



# PEI Animal Welfare Survey Report

Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Towards Animal Welfare

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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**Photos:** Jennifer Moar, Sally Bernard, Hayley Wood, StClair MacAulay, Nancy Milton, Shirley MacClure, and Yasemin Dunn





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On April 13, 2017, the Government of Prince Edward Island (PEI) updated the Animal Welfare Act. The Act includes, by reference, the National Farmed Animal Care Council Codes of Practice and a Code of Practice for Canadian Kennel and Cattery operations. At minimum, animals must be provided with adequate food, water, and shelter and access to veterinary care when injured or ill. The Department of Agriculture and Land (DAL) is responsible for protecting the welfare of agricultural and companion animals on PEI.

In early 2021, the PEI Animal Welfare Survey was developed by the DAL to understand public knowledge, attitudes, and practices towards animal welfare and identify gaps in animal welfare laws and policies on PEI. The survey contains questions on knowledge about farm and companion animal welfare, attitudes toward reporting animal welfare concerns, and opinion on who should enforce animal welfare laws on PEI. Results of the survey will help DAL identify Islanders' concerns about animal welfare.

### Key Findings

**The majority of survey participants are living on PEI.** Islanders were more likely to participate in the survey than non-Islanders as the survey mainly targeted people who live on PEI. There are no significant differences between the proportion of Islanders who participated in the survey from each county, suggesting that the survey included broad coverage across PEI.

**The majority of survey participants are female.** Females are more highly represented among survey participants. Generally, females have greater concern for animal welfare than males, which may explain why females were more likely to participate in the survey than males.

**The majority of Islanders self-identified as general public.** The high proportion of Islanders who consider themselves as the general public is valuable in that the survey's intent was to garner information on the knowledge and concerns of everyday Islanders on the topic of animal welfare. In contrast, a high proportion of non-Islanders self-identified as animal welfare advocates.

## **Animal Welfare on PEI**

**Animal Welfare.** Animal welfare and protection on PEI are very to extremely important to all survey participants. Individuals interested in animal welfare are most likely to engage with the survey and take the time to complete it.

**Improvement of Animal Welfare on PEI.** More than 50% of Islanders thought that animal welfare on PEI had been improved over the last 10 years. However, a high proportion of Islanders feel that animal welfare should still be improved further.

**Sources of Animal Welfare Information on PEI.** Almost all survey participants would like to be more informed about the animal welfare laws on PEI. The majority of survey participants are looking for animal welfare law information on the internet followed by books and daily local newspapers. Furthermore, a high proportion of Islanders considered veterinarians as the most trusted source to get accurate animal welfare information, followed by animal welfare advocates.

## **Reporting Animal Welfare Concerns on PEI**

**Animal Welfare Concerns.** Half of Islanders would call the local Humane Society or Provincial Government (DAL) if they had farm animal welfare concerns. Also, the majority of Islanders would call the local Humane Society or Police if they had companion or exotic animal welfare concerns.

**Reporting Cases of Animal Neglect or Abuse on PEI.** Almost all Islanders and non-Islanders indicated they are somewhat to extremely likely to report a case of animal neglect or abuse. About half of Islanders and two-thirds of non-Islanders had made a call concerning animal welfare in the past.

## **Enforcement of Animal Welfare Laws on PEI**

**Enforcement of Animal Welfare Laws.** Most Islanders and non-Islanders think that the Provincial Government or Humane Society should have the power to enforce welfare laws on PEI.

**Protection of Animals.** Over 70% of survey participants strongly indicated that the Provincial Government should be responsible for the protection of farm animals and the Humane Society should be responsible for protecting companion and exotic animals on PEI.

**Investigation of Animal Abuse Cases.** More than 50% of Islanders think that Government appointed individuals employed by the Humane Society should have a primary role in investigating animal abuse on PEI. Most felt the provincial government's role was supportive.

**Prohibition Sale, Trade and Exhibition of Exotic Animals.** About two-thirds of Islanders indicated that they somewhat to strongly agree with prohibition of the sale, trade and exhibition of exotic animals on PEI.

**Survey participants comments.** The majority of Islanders suggested additional interventions are needed for wildlife and puppy mills to help improve animal welfare on PEI.

## Recommendations

Based on this reports' findings, Islanders feel that animal welfare on PEI has improved over the last 10 years. Many initiatives that aim to improve Islanders knowledge, attitudes and practices toward animal welfare are already taking place across PEI, however, more work is needed.

A strategic approach to addressing the animal welfare concerns and increasing the knowledge of Islanders on animal welfare laws and policies could include the following:

- ✓ Regularly share and update information such as “frequently asked questions” about the PEI *Animal Welfare Act* and Regulations and relevant codes of practice through the government website, social media, and trusted partners such as practising veterinarians.
- ✓ Provide education sessions to the general public regarding animal welfare.
- ✓ Periodically provide summary statistics regarding animal complaints and resolution.
- ✓ Provide clarity and information about who should be contacted to address farm, companion or exotic animal welfare concerns.
  - A step-by-step guide of what happens from the initial complaint to the proper authority to the resolution of the problem should be made available to the public.
  - Develop an online complaint tool to report animal welfare concerns on PEI.
- ✓ Develop continued educational offerings with welfare focuses for veterinarians to ensure they are sharing the best evidence welfare standards with clients.
- ✓ Continue to support industry groups on projects with an animal welfare focus.
- ✓ Consider policies and regulations related to wildlife welfare, dog breeding and the sale, trade and exhibition of exotic animals on PEI.

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## **Section 1: Introduction**



## Introduction

Animal Welfare is a multi-dimensional concept that includes both physical and mental aspects of the state of an animal. The five tenants of protecting animal welfare are known as the Five Freedoms:

1. Freedom from **Hunger** and **Thirst** by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
2. Freedom from **Discomfort** by providing an appropriate environment, including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
3. Freedom from **Pain, Injury** or **Disease** by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
4. Freedom to **Express Normal Behaviour** by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
5. Freedom from **Fear** and **Distress** by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

These Five Freedoms create a minimum base to work from and have been refined over the years since they were first introduced by a UK government report in 1965.<sup>1</sup> Additional aspects of good animal welfare could include a positive human-animal relationship, appropriate veterinary care, shelter, management and nutrition, a stimulating and safe environment, humane handling and humane slaughter or killing. While animal welfare refers to the state of the animal, the treatment that an animal receives may be covered by other terms such as animal care, animal husbandry, and humane treatment.

Animal welfare is an important issue for many Islanders, and the Department of Agriculture and Land (DAL) supports various projects and activities that aim to improve animal welfare on Prince Edward Island (PEI). Therefore, DAL created an online survey asking Islanders to have their say about animal welfare policies and laws on PEI. The survey helped DAL identify Islander's concerns about animal welfare and determine gaps in animal welfare policies and laws on PEI.

## Objectives

The objectives of the animal welfare survey are to:

- understand the public knowledge, attitudes, and practices towards animal welfare on PEI.
- identify gaps in animal welfare laws and policies on PEI.

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<sup>1</sup> B. Cartwright Five freedoms of Animal Welfare June 2017 <https://humanecanada.ca/2017/06/16/five-freedoms-of-animal-welfare/>

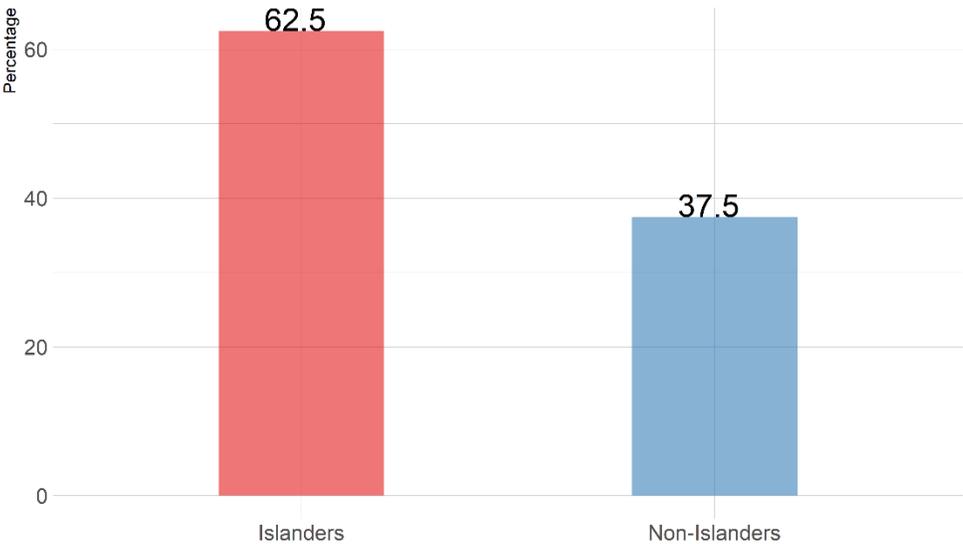
## Section 2: Demographic Characteristics



### Total Responses

In total, there were 10,319 views and/or openings of the survey link, and 3,957 responses were received. Out of the 3,957 responses, 11 uncompleted surveys (only one to three questions were answered) were removed making the total number of participants who completed the survey 3,946. Of those who completed the survey, 62.5% were living on PEI (Islanders), and 37.5% lived outside of PEI (Non-Islanders) (**Figure 2.1**). Islanders were more likely to participate in the survey than non-Islanders as the survey was targeted to people who live on PEI.

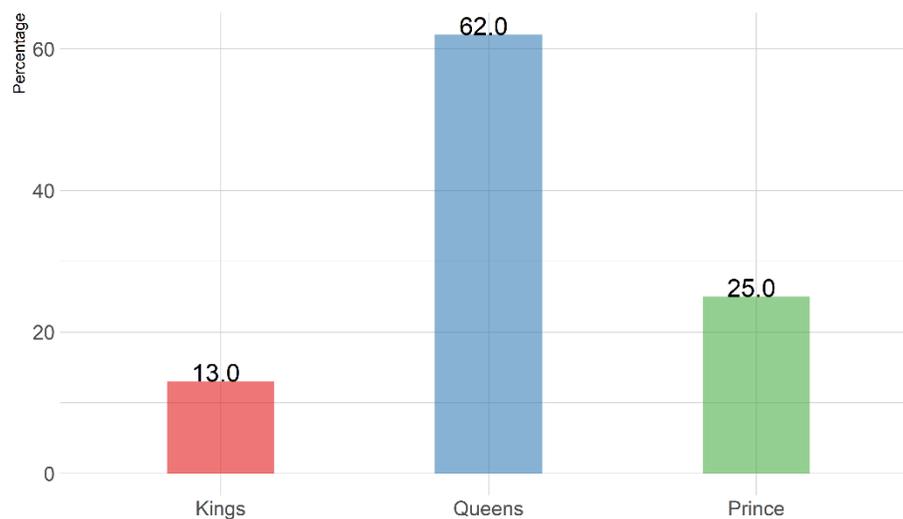
**Figure 2.1. Percentage of survey participants who live on and outside PEI**



## Regional Zone

**Figure 2.2** shows the distribution of participants who live on PEI. More than half (62%) of Island respondents lived in Queens, 13% in Kings and 25% in Prince County.

