

Abstract - Ledger

When things go seriously wrong: What happens when we don't meet animals' needs

Animal cruelty legislation exists in most countries to protect animals from unnecessary harm, occurring commonly through acute acts of violence, or from the long-term neglect of an animal's various nutritional, environmental, health and behavioural needs.

Animal cruelty legislation typically defines harm in terms of pain, injury, disease, distress and suffering. While these terms encompass both physical and psychological forms of harm, still,

historically, the vast majority of animal cruelty prosecutions have focused on cruel acts where there is direct evidence of harm, such as the presence of a physical injury (fractures, contusions etc). Indirect evidence is also utilized to infer the potential for harm, such the absence of food and water, the absence of adequate shelter, or the absence of veterinary care.

Since 2014, the Five Domains Model (5DM) has been incorporated into animal cruelty cases in Canada to expand on how investigations are undertaken, providing a range of benefits. After having successfully applied the 5DM to the analysis of hundreds of animals involved in cruelty files, a process that provides a systematic way to ensure that welfare assessments are undertaken in a comprehensive manner has emerged.

Canadian case studies, where the 5DM has been applied in Canada, will be discussed.

Dr Rebecca Ledger

Animal Behaviour & Welfare Consulting
Vancouver, Canada

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