

# Animal Kind



## Marking 10 Years Since the Milk River Dogs Seizure

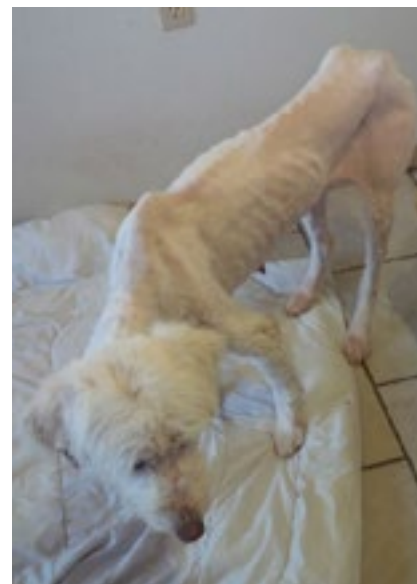
It was one of the largest seizures in Alberta SPCA history – and a case that shocked the province. Images from the Milk River dogs investigation were both disturbing and heart-breaking; 201 animals, many matted, and all severely malnourished.

Alberta SPCA Peace Officers arrived on the southern Alberta property in the winter of 2014-15 to find the dogs chained outside in the bitter cold with little food and shelter. Securing immediate care for so many animals all at once was a monumental task. Rescue group Alberta Animal Rescue Crew Society (AARCS), as well as more than a dozen additional animal welfare organizations, stepped up to help care for these poor souls, rehabilitate them, and ensure they were rehomed to loving families. Remarkably, most of the dogs survived their horrific ordeal and went on to live happy, fulfilled lives.

Reflecting on the Milk River case 10 years later, we are deeply moved by the incredible response from the animal welfare community to that event. And while we're grateful, we're not surprised. Alberta's animal welfare sector is robust with so many dedicated individuals working tirelessly to ensure animals are treated humanely so they have an opportunity to live their best lives.

These partnerships within the animal welfare community are needed now more than ever. Although there hasn't been another seizure of this scale since the Milk River case, we are seeing many smaller investigations involving large numbers of animals. In April, we had 86 animals – livestock and companion pets – come into care from one case in Mountain View County, and 72 more from an investigation in November in Brazeau County. Over the course of 2024, our Animal Protection Services team brought in approximately 900 animals; a staggering number.

As was the case 10 years ago, animal shelters are stepping up again to share the responsibility of rescuing, rehabilitating, and rehoming these animals, and we are profoundly grateful to have so many amazing partners. However, the current situation is not sustainable – for our organization or for the animal welfare community as a whole. That's why we're leading conversations to address the root causes that are creating the animal welfare crisis, including updating the *Animal Protection Act*.



# ANIMAL PROTECTION

## Historic Large Seizures

Alberta SPCA Peace Officers have been involved in a number of large seizures over the past 20 years, most of which have involved livestock. These cases carry an emotional toll on the entire community, and we know that alleviating distress not only provides immediate relief for the animals but also for the neighbours who live nearby. Here are a few cases our Peace Officers have managed over the past two decades.



### Rescue 100 Horses - 2008

In February of 2008, 100 horses were removed from a property east of Edmonton. When Alberta SPCA Peace Officers arrived, they found the animals to be severely emaciated, while another 27 horses had already perished. Further to that, an additional 65 animals – rabbits, chickens, sheep and goats – were seized.

The horses were eventually moved to an organization called the Rescue 100 Foundation which accepted the task of rehabilitating and rehoming the surviving horses.

Two animal owners pleaded guilty in the case to charges under the *Animal Protection Act* of permitting animals to be in distress. Axel Hinz-Schleuter was fined \$12,000 and handed a life-time prohibition from owning horses. Dale Huber was fined \$6,000 and was given a 10-year prohibition from owning horses.



### Cattle Crisis - 2021

In December 2021, Alberta SPCA Peace Officers obtained a warrant to inspect animals on a property in Strathcona County. Once there, Peace Officers observed numerous emaciated cattle, as well as many animals that had died.

187 cattle were removed from the property and immediately placed under the care of a veterinarian. Unfortunately, a subsequent cold snap resulted in many more animals dying before they could add enough weight to withstand the bitter weather.

The surviving cattle were eventually sold at auction. The animal owner, Jim Jenkins, was convicted under *Animal Protection Act* of permitting animals to be in distress. He was given a prohibition against owning more than 20 head of bovine for a period of three years.



### Tofield Minis - 2019

In December 2018 the Alberta SPCA received a public complaint of horses in distress on a property in the Tofield region. Peace Officers attended the property and over the course of two months seized approximately 80 horses due to distress and a lack of feed. The horses were of miniature and full- sized breeds.