**Figure 2.2. Distribution of participants who live on PEI**



The distribution of Islanders was adjusted to the total populations reported in each county in 2019<sup>2</sup> and is presented in **Table 2.1**. County participation was proportional (1.3-1.8 %).

**Table 2.1. The distribution of Islanders who participated in the survey adjusted to the total population in each county in 2019.**

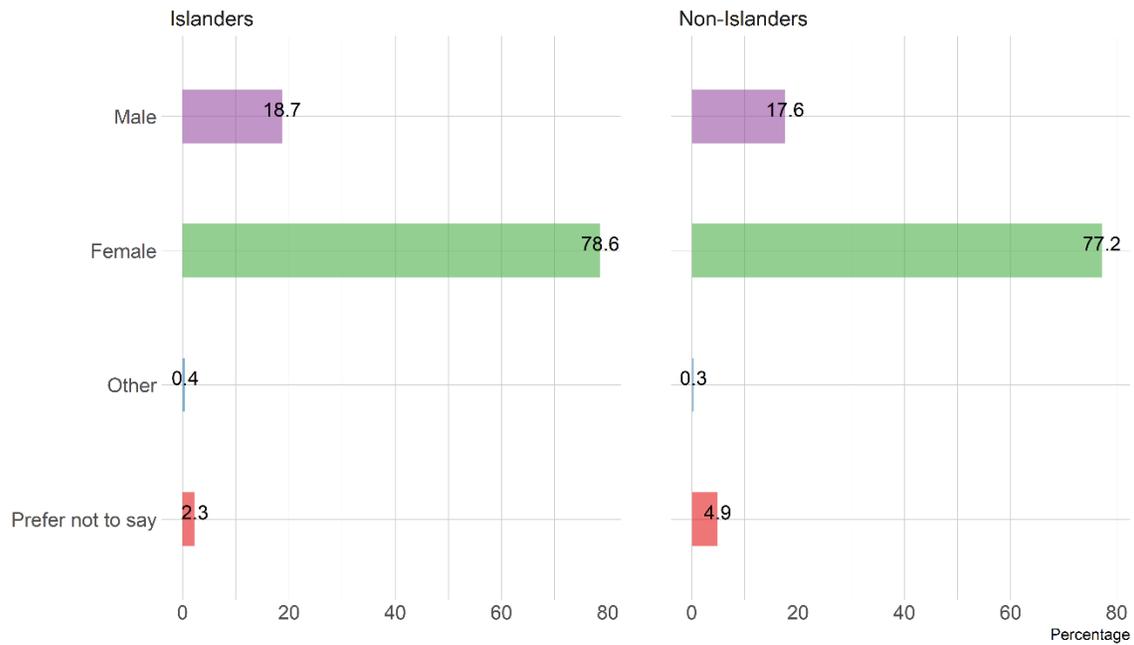
PEI Counties	Total population <sup>1</sup>	Number	%
Kings	18,382	322	1.8
Queens	92,178	1523	1.7
Prince	46,387	621	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>156,947</b>	<b>2,466</b>	<b>1.6</b>

<sup>2</sup> Government of PEI Annual Statistical Review 2019.  
<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/publication/annual-statistical-review>

## Gender

More than three quarters of the survey participants were female (**Figure 2.3**). Females generally have greater concern for animal welfare than males, which may explain why females were more likely to participate in the survey<sup>3</sup>.

**Figure 2.3. Gender of the survey participants**

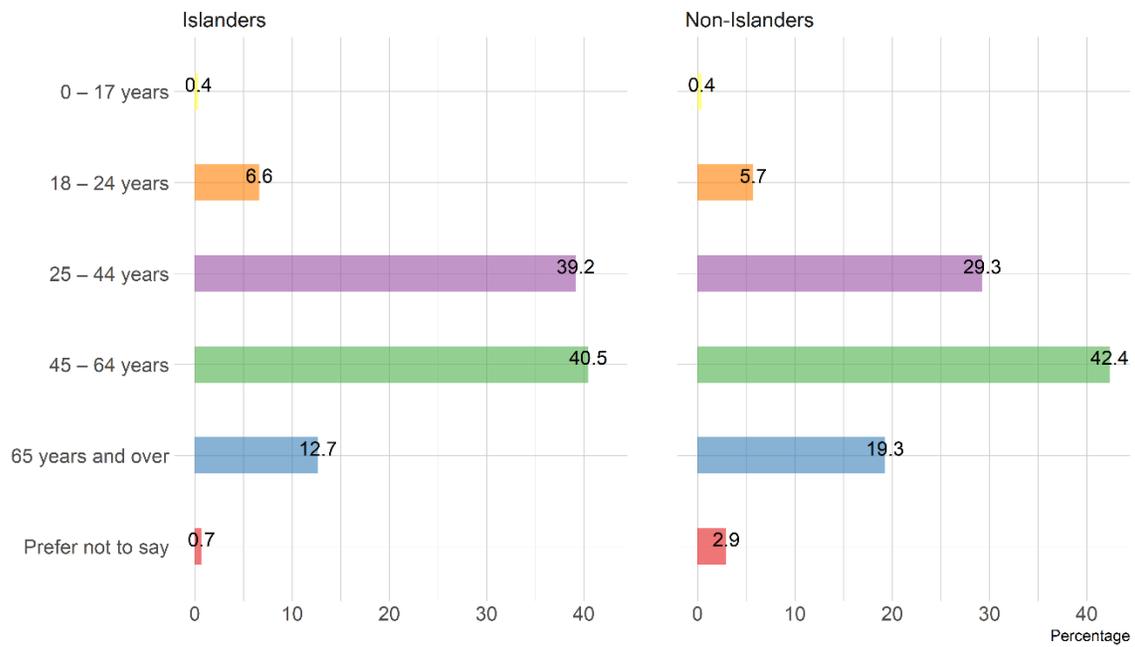


<sup>3</sup> Phillips, C.; Izmirli, S.; Aldavood, J.; Alonso, M.; Choe, B.; Hanlon, A.; Handziska, A.; Illmann, G.; Keeling, L.; Kennedy, M.; Lee, G.; Lund, V.; Mejdell, C.; Pelagic, V.; Rehn, T. An International Comparison of Female and Male Students' Attitudes to the Use of Animals. *Animals* 2011, 1, 7-26.

## Age Groups

The highest proportion of respondents self-identified as 25-44 years or 45 to 65 years old. (Figure 2.4).

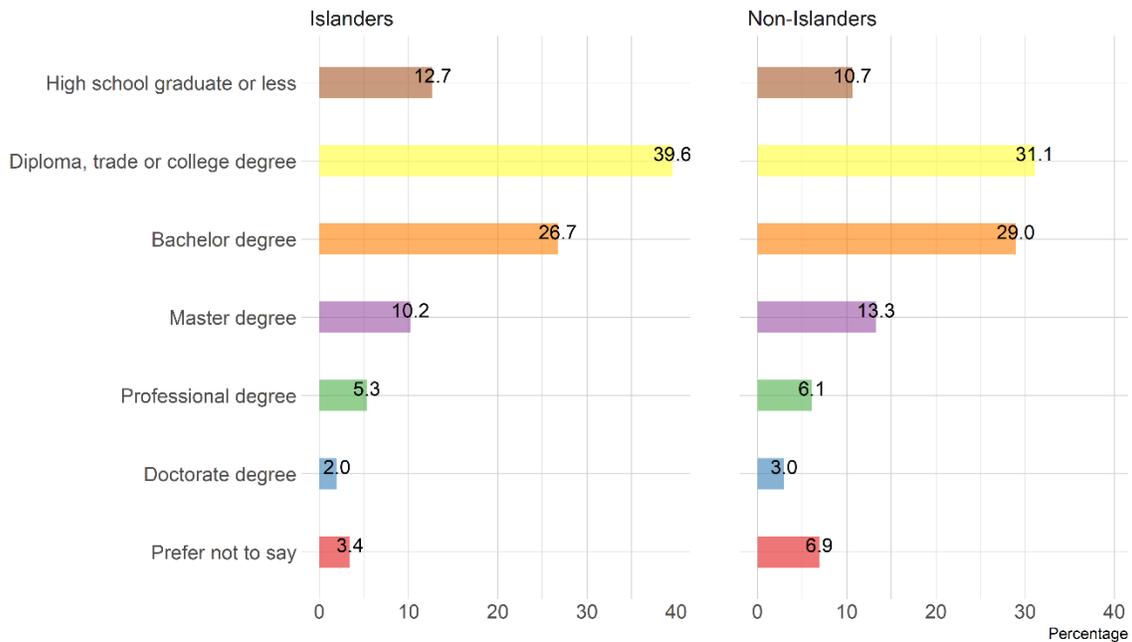
**Figure 2.4. Age groups of the survey participants**



## Level of Education

The highest proportion of Islanders (39.6%) and non-Islanders (31.1%) had completed diplomas, trade or college degrees (**Figure 2.5**). A substantial proportion of all survey respondents had university level education.

