

Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan

Annual Report

April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016



Animal Protection Services

SASKATCHEWAN

APSS Annual Report 2015-2016

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President's Report

We have now completed our first year of operation, and I am happy to report that we are doing well. We have a strong and diverse Board that has been working together successfully, and our year-end financial position is positive since the number of complaints received was low.

In the coming year, we intend to continue to work towards refining our organization's Bylaws, and ensuring that we are following all of the correct procedures at both the governance and operations levels. We are also developing strategies to recruit new Board members to fill out our ranks, and to cover any future vacant Executive positions. We will be looking towards potentially extending the term of future Government Provision of Services agreements, as we feel that longer term agreements may lend stability and enable long term planning.

I am pleased to continuing to working with and supporting this group of dedicated Board members and staff, in order to ensure APSS' ongoing maturation and success.

Sincerely,

Jim Sawatsky,
President of the Board

Staff & Office

At the beginning of April 2015, APSS started operations with four full time staff members who had all worked for the Saskatchewan SPCA. Those staff were Executive Director Kaley Pugh, Operations Assistant Laura Vany, and Animal Protection Officers Ashely Detillieux and Stacey Greke. There were two vacant Animal Protection Officer (APO) positions at the beginning of the year.

It has always been difficult to recruit the right people to work as APOs, and filling these two vacancies proved no different. Often, the people who are keen to do the work do not possess the practical experience or sensible attitude required to be a good APO, and the people with the skills and experience balk at the hours, the risks or the salary.

Dennis Muirhead was hired as a full time APO on July 2, 2015, and he works out of his home office in Craik, SK covering the South of the Province. Blair Waggoner was hired as a full time APO on February 1, 2015 and works out of a Ministry of Agriculture office space in Yorkton, SK covering Yorkton and surrounding areas.

Barry Thiessen, who had worked for the Saskatchewan SPCA as a part time casual APO, was hired as an APO to help fill in for the busy winter season, and he worked more or less full time for us from November until May.

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Stacey Greke had an unfortunate accident at home in November, and was off work with a badly broken leg from November through April.

At the beginning of our operations, APSS had been sharing office space with the Saskatchewan SPCA. In December 2015, APSS relocated to independent office space, in the same building as the Saskatchewan SPCA. This office space is affordable, and offers the use of shared kitchen and boardroom facilities which is a considerable advantage over other spaces that we could afford.

Case Statistics

The 2015-2016 year was fairly slow in terms of the number of new cases we opened, particularly in the beginning of the year. I suspect that this was due to confusion about who to report cases to, however the mild winters also likely contributed as weather is typically highly influential on case numbers.

We opened a total of 544 new cases in 2015-2016, which is well below the average of 674 for the previous 4 years (

Table 1). 324 of those complaints involved dogs (60% of the total), with 138 (25%) horse complaints, 63 (12%) cattle complaints, 56 (10%) cat complaints, 20 (4%) sheep/goat complaints, and the remaining categories of "other", fowl, camelids, hogs, cervids and bison all having just a few complaints each (Table 2, Figure 1).

Table 1 Number of cases per month for the last five years, including an average number for the previous four years

	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Total
2011-2012	74	78	62	66	63	55	44	52	32	55	42	43	666
2012-2013	31	52	67	61	61	54	56	59	55	53	59	63	671
2013-2014	80	59	58	67	58	50	46	61	67	77	58	54	735
2014-2015	53	71	53	59	61	50	58	67	46	41	37	27	623
4 year Avg.	60	65	60	63	61	52	51	60	50	57	49	47	674
2015-2016	43	44	44	50	55	46	40	40	51	51	38	42	544

Table 2 Number of complaints by species and month for 2015-2016. Note that the total number of cases is lower than the total per species – this is because many complaints involve more than one species.

	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Total
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Cattle	6	6	5	2	7	9	4	5	5	5	5	4	63
Horses	15	9	9	12	11	15	10	12	8	13	11	13	138
Bison	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Sheep/goats	0	2	6	3	1	2	0	2	1	1	1	1	20
Hogs	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Cervids	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Camelids	0	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	7
Fowl	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	7
Dogs	27	23	28	33	39	24	23	16	33	30	22	26	324
Cats	5	4	3	1	5	5	5	8	8	6	3	3	56
Other	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	4	10
Total Cases	43	44	44	50	55	46	40	40	51	51	38	42	544

