

From: [Lifeforce Foundation](#)
Sent: Thursday, April 03, 2008 1:04 PM
To: [Lifeforce Foundation](#)
Subject: Stanley Park Petting Zoo Problems

OPEN LETTER

April 3, 2008

Dear Mr. Joseph:

Re: Stanley Park Petting Zoo Problems

Although I appreciate the information that you provided it failed to respond to the number of issues and/or failed to fully address the issues.

For example:

1. Were the bunnies removed from the window display?
2. Was the "injured" bird removed from public display?

I am pleased to hear that the Parks Board will implement Lifeforce's recommendations to put up sufficient signage to properly inform the public about the health hazards. I hope this includes all of the information that we recommended and will include the animal rights issues. (Information in our report "Petting Zoos: A Silent Epidemic?")

However, hand wash stations must be running water and disposable towels not just hand sanitizers/gels that you may have meant. Please clarify what the two stations are using.

Although the Board may not have knowledge of human illnesses the lack of proper information is what may well be contributing to a silent epidemic. As I said people may go home and have diarrhea and nausea but not relate it to the petting zoo. Lack of knowledge may mean lack of reporting.

Feces/urine soaked hay was not picked up by staff. Kids were walking through it and sitting in it. As stated urine and fecal matter puddles around at least one drain that needs to be redesigned/fixed.

Contrary to your letter I was advised that some animals had come from the Fraser Valley Auction. In addition, the bunnies were originally "borrowed" from Aldor Farms and it was later decided to keep them. Past Commissioners did not support these types of practises. As I requested please supply a list of acquisitions and dispositions of animals.

I found it very disturbing that staff responses to public inquiries may differ than management responses to agencies investigating your petting zoo business. You stated that I was "questioning one of our staff who responded openly". That "openness" is somewhat lacking in your response. I do not have my original letter with me so please refer to all issues that I sent and respond "openly".

Thank you,

Peter Hamilton

Lifeforce Director

604.649.5258

lifeforcesociety@hotmail.com

From: [Josephs, Philip](#)

Sent: Thursday, April 03, 2008 11:33 AM

To: lifeforcesociety@hotmail.com

Cc: [Council Support \(COV\) - DL](#) ; [Casanova, Julie](#)

Subject: Stanley Park Children's Farmyard

Dear Mr. Hamilton,

I am responding to your emails of March 19, 2008 regarding a number of issues that you have raised about the Stanley Park Children's Farmyard.

We are well aware of the potential dangers to both animals and humans of unsanitary conditions.

Although we feel that we had sufficient signage to create an awareness of the importance of hygiene, we have now installed additional hygiene advisory signs and handwash reminder signs. In the experience of our staff, almost all visitors avail themselves of at least one of the two hand sanitizer stations and / or the handwash facilities in the washrooms. One of the hand sanitizer stations was missing at the time of your visit, it has now been reinstalled in the area between the two barns, the other one is by the Farmyard exit. Staff at the exit also remind visitors to use them, so if they choose not to wash their hands or use the sanitizer, that is their decision. We are also installing mats at the exit, which will be sprayed with disinfectant recommended by the CFIA.

Our staff regularly clean, hose down and / or disinfect relevant areas of the yards and buildings. While staff continually pick up after the animals, this is a farmyard and there is no way of avoiding the fact that there will be animal feces on the ground. We consult with the CFIA veterinarian based at Vancouver Airport whenever there is a general issue of concern for public or animal health and we follow his advice on precautionary measures for such issues as Foot & Mouth Disease, BSE, West Nile Virus, E. Coli etc. As a result of our precautions, to our knowledge there has never been a specific case of illness amongst visitors or staff which has been linked to the Farmyard.

The Farmyard continues to support Rare Breeds Canada and the variety of animals we have under this program is reasonably consistent with what we have always had. When we became a host farm under the program, it was on the basis that we would display the animals, educate visitors and only do limited breeding. Other animals have come to us by onsite breeding (again, this is limited). We have also acquired some for humane reasons, where their original owners were unable or unwilling to care for them and they would likely otherwise have been abandoned or put down.

They generally will live out their lives at the Farmyard. That is why the farmyard has a number of older animals, such as the 20 year old Dexter Cow. Many live much longer lives than they would in a normal farmyard situation. We do not "dispose" of them. In their later years, we do what we can to make them comfortable for as long as possible but, should the time come that they are suffering then, in consultation with our veterinarian, we will consider whether the appropriate course of action is to humanely euthanise them.

Our animals are extremely well looked after and our Farmyard staff regularly go above and beyond in looking after them. Most of the staff have worked there for a number of years, they are knowledgeable about the animals and have great affection for them. We have regular monthly visits from our very experienced veterinarian, who has worked with us for about 16 years now. On her visits, in addition to dealing with any specific animal health issues identified by staff, she walks around and generally looks over all of the animals, deals with anything else that she feels need attention and makes recommendations to staff. She is available for telephone consultations with our staff or additional visits to the farmyard, or else our staff take animals to her clinic, as and when required. She has indicated that she believes that the animals are well cared for and that our staff are well informed and well trained.

We are committed to the health and welfare of the animals in the Children's Farmyard and of our visitors to the facility. We continually review ways of improving the facility and where appropriate, implement relevant changes. We are currently in discussions with the SPCA about its Certified Program for Specialty Farms, regarding potentially becoming involved with that program.

If you have questions or concerns about the Farmyard, we suggest that, rather than showing up on site, representing yourself as someone interested in starting up a hobby farm and questioning one of our staff members who responded to you openly on that basis, you instead contact the Farmyard Supervisor directly and arrange for a visit. He can respond to any questions that you have. He is Al Regan, and can be reached at 604-257-8530. Had you taken this approach on your recent visit, he could have met with you and provided you with answers to your specific questions and much of the information noted above.

Sincerely