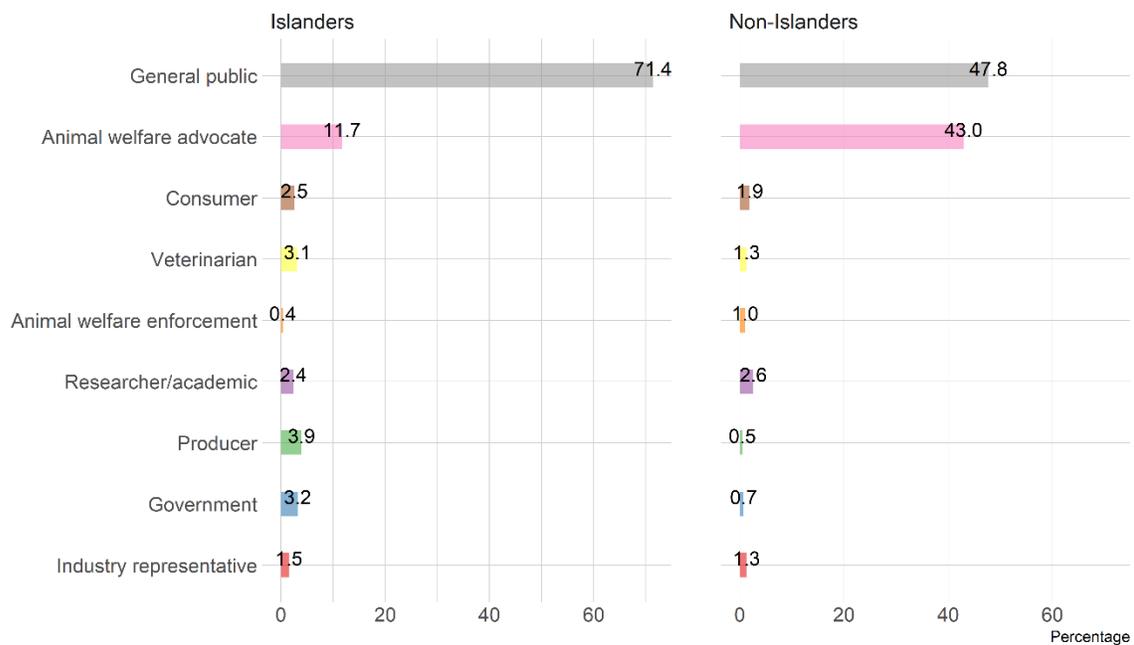
**Figure 2.5. Level of education of survey participants**



## Self-Identified Background

As demonstrated in **Figure 2.6**, 71.4% of Islanders and 47.8% of non-Islanders considered themselves as the general public. In total, 43% of non-Islanders classified themselves as animal welfare advocates, which is significantly higher than the Islander proportion (11.7%). The high proportion of Islanders who consider themselves as the general public is valuable in that the survey's intent was to garner information on the knowledge and concerns of everyday Islanders on the topic of animal welfare.

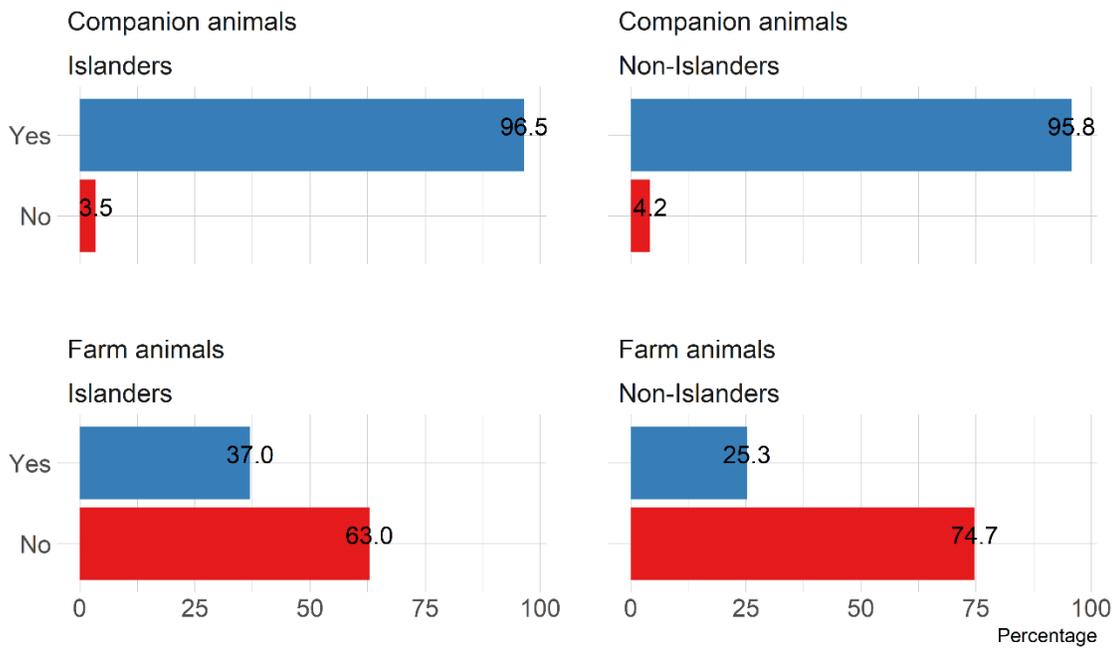
**Figure 2.6. Self-identified background of survey participants**



## Animal Interaction Status

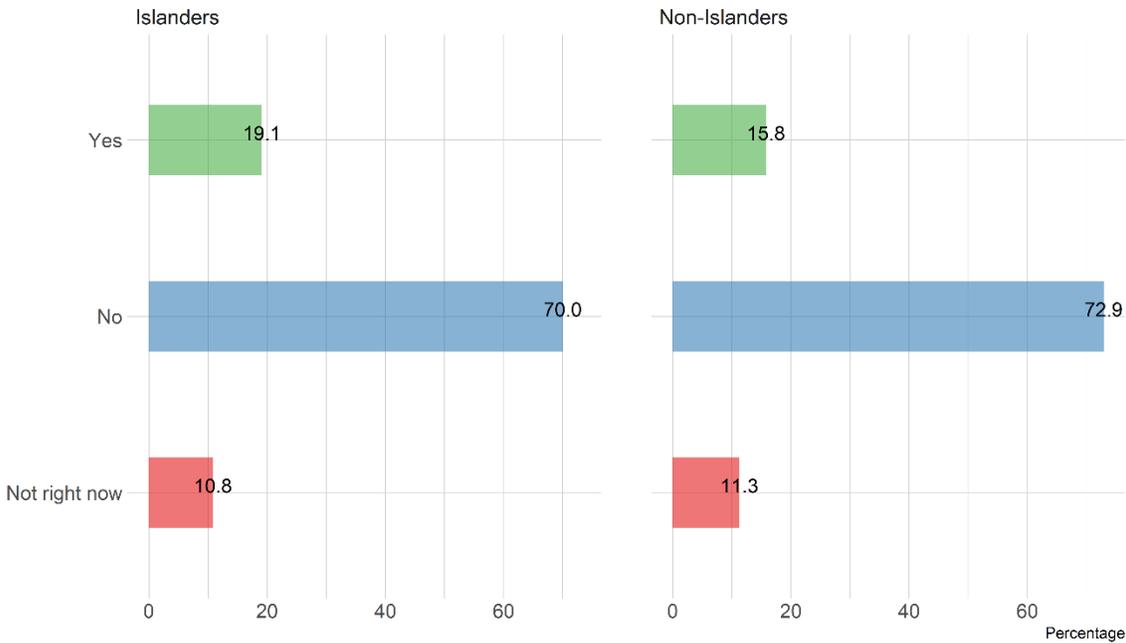
Survey participants were asked if they have had companion or farm animals now or in the past. Almost all Islanders and non-Islanders have or have had companion animals. In contrast, only 37% of Islanders and 25.3% of non-Islanders had farm animals, including horses (Figure 2.7).

**Figure 2.7. Survey participants who had companion or farm animals**



When participants were asked if they interact with animals as part of their job or business, over two thirds of Islanders and non-Islanders indicated that they did not interact with animals as part of their job or business (**Figure 2.8**). Companion animal ownership has been on the rise in North America over the last decade, and it is expected that people with interest in animals and who care for animals would be more engaged in a survey about animal welfare.

**Figure 2.8. Interaction of survey participants with animals as part of their job or business.**



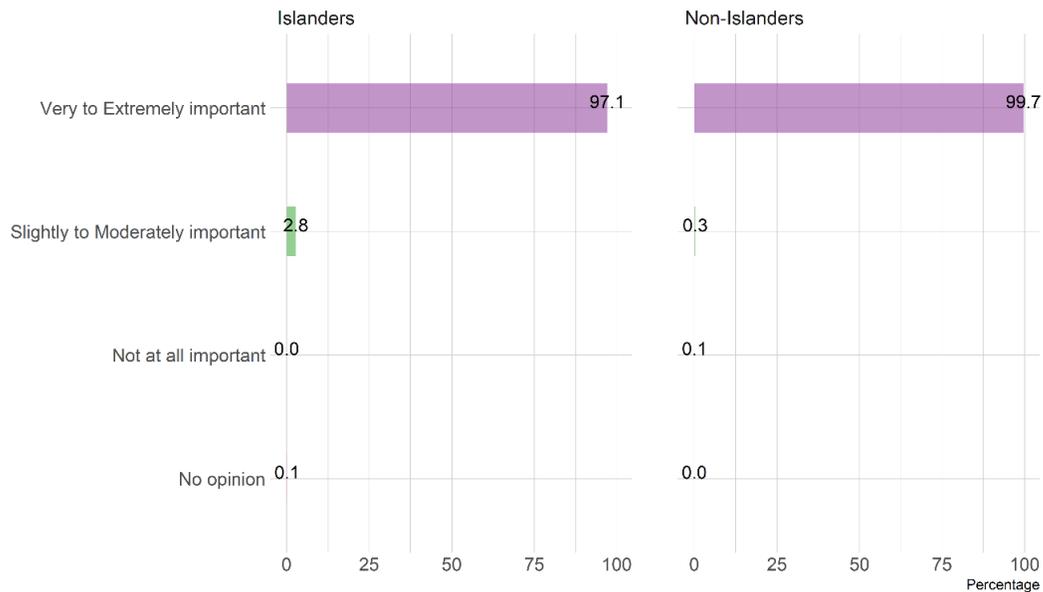
**Section 3:  
Animal Welfare in PEI**



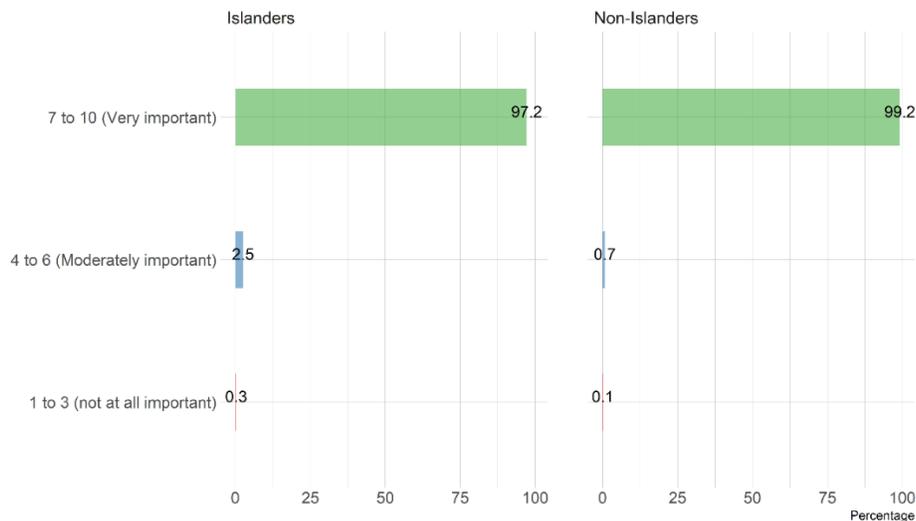
## Importance of Animal Welfare and Protection

Almost all respondents indicated that animal welfare is very to extremely important (**Figure 3.1**), and the protection of animal welfare is very important (**Figure 3.2**). This high proportion is expected as people who are concerned about animal welfare are most likely to engage with the survey and take the time to complete it.