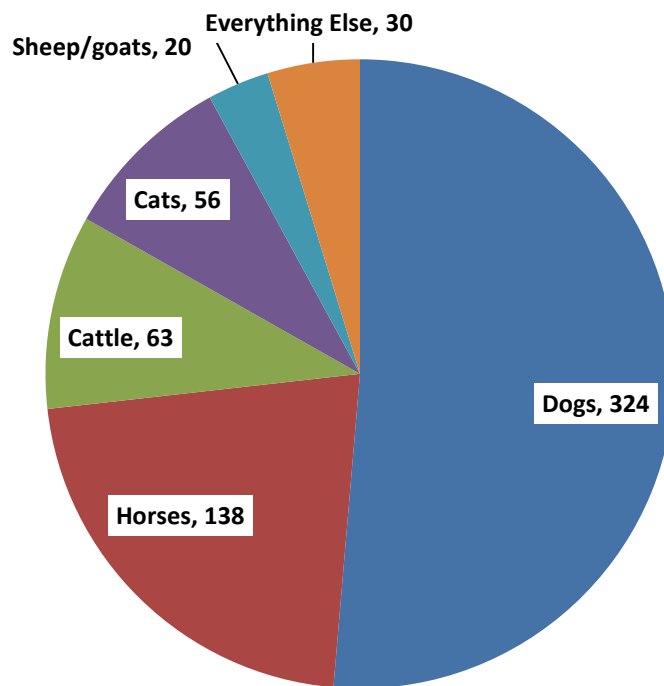


Figure 1 Proportion of cases by species

We classify our cases as either “Founded”, “Unfounded” or “Inconclusive”. Founded cases are those where there is legitimate concern for the welfare of the animals, and follow up is required. Unfounded cases are those where there is no concern for the well-being of the animals, and nothing further is required by our APOs. Unfounded complaints are sometimes simply well-meaning complainants, but they are also sometimes malicious complaints such as divorcing spouses or feuding neighbors.

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Inconclusive cases are those where the APO was unable to assess the welfare of the animals for one reason or another; sometimes the animals have been moved, the animal in question died, the APO cannot gain entry to the premise, etc.

In 2015-2016 our percentage of founded complaints ranged from 100% for the small number bison, hog and cervid cases, to just 29% for the camelid cases.

Horse cases were 53% founded, dogs were 46% founded, cats complaints were 45% founded, and cattle complaints were 40% founded (

Table 3). Unfounded and Inconclusive cases take a significant amount of time and resources away from our “real” cases, however we have no way of knowing whether a case is founded or not before we attend, and therefore must respond equally to all complaints.

Table 3 Number and percentage of founded, unfounded and inconclusive cases by species for 2015-2016

	Total	Founded		Unfounded		Inconclusive	
Cattle	63	25	40%	16	25%	22	35%
Horses	138	73	53%	27	20%	38	28%
Bison	1	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Sheep/goats	20	11	55%	2	10%	7	35%
Hogs	3	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Cervids	2	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Camelids	7	2	29%	1	14%	4	57%
Fowl	7	6	86%	0	0%	1	14%
Dogs	324	150	46%	68	21%	106	33%
Cats	56	25	45%	10	18%	21	38%
Other	10	6	60%	1	10%	3	30%

Animal Protection Officers seized animals on 20 separate cases (Table 4). In total, 46 horses, 19 dogs, 12 cats, 4 chickens, and 1 turtle were seized this past year. A further 26 cats and 13 dogs were voluntarily surrendered during our investigations. Animals were placed with SPCAs/humane societies, euthanized, sold at auction, and placed with private caretakers.

One dog owner paid seizure expenses and had the dog returned, and in one horse sale the revenue for the sale of the horses was more than the seizure expenses, so money was returned to the horse owner as per section 10(5) of the Animal Protection Act.

Placement of seized companion animals continues to challenge us. Shelters around the province are often at or over capacity, simply do not want to accept animals from us for any reason, or do not want to accept animals with behaviour or health problems since they may have to be euthanized. This means

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that animals are sometimes transported significant distances after a seizure, or it sometimes means that animals are not seized when they perhaps should have been.

APOs obtained Search Warrants 40 separate times in 2015-2016, but these were not all for 2015-2016 cases. We had charges laid in 10 cases, and submitted 4 further cases for opinions on whether charges should be laid but the Crown Prosecutors decided not to proceed. A number of cases that had been before the courts for some time concluded, with variable sentences. We continue to struggle to receive updates from the courts as to the outcomes of our cases.