Peter and Linda Spahr pleaded guilty to two counts each under the *Animal Protection Act* of permitting animals to be in distress. Both owners received prohibition orders that they may not own or have joint care or custody of more than 14 horses for a period of 15 years. The Court ordered Peter Spahr to pay a fine of \$5,000 and Linda Spahr to pay a fine of \$2,000 as part of the sentences.

In the aftermath of this case, the Alberta SPCA hosted its first ever rehoming sale, allowing the horses to be connected with families who relished the opportunity to care for and rehabilitate these animals.



### Alberta SPCA Annual General Meeting

Saturday March 22, 2025

10:00am - 11:00am

Royal Hotel West Edmonton, Emerald A Room  
10010 178 St. NW, Edmonton

Members in good standing are eligible to vote

Contact Donor Relations at [donorrelations@albertaspca.org](mailto:donorrelations@albertaspca.org) or 780-732-3746 no later than 4:30pm on Friday March 21, 2025 to register to attend the AGM.

### Alberta SPCA Animals in Care 2024 Stats



532  
Dogs

298  
Cats



10  
Birds

5  
Horses



19  
Other  
Livestock

5

Small Animals & Reptiles

# EDUCATION



## Pilot Project Aims to Help Animals and Farmers in Rural Alberta

We are partnering with the University of Alberta's Agricultural Well-being in Alberta (AgWellAB) program to develop training and resources for Peace Officers to support farmers while investigating animal welfare.

Our Peace Officers respond to calls of animal distress across the province. In some cases, the Peace Officer identifies that the owner of the animals may also be in distress and/or experiencing a mental health challenge. However, there is no existing training and few resources for Peace Officers to support the farmer's needs.

In response, the Alberta SPCA will be working with AgWellAB's lead researcher, Dr. Rebecca Purc-Stephenson, an Applied Social Psychologist and professor at the University of Alberta's Augustana Campus. She studies stressors and resilience in rural and farming communities, working with partners to turn research into practical programs and resources to support the mental health and well-being of those working in the agricultural industry.

For this project, Dr. Purc-Stephenson aims to create assessment tools, provide resources, and deliver training that empowers Peace Officers to effectively engage with residents living on farms. This will help Peace Officers identify possible cases where mental well-being may be a concern and provide resources for support while investigating animal welfare concerns. The first step for Dr. Purc-Stephenson will be to hold focus groups with Peace Officers to learn more about their experiences in rural Alberta.

This collaboration is guided by a One Health approach that states an individual's health has an impact on animal welfare and the environment. By helping farmers, we know we will be helping animals as well.

Financial support for this project was provided under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a five-year, \$3.5-billion investment by Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments that supports Canada's agri-food and agri-product sectors.

## Calling All Student Artists

The Alberta SPCA is holding a T-Shirt Design contest! Now is the chance for Alberta students to demonstrate their artistic side and have their artwork featured on an Alberta SPCA t-shirt. Students are encouraged to use their creativity to design original artwork that highlights how they have learned from or been inspired by an animal! Three winning designs will be selected to have their artwork printed on t-shirts that will be made available for purchase. Proceeds from t-shirts sold will go towards helping animals across the province.

The entries will be reviewed by a panel of Alberta artists including Macha Abdallah, Gloria Ho and Aimee Movold. Visit our website to read the artist bios.

The contest is open to all students (K-12) in Alberta and entries must be submitted by a teacher or parent/guardian. The deadline to enter is April 15, 2025. Full contest details can be found at [everylivingthing.ca/Contest](http://everylivingthing.ca/Contest).



# YOUR SUPPORT



## Looking to make an impact in 2025? Make it monthly!

Start your new year off by making a commitment to animals. Monthly donors are critical partners in our mission to protect, promote and enhance the well-being of animals in Alberta. Regular contributions ensure we have the funds to fuel efforts that save animal lives. When you choose to become a monthly donor, you signal your support for animal welfare and your desire to see animals treated humanely across our province.

There are significant advantages in choosing to give monthly. The donations are automatic and recurring, so there is minimal effort beyond the initial setup. You can set your gift to be as little or as much as you'd like, making budgeting easier. Best of all, your gift, no matter the size, will add up over time. This is a wonderful way to make a significant, long-term impact with your generosity.

Thank you to everyone who has committed to protecting animals by joining our monthly donor program already. If you are interested in learning more about the monthly donor program and how you can sign up, please reach out to us at 780-732-3746 or email us at [donorrelations@albertaspca.org](mailto:donorrelations@albertaspca.org).