**Figure 3.1. Animal welfare importance to survey participants**



**Figure 3.2. Importance of animal welfare protection to survey participants**

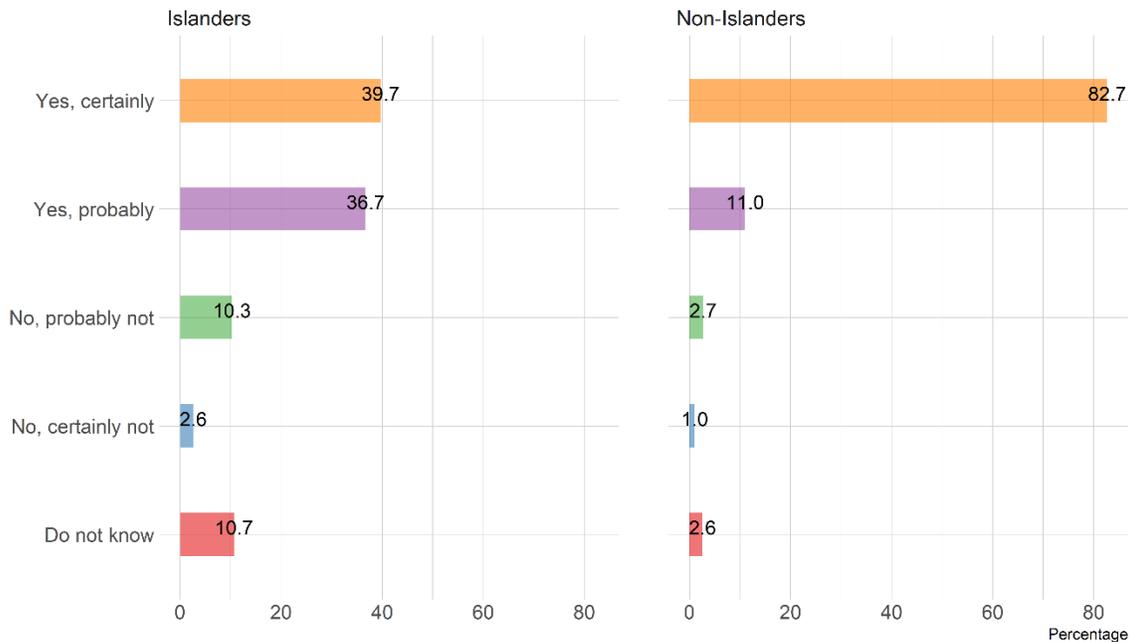


## Improvement of Animal Welfare on PEI

In order to have a better understanding of survey participants' opinions about the improvement of animal welfare on PEI, participants were asked if farm and companion animal welfare on PEI needs to be improved.

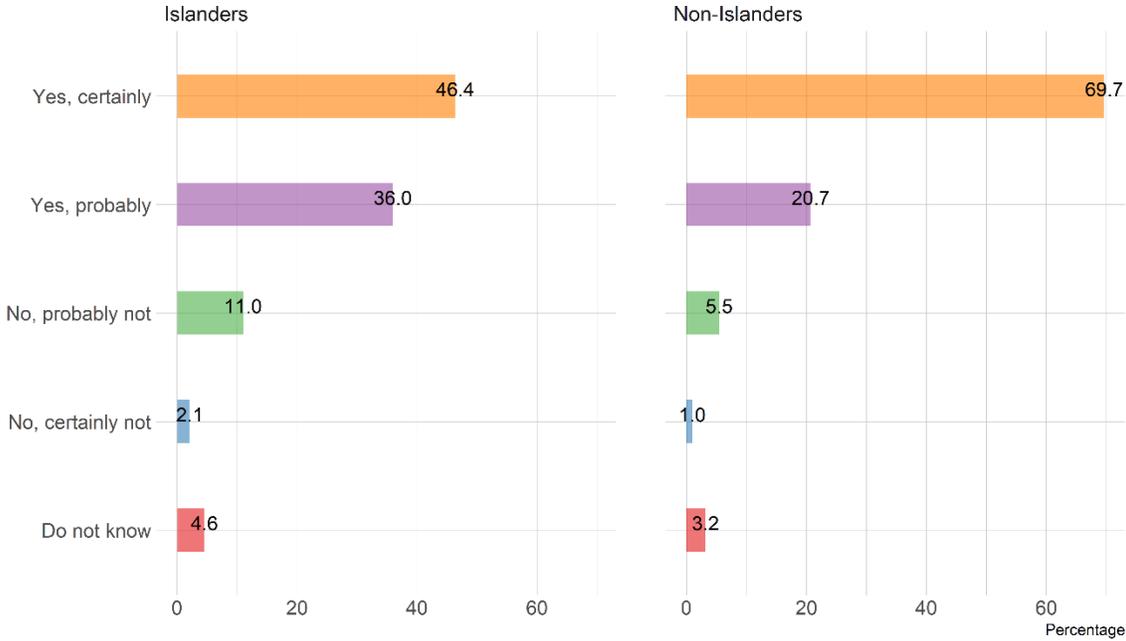
In total, 76.4% of Islanders and 93.7% of non-Islanders thought that the welfare of farm animals certainly or probably needs improvement (**Figure 3.3**). This relatively high proportion of Islanders who feel that farm animal welfare should be improved indicates that there is room for improving public trust and in public understanding of the many programs already in place with the aims of improving industry welfare standards and that focused work needs to continue to build awareness of the NFACC codes of practice for livestock.

**Figure 3.3. Improvement of farm animal welfare on PEI to survey participants**



**Figure 3.4** illustrates that 82.4% of Islanders and 90.4% of non-Islanders thought that the welfare of companion animals certainly or probably needs improvement. Based on the comments received, Islanders would like to see more laws and policies pertaining to puppy mills.

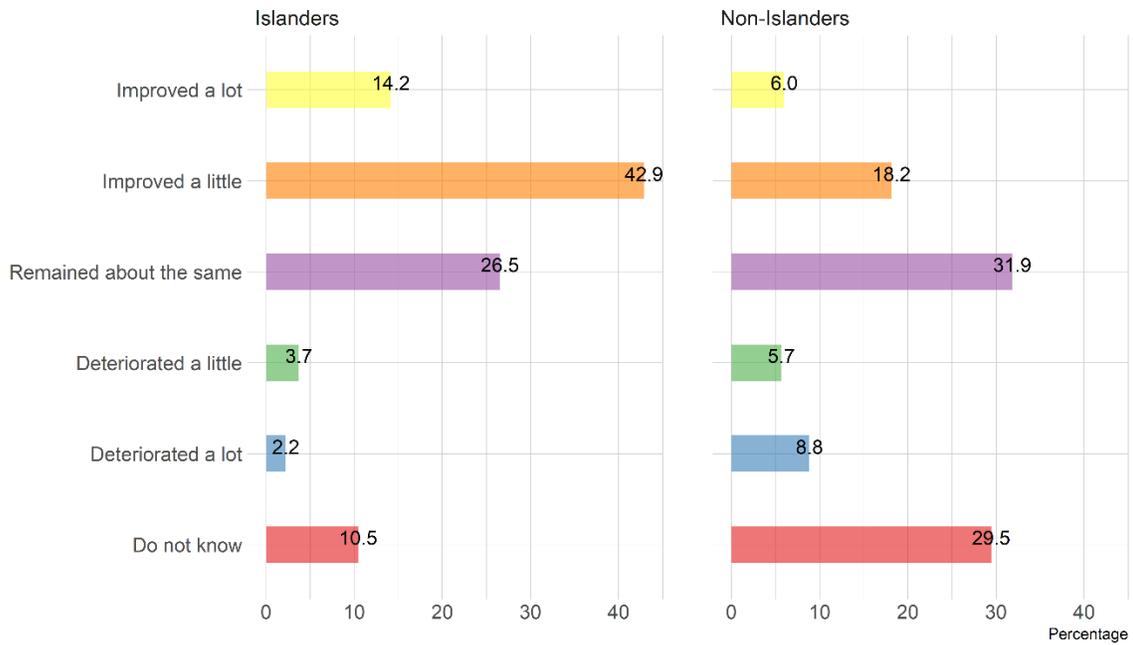
**Figure 3.4. Improvement of companion animal welfare on PEI to survey participants**



More than 50% of Islanders thought that animal welfare on PEI has been improved; either a little or a lot over the last 10 years (**Figure 3.5**). This may be based on personal experience or the introduction of new animal welfare legislation on PEI in 2017. However, the relatively high proportion of Islanders who still felt both farm and companion animal welfare needed

improvement indicates we have made strides in the right direction, but more work is still to be done through policy, communication, education, training, and enforcement.