Table 4 Listing of seized and surrendered animals in the 2015-2016 year

File number	Date	Warrant?		Delivered to	#	Type
S556JA15-O	9-Apr-15	Y	Seized	Regina Humane Society	2	Dog
S294AU13-F	10-Apr-15	Y	Seized	Auction	1	Horse
S002AP15-O	13-May-15	Y	Seized	Regina Humane Society	2	Dog
S062MY15-O	21-May-15	N	Seized	Saskatoon SPCA	1	Cat
S128JN15-F	30-Jun-15	Y	Seized	PDS	4	Chicken
S115JN15-F	7-Aug-15	N	Seized	Vet	1	Dog
S229AU15-F	26-Aug-15	N	Seized	Prince Albert SPCA	2	Dog
S222AU15-F	1-Sep-15	Y	Seized	Heartland Livestock	20	Horse
S247SE15-F	14-Sep-15	Y	Seized	Battlefords Humane Society	2	Dog
S259SE15-F	22-Sep-15	Y	Seized	Prince Albert SPCA	2	Dog
S310OC15-F	28-Oct-15	Y	Seized	Saskatoon SPCA	1	Dog
S346NV15-O	25-Nov-15	N	Seized	Vet	5	Cat
S207AU15-O	17-Dec-15	Y	Seized	Saskatoon SPCA	1	Dog
S406DE15-F	23-Dec-15	N	Seized	Saskatoon SPCA	2	Dog
S406DE15-F	23-Dec-15	N	Seized	Saskatoon SPCA	1	Cat
S387DE15-F	11-Jan-16	N	Seized	Vet	1	Dog
	11-Jan-16	N	Seized	PDS	1	Cat
S470FE16-F	4-Feb-16	N	Seized	Saskatoon SPCA	1	Dog
S464JA16-F	9-Feb-16	Y	Seized	PDS	2	Elk
S464JA16-F	9-Feb-16	Y	Seized	PDS	1	Horse
S178JL15-O	10-Feb-16	Y	Seized	Saskatoon SPCA	1	Turtle

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S464JA16-F	16-Feb-16	Y	Seized	Heartland Livestock	25	Horse
S374OC14-F	14-Mar-16	Y	Seized	Vet	4	Cat
S519MR16-O	15-Mar-16	N	Seized	Regina Humane Society	2	Dog
S540DE13-F	23-Apr-15	N	Surr.	Vet	16	Cat
S540DE13-F	23-Apr-15	N	Surr.	Battlefords Humane Society	1	Cat
S526DE13-F	28-Apr-15	Y	Surr.	Battlefords Humane Society	2	Cat
S050MY15-F	8-May-15	Y	Surr.	Caregiver	2	Chicken
S158JL15-F	22-Jul-15	N	Surr.	Battlefords Humane Society	2	Dog
S540DE13-F	29-Jul-15	N	Surr.	Vet	1	Cat
S194AU15-F	10-Aug-15	N	Surr.	Prince Albert SPCA	1	Dog
S158JL15-F	3-Sep-15	N	Surr.	Prince Albert SPCA	1	Dog
S242SE15-F	3-Sep-15	N	Surr.	Prince Albert SPCA	2	Dog
S122JN15-F	15-Oct-15	N	Surr.	Battlefords Humane Society	1	Dog
S626MR12-F	21-Oct-15	N	Surr.	Battlefords Humane Society	1	Dog
S092JN15-O	5-Nov-15	Y	Surr.	PDS	1	Cat
S318OC15-O	20-Nov-15	N	Surr.	Prince Albert SPCA	1	Cat
S122JN15-F	16-Dec-15	N	Surr.	Vet	1	Dog
S336NV15-O	13-Jan-16	N	Surr.	Prince Albert SPCA	1	Dog
S387DE15-F	16-Jan-16	N	Surr.	Saskatoon SPCA	2	Cat
S458JA16-F	20-Jan-16	N	Surr.	New Hope	1	Dog
S434JA16-F	22-Jan-16	N	Surr.	Lloydminster SPCA	1	Dog
S492FE16-O	23-Feb-16	N	Surr.	Vet	1	Dog
S259AU14-F	24-Mar-16	N	Surr.	Saskatoon SPCA	2	Cat

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The case load per individual officer is a continuing to be a challenge, with only 4 full time APOs to deal with 544 new complaints as well as the ongoing files from previous years. One APO, who worked full time for the entire 2015-2016 year, was assigned 177 new files this year, and had a further 42 files from previous years that were ongoing at the beginning of April 2015. Each file requires considerable travel, paperwork and time, and many require multiple visits, therefore this number of cases represents a very high workload.

Our time to respond to new complaints continues to be less than ideal in many instances. In 233 cases, or about 43% of the time, an APO attended in less than 5 days, however in a 141 cases or about 26% of the time response took between 11 and 30 days. In the last 13% of cases, or on 69 files, response took longer than 31 days (Figure 2).