## Alberta's Animal Heroes Lottery

Our Alberta SPCA cash lotteries are very popular, and now they have a new name – Alberta's Animal Heroes Lottery and 50/50 Raffle. The refreshed lottery better reflects the heroic part our ticket buyers play in helping save and rehome animals in our province. Revenue from our lotteries goes directly toward caring for animals that come into our care via our neglect and abuse investigations, as well as other core programs. When you participate in Alberta's Animal Heroes Lottery, you're a hero to animals in need!

The New Year Edition started January 27 and features our biggest prize pool ever – \$95,000 in cash prizes plus a 50/50 jackpot of up to \$325,000. Tickets for the Alberta's Animal Heroes Lottery - New Year Edition, will be on sale until March 21, 2025.

Tickets can be purchased anytime at [AnimalHeroesLottery.ca](http://AnimalHeroesLottery.ca) or during business hours by calling 1-888-802-0780.

We have also updated the name of our stand-alone 50/50 raffles. They will now be called the Heads & Tails 50/50. The first Heads & Tails 50/50 will be held this summer.



# ALBERTA SPCA NEWS

## Executive Director's Message

We were cleaning out a file cabinet the other day and came across several old copies of logos and other graphics this organization has used over its 65-year history – and some from other partners. Bright primary reds and yellows from the 60's, cool pink and green comic book characters from the 70's and 80's and more. It's funny how our tastes change.

Unfortunately, there hasn't been the same amount of change in the rest of our world.

As you've already read, this winter marks a grim anniversary; 10 years since the largest seizure in our history.

I wasn't in this role at that time, but I remember it. I think most of you do too.

We still have the images of those dogs in our memories.

And while it is the largest so far, I fear it may soon lose that inauspicious title.

We're dealing with more and more large seizures of not only dogs, but cats, and livestock as well.

Something is wrong with the system. But what? Well, that's what we're going to be spending a lot of time working on in the coming years.

Can we get the root problems of the issue? I think so.

With our partners in the animal welfare community, the agriculture sector and government we're going to be asking some tough questions and hopefully finding some solutions.

Legislation is one of the topics we're studying, but so are community and municipal by-laws, farmer mental health, access to care and how the rising cost of living and housing is compromising people and animals in their care.

You can help. You are already helping. Your support of our work means everything to us, and I hope you stay tuned to help us celebrate when we mark other, happier anniversaries.

Thank you!

Leanne and Hope



AnimalKind is published by the Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Alberta SPCA)

President: Doug Sawyer  
Executive Director: Leanne Niblock  
Editor: Dan Kobe

To find out more about the work we do for animals across Alberta, visit our website at: [AlbertaSPCA.org](http://AlbertaSPCA.org).

The mission of the Alberta SPCA is to protect, promote and enhance the well-being of animals in Alberta.

# IN LOVING MEMORY



Alexander Jay-Cee Hinz, Michelle Brown  
 Alexandra Mackey, Ann Mackey  
 Annette Barrett, Julia Barrett  
 Arlene Caza, Louise Kolba  
 Art, Elaine Ritchof  
 Artenis, Ronald Cook  
 Arthur Davison, Esso Annuitant Club - Strathcona  
 Atehanu, Esther Schwab  
 Athena, Edyta Sadurska  
 Aunty Sheila, Annette Perreaux  
 Avery Ann Cunningham, Caroline Buntun  
 Axel Benvik, Victoria Cherniak  
 Bailey Kolbuc, Georgina Finch  
 Bernadette Selinger, Sheila Teske  
 Beth Jane DeBlock, Tiange Shi, Janna Van Sloten, Patrick Inglis, Mary Lou Myles, Rosanne Tack-aberry  
 Betty White, Donald Patterson & Lynda Bowes  
 Bev Comin, Larry Comin  
 Beverly Diotte, Michel Diotte  
 Bill & Pearl Stuparyk, Roger & Audrey Stuparyk  
 Bobbie Pendergast, Roberta Harvey  
 BobCat, Jody Forester  
 Bodie, Debra D. Leibel  
 Bruce & Rita McDonald, Heather Dayman  
 Bruce Mitchell & our furbabies, Angela Mitchell  
 Bryce Rohn, Cal & Heather Christianson  
 Buddy & Calli, Naomi Abel  
 Buggs Antoniuk, Wendy Antoniuk  
 Cali Ganie, Sheila Chauvet  
 Carol Taylor, Morag Alexander  
 Carol Watt, Eleanor Williams  
 Carole Patricia Schmidt, Linda Parasiuk  
 Carter Klopp, Caelly Campbell  
 Casey & my cats, Kamala Ray  
 Casey Reynolds, Julie Reynolds  
 Cece, Joan Mielke  
 Cedar, Sandra Marin  
 Chantelle Roberts, Judy & Roger Roberts  
 Chloe, Trudy Pinter-Matick & Paul Matick  
 Chloe Douglas, Adrian Phiri  
 Claire Ormiston, Shelley Moore  
 CoCo, Julia Stanbridge  
 Colette Lizotti, Peggy Simison  
 Connie Adamson, Edward Adamson  
 Danger Gretzinger, Linda Bodo  
 Danny Kerr, Victoria Armstrong  
 Darrel Sheard, Glenda Sheard  
 Deb Bowers, Soren & Louise Jensen  
 Deborah Marie Piedmont, Janet Platz  
 DeeDee, Roger Rousseau  
 Dexter Dog, Rod Loesch