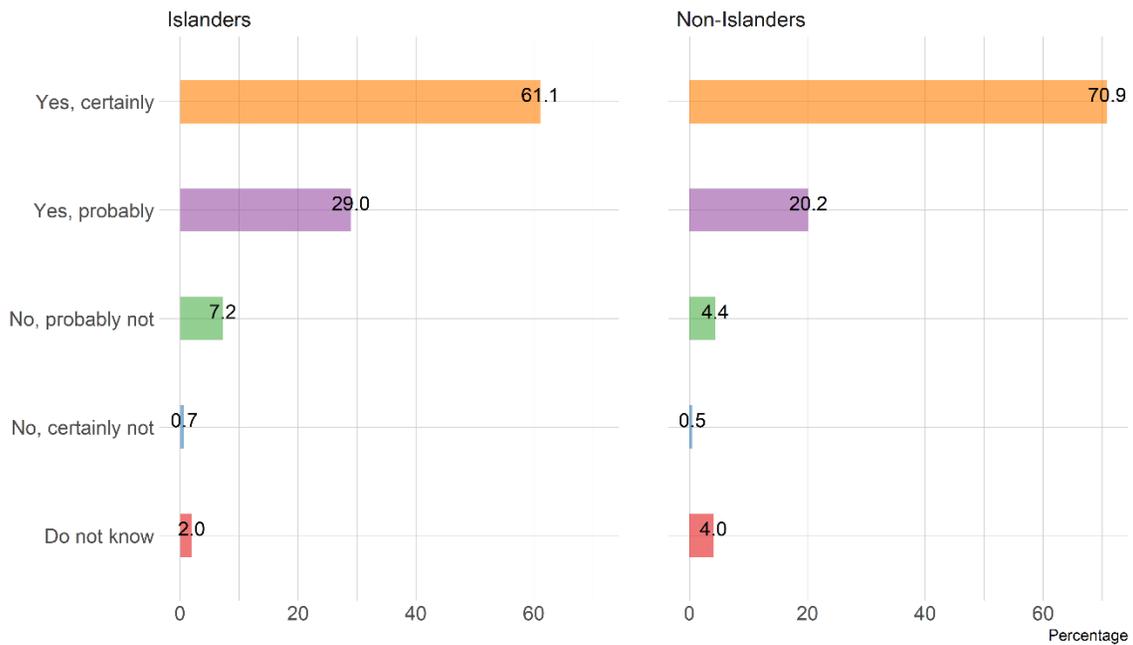
**Figure 3.5. Improvement of animal welfare on PEI in the last 10 years to survey participants**



## Sources of Animal Welfare Information on PEI

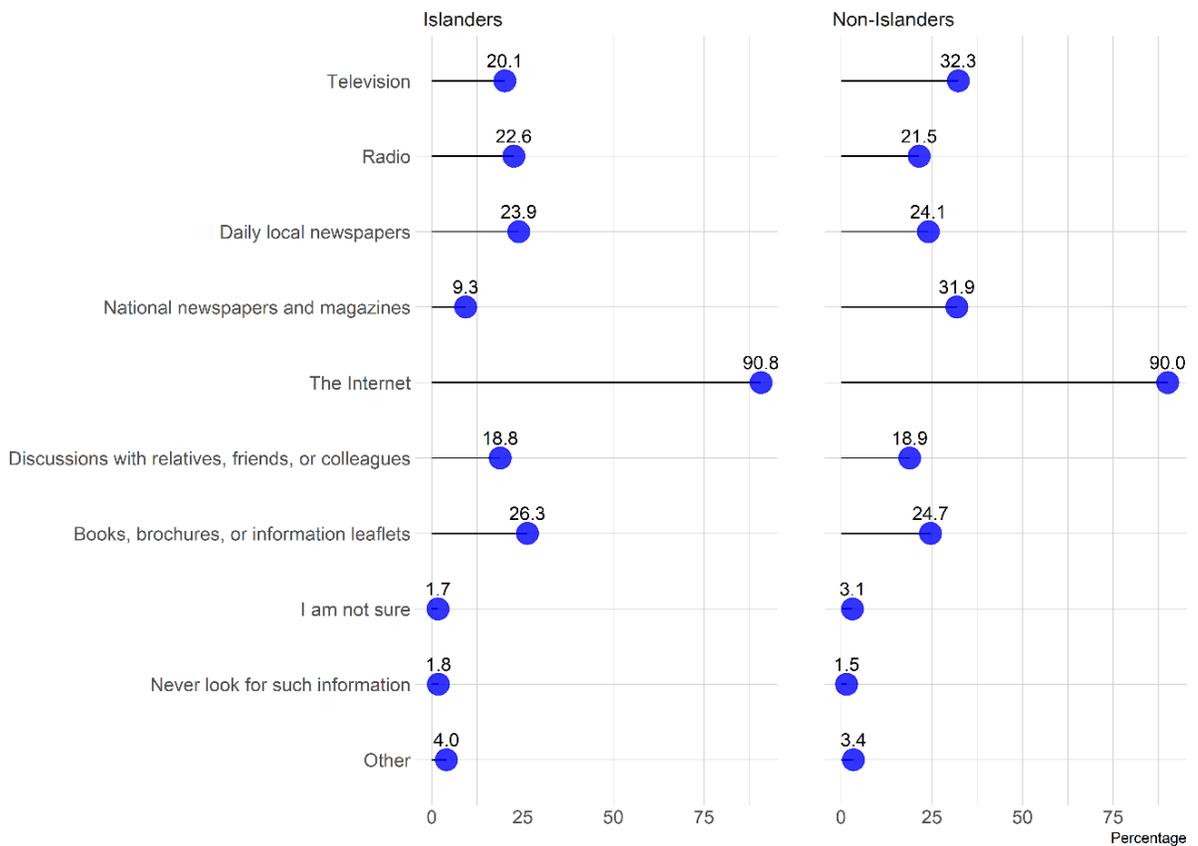
When the survey participants were asked if they would like to be more informed about the animal welfare laws on PEI, approximately 90% of participants are interested in being more informed (**Figure 3.6**).

**Figure 3.6. Survey participants like to be more informed about animal welfare laws on PEI**



As shown in **Figure 3.7**, most Islanders indicated that they are looking for animal welfare law information on the internet (90.8%), followed by books (26.3%) and daily local newspapers (23.9%). Similarly, non-Islanders are also looking on the internet (90%) to get information about animal welfare laws, followed by television and national newspapers and magazines (32%). These results are a good indication that communication through these sources could be improved so that Islanders might feel better informed and confident about Island animal welfare.

**Figure 3.7. Sources of information about animal welfare laws on PEI for survey participants**



Furthermore, the word cloud of comments added under the category "other" showed that when Islanders looked on the internet, they searched for the humane society and government websites to get information about animal welfare laws (**Figure 3.8.a**). However, non-Islanders looked mainly at Animal Justice and government websites (**Figure 3.8.b**).

**Figure 3.8: Word cloud comments for sources of animal welfare information by (a) Islanders (n = 98) and (b) non-Islanders (n = 50).**<sup>4</sup>

a)



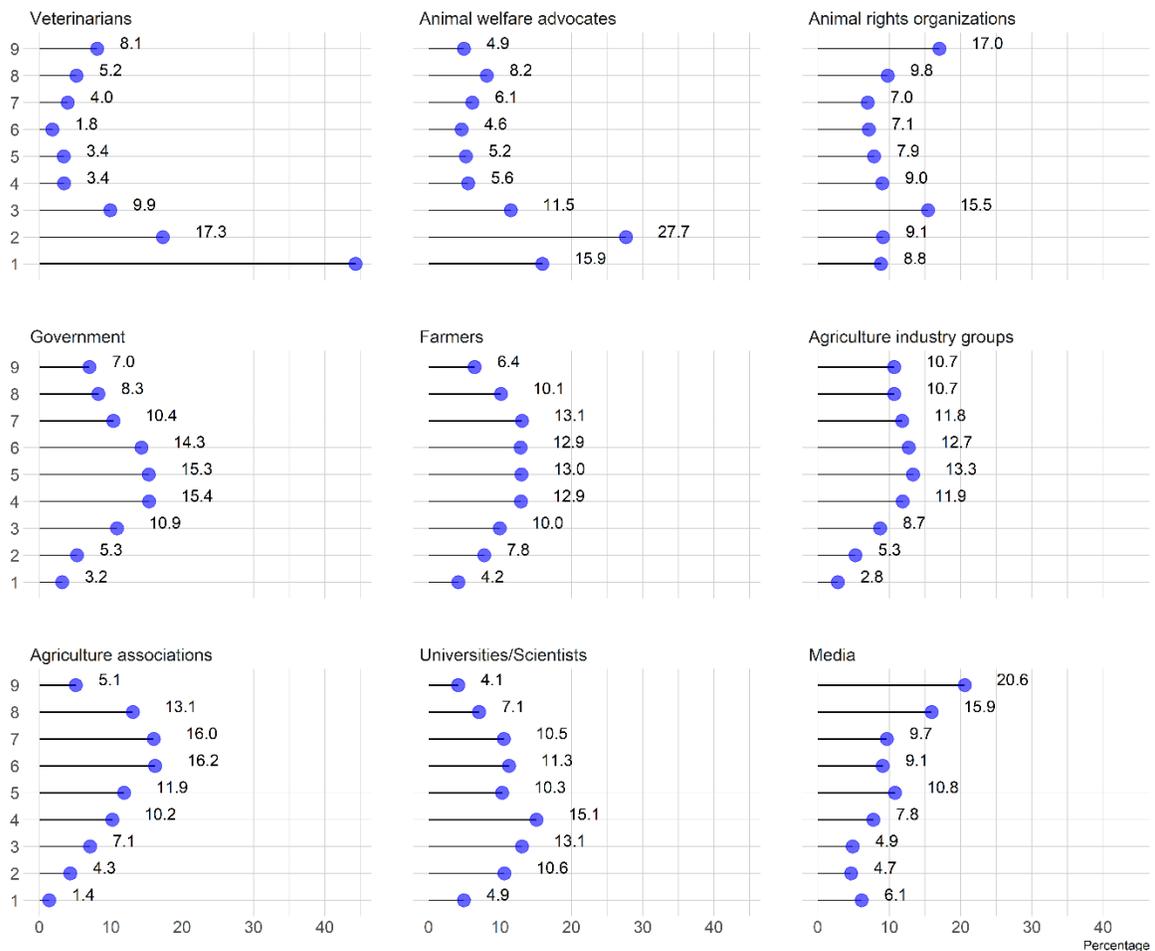
(b)