We classify complaints as either Priority 1 or 2, depending on their apparent severity and the urgency of the required response. In 2015-2016, we classed 76 complaints as Priority 1, with a target response time of less than three business days. Our APOs were able to respond within the targeted window in 58, or 76%, of the Priority 1 cases.

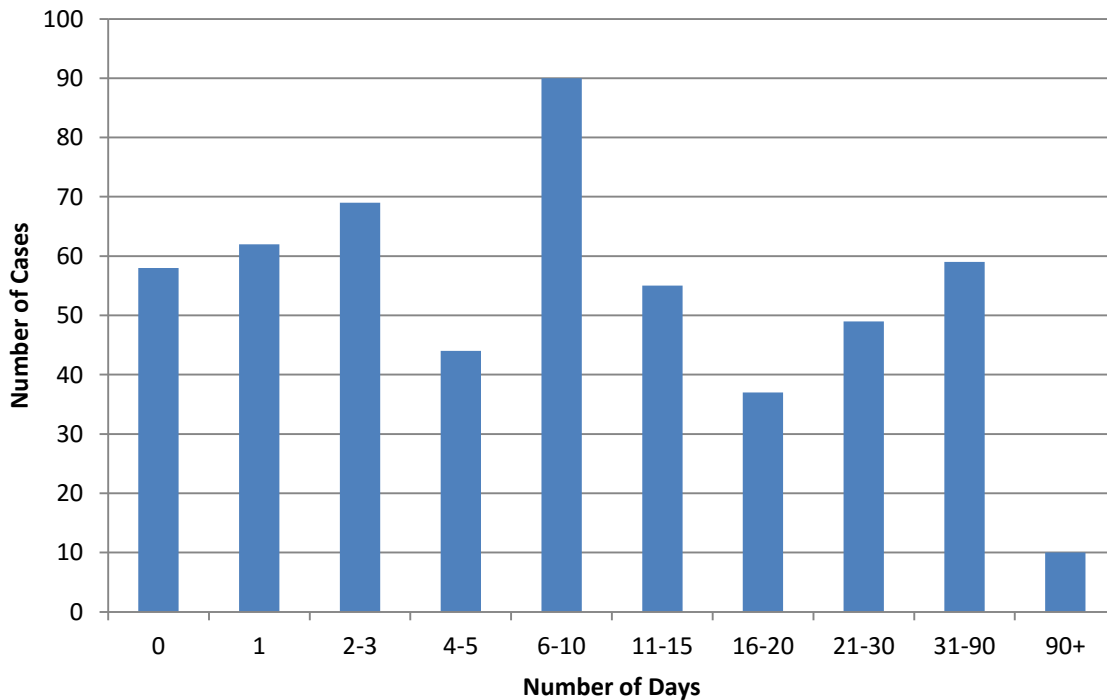


Figure 2 Response times for cases opened between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016, showing number of days from the complaint until an APO attended

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Notable Cases

There were two significant livestock seizures this year, both involving horses. In the Lanette Reid case, 20 horses were seized from the Maple Creek area because they had been left without a water source. This owner had previously been convicted, in 2010, of animal cruelty in regards the starvation of several horses. She was charged again, pled guilty, and was given a \$2000 fine and a lifetime ban on owning livestock, which she can apply to have removed in 3 years. In the other file, 25 horses were seized after the owner failed to provide adequate feed to his emaciated horses. There were also starving elk on this property; the owner euthanized them after the vet authorized seizure but removal of the animals was not possible. This owner has been charged, and is awaiting trial.

One dog case, opened in December of 2015, is notable. There had been at least two previous files on the owner, who lives near Riceton, SK, in regards to a very large number of free roaming farm dogs. In the most current file, at least 80 dogs were found initially, living in poor conditions with inadequate shelter, many confined without water, with puppies in very poor condition, and the dogs being fed a diet consisting primarily of grain. The dogs' body condition, health and care appeared to be deteriorating over subsequent visits to the premise, and the owner appeared to be simply overwhelmed with the number of dogs, yet was reluctant to part with them. We did end up seizing 70 dogs from the premise in April of 2016, and charges have been laid. Calculations based on the number of dogs seized, the number left on the premise, and the number that the owner had voluntarily surrendered to other organization during the course of the investigation indicate that there were approximately 140 dogs when our investigation began. The matter is ongoing, and we continue to follow up on the care of the dogs and horses remaining on the premise.