Dezi, Sandy Ewazko-Mah & Foster Mah  
 Don, Beverly Lynn Crockett  
 Doreen Dunkley, Tamara Lodwig  
 Doris Olsen, Betty Wilson & Jim David  
 Dr. Biscoff, Alexander Ladd  
 Dubie, Joanne Swersky  
 Dylan Christopher Rutherford,  
 Brian Chorney & Lynn Corden,  
 Aubrey Plan  
 Dylan Rutherford, Myrna Morash  
 E. Cattoni, Ken & Dolores Scott  
 Ed Stoeck, Elisabeth Stoeck  
 Edith and Albert Dugas, Gail Dugas  
 Edmond Henley, Juliette Henley  
 Edmonton Family, Mary Saucier  
 Einar & Mary Finnebraaten, Robin Barnes  
 Ethel Haynes, Grant Haynes  
 Fernando Campbell, Jim Brack-enbury  
 Francis Gerald Thompson, Pam Arnston  
 Frankie, Deanna Azzara  
 Frankie Paisley, Magaretha Shed  
 Ginger and Angus, Linda Hickman  
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 Greg Christensen, Linda Larose  
 Greg Nemish, Wade Harper  
 Gunner, Budweiser, Sam, Yukon,  
 Kirby, Gabriele Blacklock  
 Harry, Julie Warthe  
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 Irene Sombyk, Ryan Bochnak,  
 Midwest Pipelines Inc.  
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 Izzie, Donna Nielsen  
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 Kaylee, Sharon Fowler  
 Kaylin Krupa, Theresa & Doug Blades  
 Kerry Carver, Christine Perry  
 Kimba, Pausah, & Racial, Shannon  
 O'Sullivan & Gregory Emann  
 Klaas Post, Jeffrey & Marina Post  
 Kobe & Zoe, Aaron Kuffler  
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 Kyle Goliss, Debra Snowdon

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 Lynn Kathleen Olmsted, Audrey Andruchow, Keith O'Donnell  
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 Maggie Hodson, Dave Hodson  
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 Maria Kacin Comelli, Rex & Tear, Sylvia De Angelis  
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 Mary, Leo & Atty, Karen Scott  
 Mayah, Judith McLeay  
 Meeko Bailey Ahlberg, Jennifer Ahlberg  
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 Misha Doucette, Brad Doucette  
 Mittens, Stephen Hobbins  
 MJ, Debbie Forcade  
 Morgan BCE, Kerry Moore  
 Nero Pinder, Laura Lee Life  
 Nic Wales, Wilhelmine Wales  
 Noche, Leanne Andrews  
 Nona German, Ann Valan  
 Nora Lamoureux, Taylor Lamoureux  
 Nutmeg, Maisy & Griffy, Aimee DeValois  
 Oge, Bruce Sinclair  
 Oscar, Cecile & Ralph E Atkinson  
 Pal, Tracy & Stan Wadden  
 Pat Persson, Violet Currie  
 Patricia Anne Greenwood, Norm Greenwood  
 Peggy Marshall, George Buck  
 Peter Homeniuk, Yvonne Hagel  
 Phyllis Sargent, Sue Sargeant  
 Posey and Jack, Naresh Sharma  
 Pucci & Sam Watts, Jeannette Watts  
 Punch & Kootolulu, Manni & Vanitha Pillay  
 Quill, Angela Wu

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 Ray Gadbois, Carol Fitzpatrick  
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 Tamara Pylpchkuk  
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 Rick Wolfe, Sylvia Lemaire-Wolfe  
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 Riley, Kris Hokazono  
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 Roma Mary Franklin, Helen Henderson  
 Ron Moore, Barb & Garry Carstairs  
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 Sanchez, Christine Dufresne  
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 Toby, Terry Windross & Beatrice Windross  
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 Willey Dow, Chelsea Dow  
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 Zoe & Bella, Joyce Wilson