<sup>4</sup> The words appearing in larger types were used most frequently

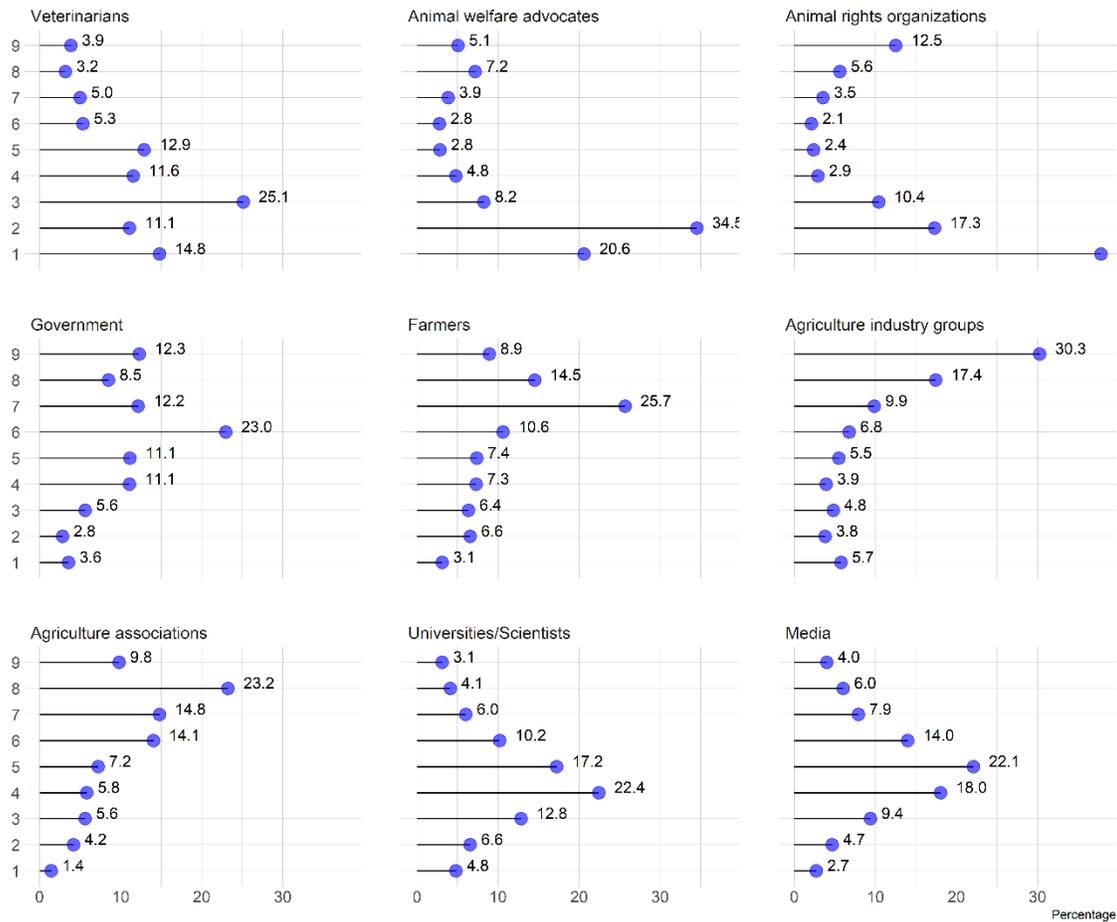
The survey participants were given the opportunity to indicate their most trusted sources from which to get accurate animal welfare information. Islanders considered veterinarians (44%) as the most trusted source to get accurate animal welfare information, followed by animal welfare advocates (27.7%) and considered media (20.6%) and animal rights organizations (17%) as the least trust sources (**Figure 3.9.a**).

**Figure 3.9.a. Most trusted sources of animal welfare information for Islanders**



Non-Islanders considered animal rights organization (38%) as the most trusted source to get accurate animal welfare information followed by animal welfare advocates (34.5%) and veterinarians (25.1%) and consider agriculture industry groups (30.3%) as the least trusted source (Figure 3.9.b).

**Figure 3.9.b. Most trusted sources of animal welfare information for non-Islanders**



In seeing the large proportion of respondents who chose veterinarians as a trusted source of animal welfare information, a stronger tie between policy makers, regulators and practicing veterinarians is critical. Collaborations between government, the Humane Society, the PEI Veterinary Medical Association and Atlantic Veterinary College should be promoted and encouraged to ensure the most up-to-date information pertaining to welfare standards is

shared and discussed. A current example of such a collaboration includes CAWI (Companion Animal Welfare Initiative) comprised of representatives from the PEI Humane Society, Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre, the Cat Action Team, Spay Aid PEI and the Department of Agriculture and Land.

Furthermore, continuing education offerings with welfare focuses should be developed for veterinarians to share current information. On PEI, we see that Islanders are searching the Humane Society's website for animal welfare information and see animal welfare advocates as trusted sources of information. Having such organizations share links to reliable animal welfare information for Islanders should be promoted and continued.

**Section 4:  
Reporting Animal Welfare  
Concerns in PEI**



## Farm Animal Welfare Concerns

Half of Islanders would call the local Humane Society or Provincial Government (DAL) if they had farm animal welfare concerns (**Figure 4.1**). Two-thirds of non-Islanders would call the local Humane Society, followed by police (33.2%). These

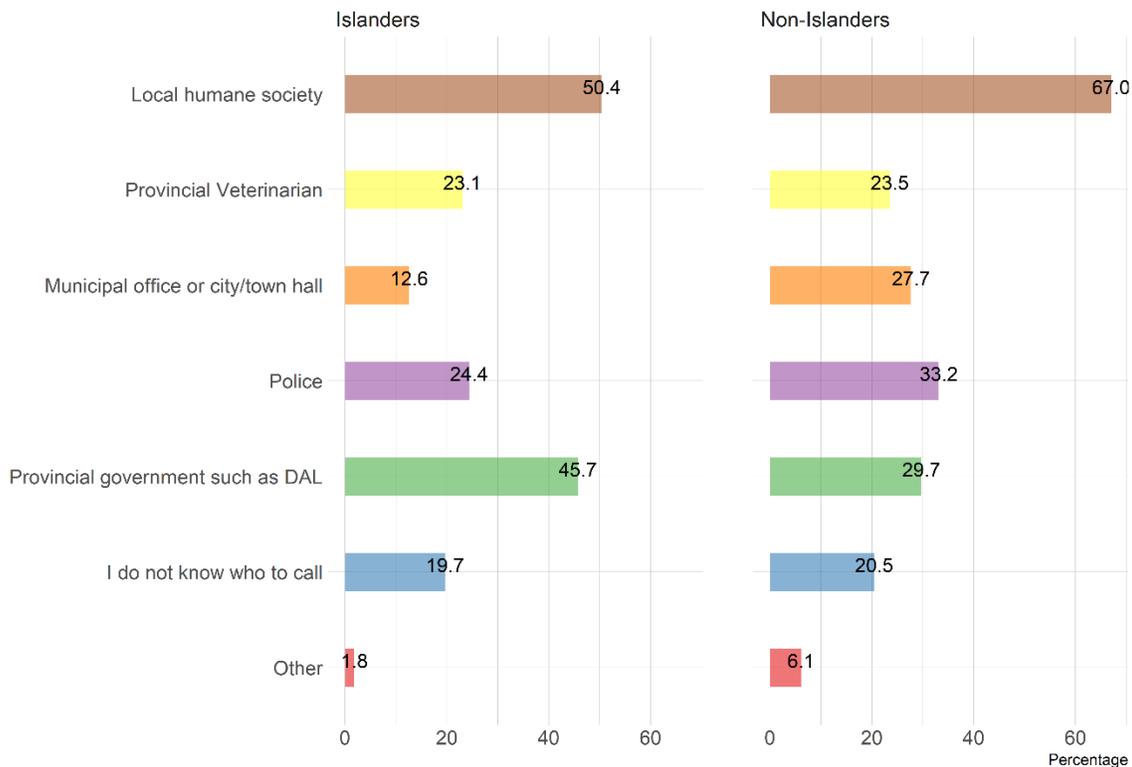
responses seem to indicate a reasonably good understanding by Islanders as to who has the authority to respond to and investigate farm animal welfare concerns on PEI. The Department of Agriculture and Land is responsible for investigating farm animal concerns, while the local Humane Society responds to concerns involving companion animals. Despite the relatively good understanding above, having almost 20% of Islanders indicate they did not know whom to call shows a need to publicize this information better.

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*Farm animal welfare concerns should be reported to the Department of Agriculture and Land at [req@gov.pe.ca](mailto:req@gov.pe.ca) or by calling 902-368-4880.*

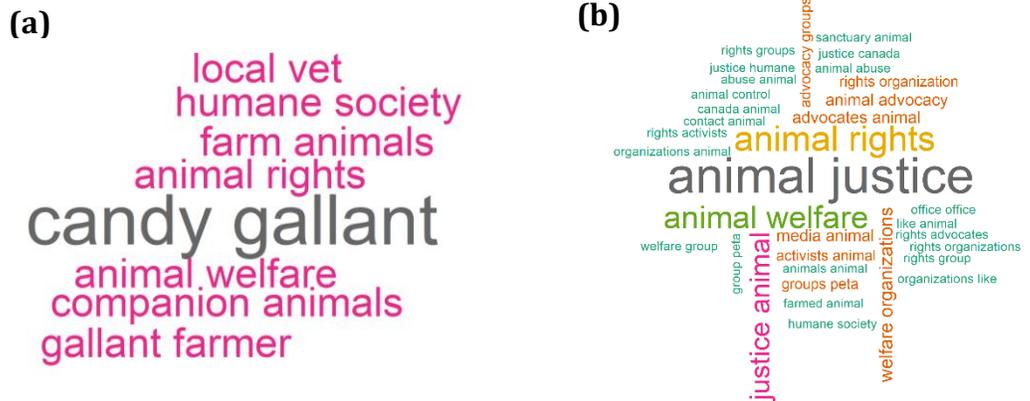
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**Figure 4.1. Reporting farm animal welfare concerns on PEI**



In addition to the provided choices, Islander and non-Islander participants indicated that they would contact Candy Gallant (**Figure 4.2.a**) and Animal Justice and Welfare Organizations (**Figure 4.2.b**) if they had concerns about farm animal welfare, respectively. Ms. Gallant is a well-known wildlife enthusiast and frequently assists ill or injured wildlife. Clearly, some members of the public are aware of this and would turn to her when they have a concern about this particular population of Island animals.

**Figure 4.2. Word cloud comments to report farm animal concerns (a) Islanders (n = 45) and (b) non-Islanders (n = 90).**



## Companion Animal Welfare Concerns

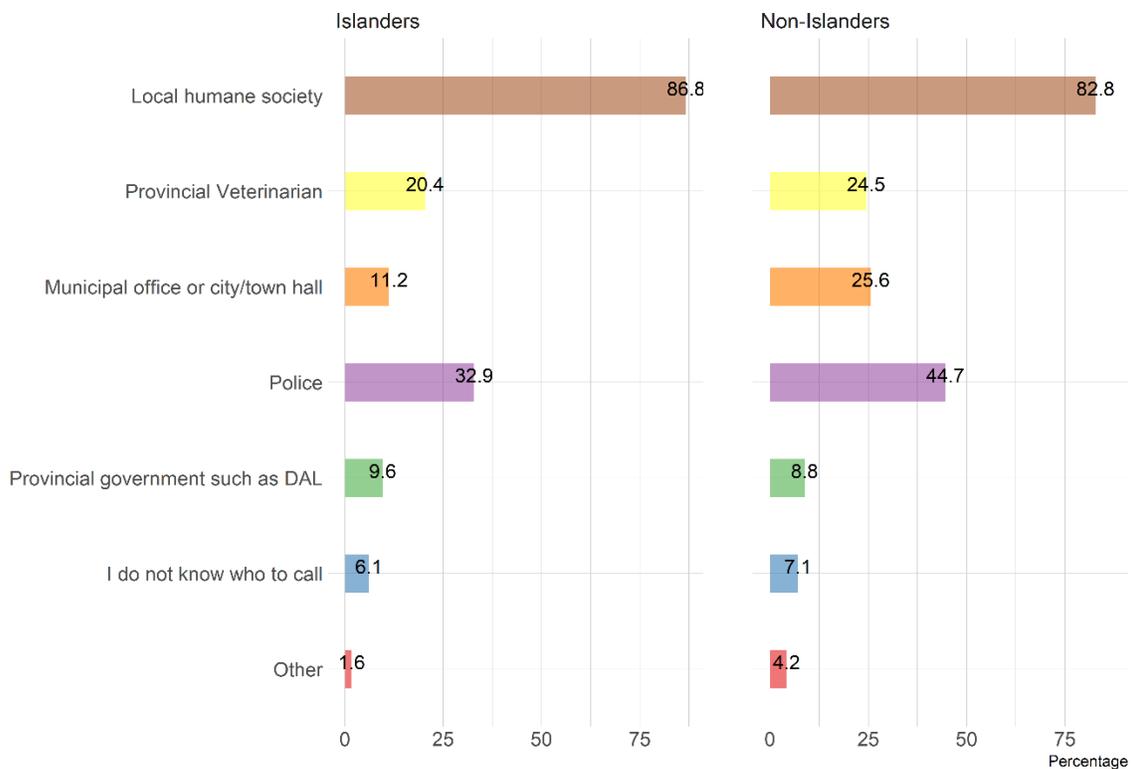
**Figure 4.3** shows that 86.8% of Islanders and 82.8% of non-Islanders would call the local humane society if they had companion animal welfare concerns followed by the police. This shows many Islanders understand the PEI Humane Society has responsibility for investigating and responding to companion animal welfare concerns.