We have had yet another case of an elderly person living in squalor with a large number of animals. In this instance, the elderly lady has a large number of miniature horses with extremely poor hooves and high parasite loads, as well as some other animals. Her living conditions are appalling, with her house having no running water, ceilings leaking and caving in, and the space overwhelmingly full of stuff; she has no useable bathroom facility. Her family is largely estranged, and she will not consider leaving the premise since she will then lose her animals. These cases are extremely frustrating for our APOs, since we can relieve the animals of their distress, but there is little that can be done for their owner.

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Finances

We finished 2015-2016 in a good financial position, spending less than budgeted in nearly all areas. Expenses in some areas such as Animal Services were significantly less than originally expected, likely due to the low number of cases and relatively few seizures compared to other years. APO wages were under budget due to the length of time two positions were vacant. APO mileage was one of the few areas over budget, which I suspect is due to larger than expected amounts of travel to respond to complaints in areas where the APO positions were vacant.

We received \$22,000 in income that had not originally been expected; \$12,000 came from the BC SPCA to cover my time to work on the Bison Code, and an additional \$20,000 came from the Ministry of Agriculture to cover the expenses related to a change in the provision of Drive-by inspections by Livestock Services of Saskatchewan.

The 2015-2016 financials have been audited by Collins Barrow.

Executive Director's Report

In addition to supervision of the day to day activities of the APOs, and occasional work in the field on investigations, I was pleased to be involved in a number of other activities this year that I believe contributed to our ability to investigate, prosecute and hopefully prevent animal cruelty in Saskatchewan.

In November on 2015, I attended the first national Animal Cruelty Prosecution Conference in Ottawa, put on by the National Centre for the Prosecution of Animal Cruelty. This conference brought Crown Prosecutors and Animal Welfare Enforcement workers together from across Canada, with the goal of increasing the effective use of Canada's Criminal Code in animal cruelty cases. This was a very successful conference, and lead to a better relationship between APSS and three Crown Prosecutors in Saskatchewan who have a particular interest in animal cruelty cases. In April 2015, I had co-presented a webinar session as part of the training that the NCPAC had been putting on leading up to the national conference.

I was involved with the Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association and the vet community in general in several ways. In September, I presented two, one hour sessions at the SVMA's annual conference. Separate sessions for large and small animal veterinarians introduced them to APSS, discussed the *Animal Protection Act*, explained the complaint investigation process in Saskatchewan, and discussed the vet's role in an animal cruelty investigation and trial. I'm also happy to have been invited to be a part of the SVMA's Animal Welfare Committee, which has had several meetings where we have been focusing on continuing education for veterinarians in the area of animal welfare, and specifically their role and ethical obligations in cruelty cases. I was also pleased to be invited to speak to three separate

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classes of students at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, which I think is important to get the future vets thinking about animal welfare and their crucial role in prevention and investigation.

In October 2015, I presented at the Ministry of Agriculture's Animal Welfare Stakeholder's Consultation Meeting held in Saskatoon. I discussed APSS, the investigative process in Saskatchewan, and some of the challenges faced by animal welfare investigators. I also shared some thoughts regarding possible improvements to the *Animal Protection Act* and enforcement work in this province. In February, this presentation was more or less repeated as a webinar hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and available to anyone who wished to attend.

I worked as the Animal Welfare representative on the National Farm Animal Care Council's committee that is developing the Code of the Practice for the Care and Handling of Bison. We had meetings in Saskatoon, Regina and Calgary and several conference calls and reviews of materials in between meetings. This committee is making good progress, and we expect two, or possibly three, more meetings before an estimated release of the completed Code in the Fall of 2017.

I've continued to work with the Saskatchewan SPCA, presenting to their annual Animal Welfare Conference about how and when to report animal cruelty concerns, as well as what is and is not considered animal cruelty. I have also been participating on their committee that is working to establish a Rescue Certification program in Saskatchewan, in order to address the issues caused by lack of regulation in that area. I assisted with ideas for the composition of the committee, presented on the need for a certification program at the first meeting, and assisted the SSPCA staff with their presentation about the program at the National Animal Welfare Conference put on by the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies.

At the CFHS Conference in Toronto, I also had the opportunity to listen to and participate in presentations about animal welfare enforcement by speakers from across the country, and found the sessions about animal hoarding and mental illness, and unwanted horses and the horse slaughter issue and to be particularly informative.

I look forward to continuing this work to advance the welfare of animals in Saskatchewan, and to building a strong and resilient team at APSS that can effectively meet our obligations to the animals and the public.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kaley Pugh,
Executive Director