensure optimal care for animals, people, and the environment. As Canada's national veterinary organization, the CVMA has the experience, national reach, and long-established reputation to credibly and efficiently engage with and assist a wide array of stakeholder groups including federal and provincial governments, other health professions, international organizations, the public, livestock producers, and others.

The CVMA greatly appreciates the considerable efforts that have been taken in drafting the National Adaptation Strategy Discussion paper (May 2022). We recognize that by necessity the paper is written at a high level to provide a broad framework for urgent action required over the coming years. The CVMA believes that given the role of the veterinary profession in society, it is well-positioned to make significant contributions to a national strategic action plan, particularly with regard to the Health and well-being system.

The CVMA wishes to emphasize that Canada's 15,000 veterinarians and 10,000 veterinary technicians have the expertise to help Canadian society adapt to the impacts of climate change, by addressing emerging zoonotic disease and its impact on animals and humans. This includes enhancing the sustainability of animal agriculture systems, strengthening preparedness and response capability, and bolstering response capacity for natural disasters that impact farm and companion animals. The CVMA holds that the veterinary profession must play an active and prominent role in supporting society's efforts to mitigate, prepare for and adapt to the effects of a changing climate in accordance with the profession's involvement in applying the concepts of One Health and One Welfare.



339, rue Booth Street  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1R 7K1

t 800-567-2862  
f 613-236-9681

[admin@cvma-acmv.org](mailto:admin@cvma-acmv.org)

[canadianveterinarians.net](http://canadianveterinarians.net)

[veterinairesaucanada.net](http://veterinairesaucanada.net)



There is wide recognition that the climatic changes that are now underway are accelerating and are having disruptive and detrimental impacts globally on human health and well-being, animal health, animal welfare, ecosystem health (e.g., wildlife), and the sustainability of agricultural and food production systems. Avoiding serious and irreversible harm to the health and welfare of humans and animals in the coming years will require the coordinated and collaborative efforts of those from multiple areas of expertise, including the veterinary profession. This coordinated approach will be needed in the development and implementation of strategies which will allow society to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of a changing climate.

Given the frontline role that the veterinary profession plays in working at the interface of human, animal, and ecosystem health (2) the veterinary profession is well-positioned and critically important to provide leadership, subject matter expertise, and assistance in the development of preparedness, response, sustainability, and adaption strategies in areas impacted by climate change. These include:

- Emerging and zoonotic disease, including vector-borne disease detection, surveillance, management, and control.
- Ecosystem and wildlife health.
- Food security and food safety.
- Animal agricultural and production practices including research and strategy development for mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
- Natural disasters such as fires and floods; including preparedness and response and addressing animal health and welfare challenges.

The veterinary profession is well-equipped to support risk communication on impacts of climate change-related to animal production, health, and welfare. Such efforts need to be directed at stakeholders (e.g., veterinary clients, allied health professions, the general public, governments, and food production sectors) through advocacy, outreach, and awareness-building activities. In addition, risk management strategies aimed at improving preparedness, response, and adaption in animal production, health, and welfare should be developed collaboratively by veterinarians and other stakeholders.

The veterinary profession is well recognized internationally for its essential role in assisting societies to address the current and future challenges presented by a changing climate.





Examples include:

- Veterinary professionals recognizing the impact of climate change on animal and human health and the need for veterinarians to play an advocacy role in society (3,4)
- The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) recognizing the key role that veterinarians play in sustainability and in solving problems stemming from the interplay between environmental science, climate change, and animal health (5,6).
- Veterinary associations in Australia and Britain recognizing through policy development and publications, the key role of the veterinary profession in assisting society in responding to the challenges of climate change (7,8).
- The World Veterinary Association adopting in 2020 a position statement on the Global Climate Change Emergency (9)

The proposed 2050 goal for the Health and Well-being system in Canada (p. 17 of the Discussion Paper) reads:

*“The health of all people in Canada is supported by a climate-resilient and adaptive health sector that has robust and agile systems and services that account for and support the diverse components of well-being.”*

The CVMA strongly recommends that the proposed goal and objectives of the Health and Well-being system as described in the Discussion Paper, which is now completely human-centric, be restated to demonstrate a clear commitment to One Health and One Welfare, and that they explicitly recognize the interdependence of desirable health outcomes across human, animal and ecosystem domains.

Again, the CVMA is pleased with efforts made to date in the development of the National Adaptation Strategy. We look forward to contributing to future discussions on behalf of the veterinary profession in Canada.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Louis Kwantes BSc, DVM, MSc  
President





## References

- 1) Joann M. Lindenmayer and Gretchen E. Kaufman, One Health and One Welfare in One Welfare in Practice. Tanya Stephen ed. Published October 26, 2021, by CRC Press <https://www.routledge.com/One-Welfare-in-Practice-The-Role-of-the-Veterinarian/Stephens/p/book/9780367904067>) and [https://www.onehealthcommission.org/documents/filelibrary/resources/library/book\\_chapters/One\\_Health\\_and\\_One\\_Welfare\\_Chapter\\_1884F534ED0DD.pdf](https://www.onehealthcommission.org/documents/filelibrary/resources/library/book_chapters/One_Health_and_One_Welfare_Chapter_1884F534ED0DD.pdf)
- 2) Renwick, Shane Managing global infectious disease threats: The Role of the Veterinary Community. Frontline Safety and Security (2015) <https://security.frontline.online/article/2015/3/3537-The-Role-of-the-Veterinary-Community>
- 3) Kramer, CG et al. Veterinarians in a Changing Global Climate: Educational Disconnect and a Path Forward. Front. Vet. Sci., 17 December 2020 <https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2020.613620>
- 4) Kiran, D. Empowering Veterinarians to Be Planetary Health Stewards Through Policy and Practice. Front. Vet. Sci., 03 March 2022. [frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fvets.2022.775411/full](https://frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fvets.2022.775411/full)
- 5) JAVMA 2018 Environment chair sees strong veterinary connection <https://www.avma.org/javma-news/2018-04-15/environment-chair-sees-strong-veterinary-connection>
- 6) Mazet, Jonna. Veterinarians could lead sustainability efforts. JAVMA Nov 2020. <https://www.avma.org/javma-news/2020-11-01/veterinarians-could-lead-sustainability-efforts>
- 7) Australian Veterinary Association (2016) Climate change and animal health, welfare, and production. <https://www.ava.com.au/policy-advocacy/policies/environment-and-conservation/climate-change-and-animal-health-welfare-and-production/>
- 8) British Veterinary Association. Focus on Climate Change. Veterinary Record (2021) [https://bvajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1002/\(ISSN\)2042-7670.focus-on-climate-change](https://bvajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1002/(ISSN)2042-7670.focus-on-climate-change)
- 9) World Veterinary Association December 2020 WVA Position on the Global Climate Change Emergency <https://www.worldvet.org/news.php?item=460#prettyPhoto>