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*Companion animal welfare concerns should be reported to the PEI Humane Society at [info@peihumanesociety.com](mailto:info@peihumanesociety.com) with subject line "ATTN Animal Protection Officer" or by calling **902-892-1190** and ask to speak to an Animal Protection Officer. After hours call **902-892-1191***

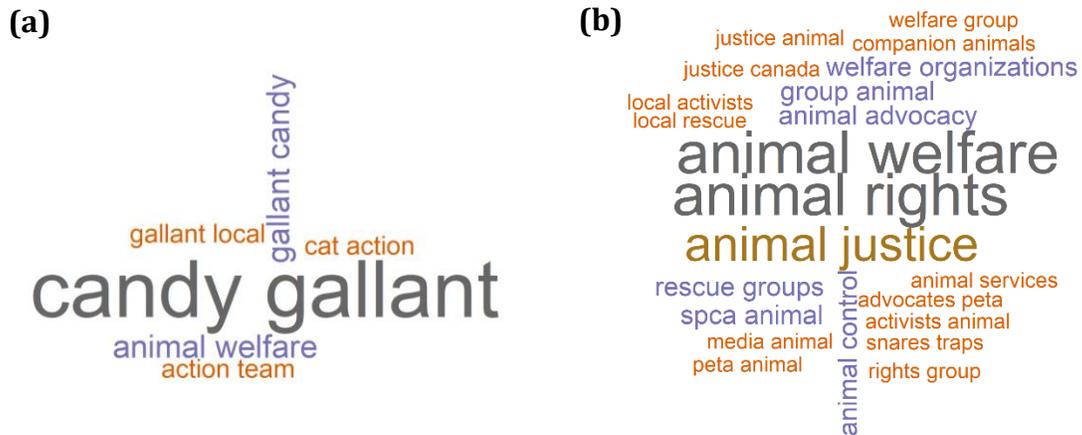
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**Figure 4.3. Reporting companion animal welfare concerns on PEI**



In addition to the selected choices, Candy Gallant would be contacted by Islanders (**Figure 4.4.a**), and animal rights groups/ Animal Justice would be contacted by non-Islanders (**Figure 4.4.b**) if they had concerns about companion animal welfare on PEI. Again, Ms. Gallant is known for her work with animals, and non-Islander animal welfare advocates are likely to consult their own groups.

**Figure 4.4. Word cloud comments to report companion animal concerns (a) Islanders (n = 40) and (b) non-Islanders (n = 62).**



## Exotic Animal Welfare Concerns

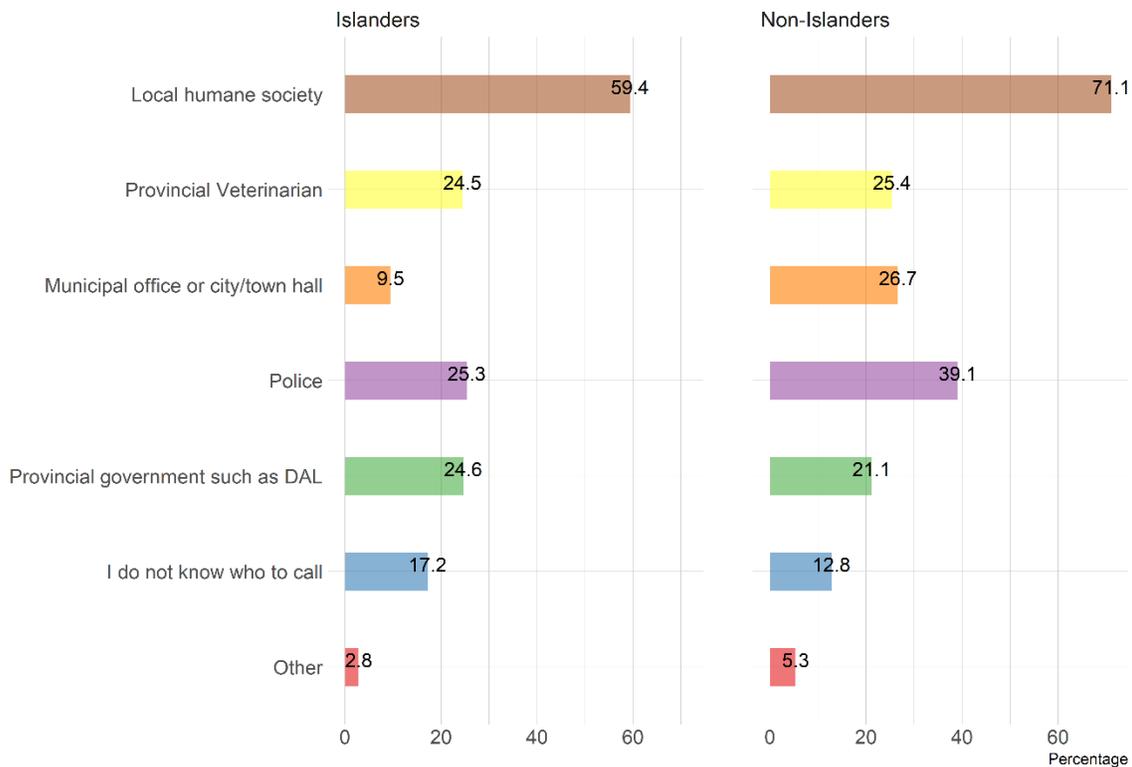
All participants would call the Local Humane Society (59% and 71%) and police (25% and 39%), respectively, if they had exotic animal welfare concerns (**Figure 4.5**). This is clearly an area where additional information for the public is warranted, as the Humane Society does not investigate welfare concerns regarding exotic animals (though they would certainly direct communications to the correct place). In addition, 17% of Islanders said they did not know whom to call.

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*Concerns regarding exotic animal welfare should be directed to the Department of Agriculture and Land at [reg@gov.pe.ca](mailto:reg@gov.pe.ca) or by calling 902-368-4880.*

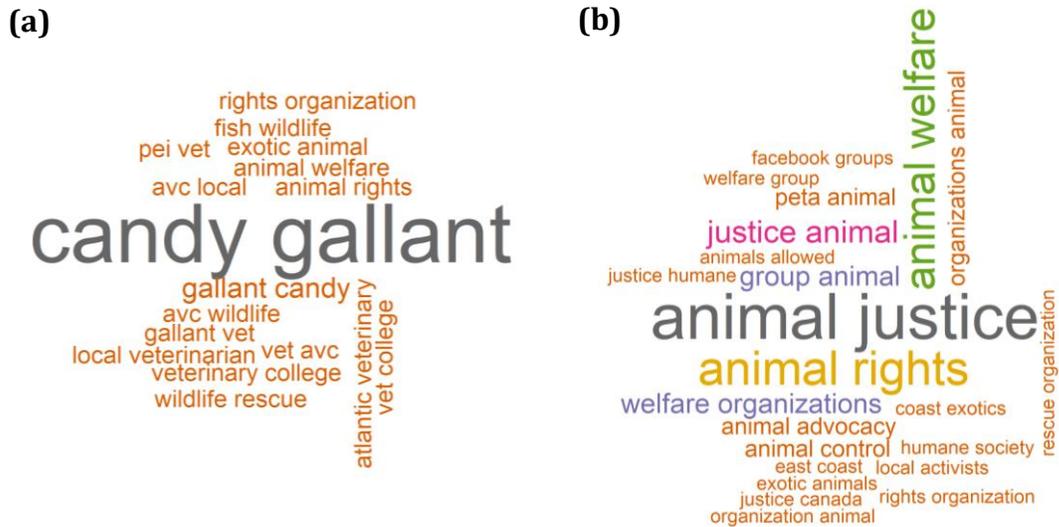
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**Figure 4.5. Reporting companion animal welfare concerns on PEI**



In addition to the selected choices, Candy Gallant would be contacted by Islanders (**Figure 4.6.a**), and animal rights groups/ Animal Justice would be contacted by non-Islanders (**Figure 4.6.b**) if they had concerns about exotic animal welfare on PEI.

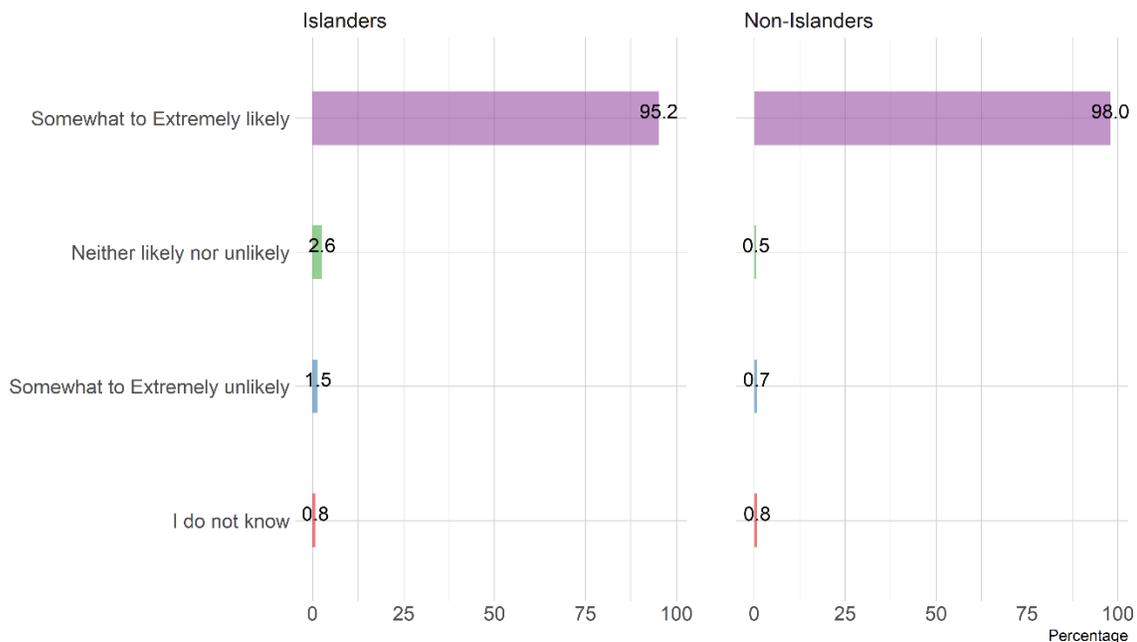
**Figure 4.6. Word cloud comments to report exotic animal concerns (a) Islanders (n = 70) and (b) non-Islanders (n = 79).**



## Reporting a Case of Animal Neglect or Abuse on PEI

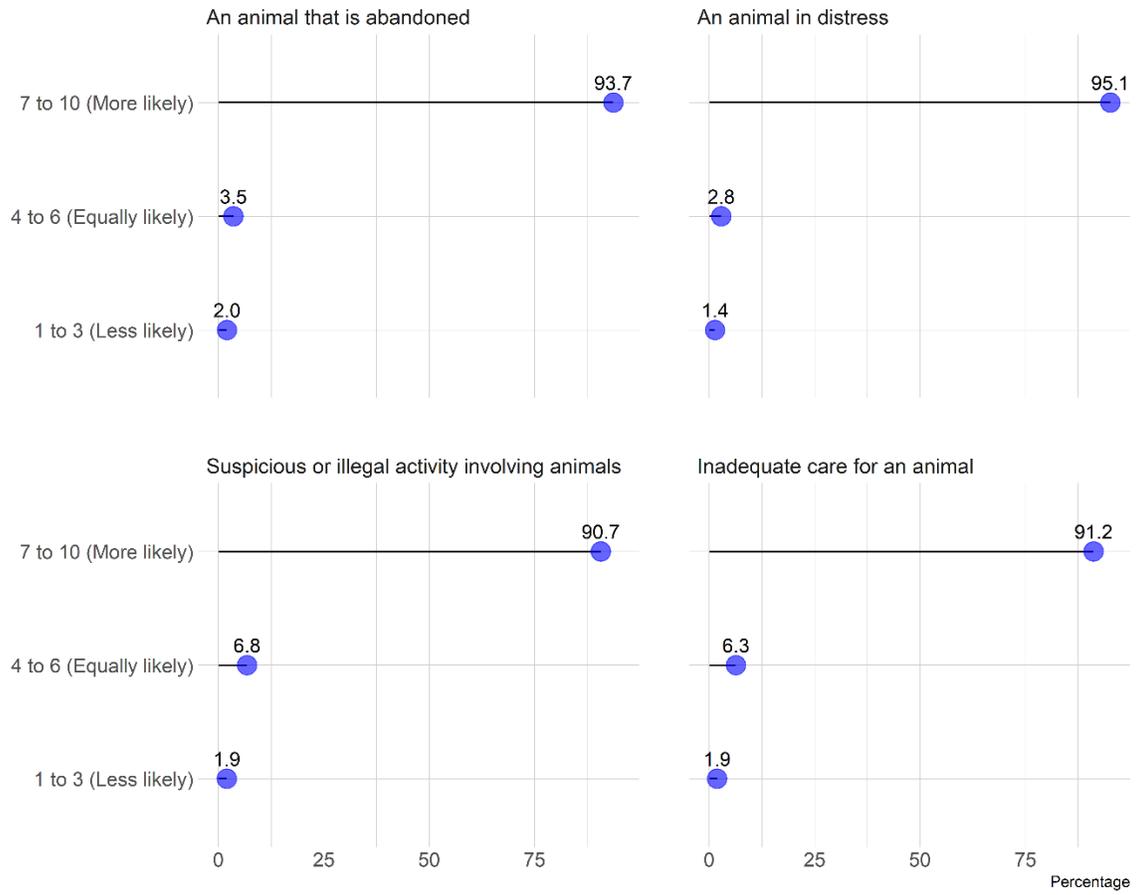
Almost all participants indicated they are somewhat to extremely likely to report a case of animal neglect or abuse (**Figure 4.7**). This high number is not unexpected, given that the individuals reported that animal welfare and protection was important to them.

**Figure 4.7. Reporting a case of animal neglect or abuse on PEI to survey participants**

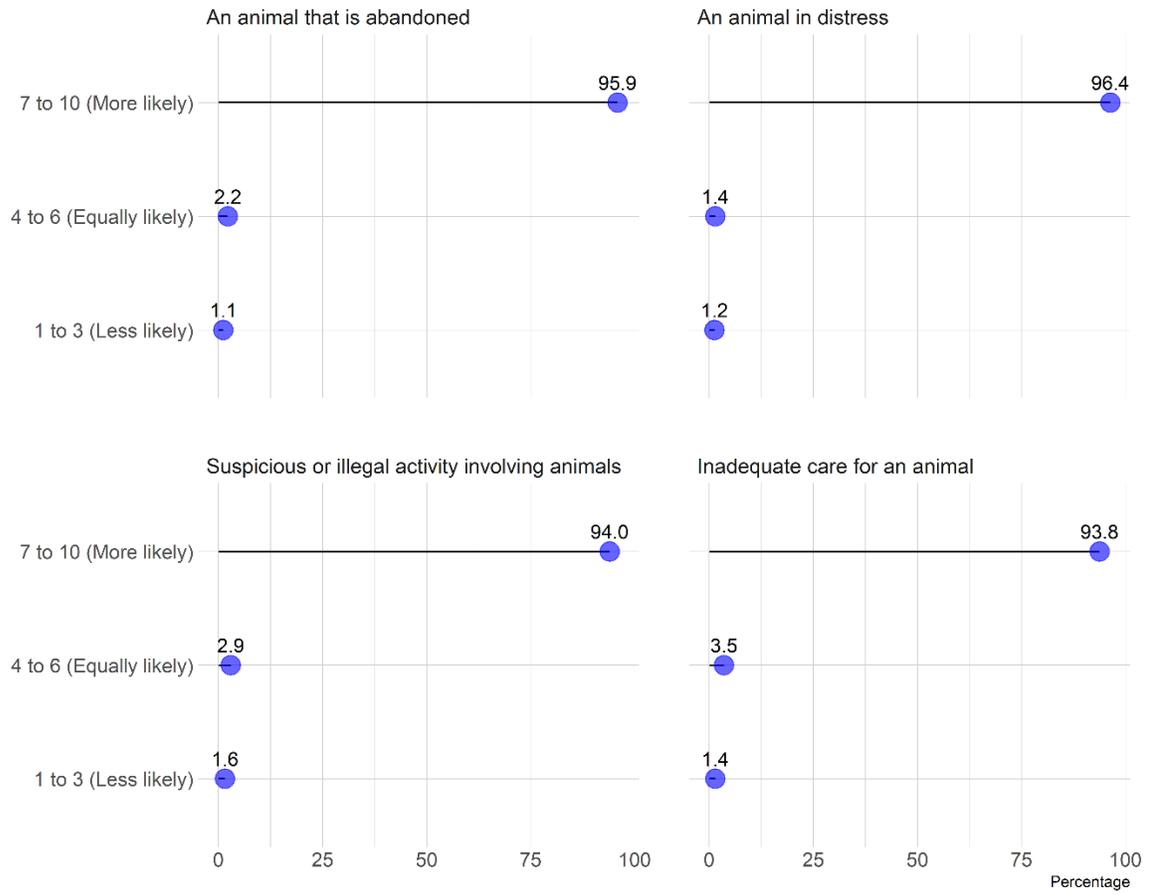


Consistent with the above, participants are likely to report all the listed types of animal abuse or neglect such as: animal in distress, animal abandonment, suspicious or illegal activity involving animals or inadequate care of an animal (Islanders (**Figure 4.8.a**) and non-Islanders (**Figure 4.8.b**)).

**Figure 4.8.a. Reporting cases of animal abuse on PEI -Islanders**

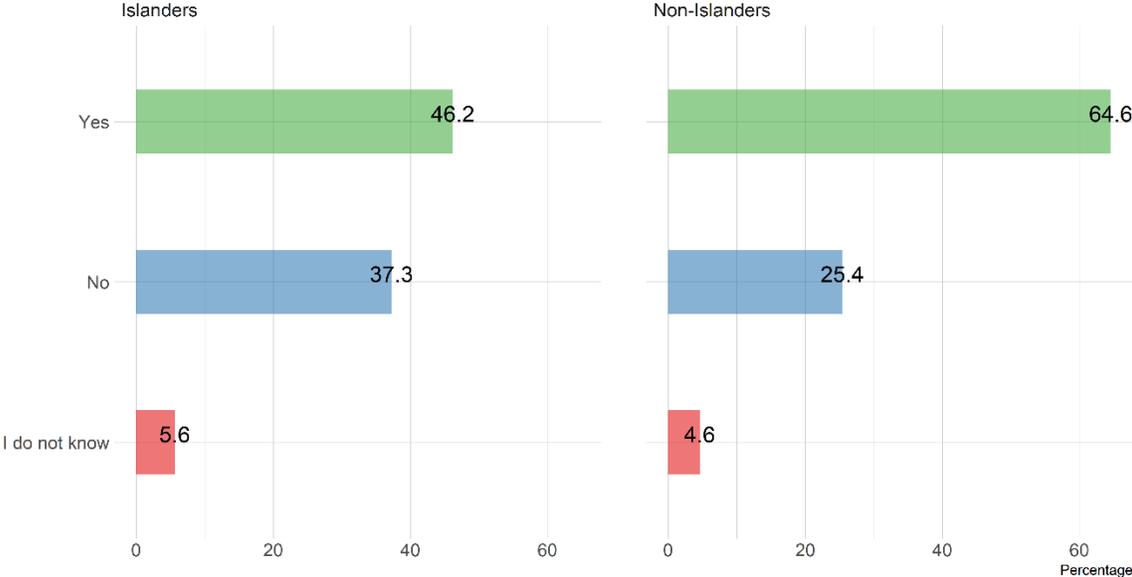


**Figure 4.8.b. Reporting cases of animal abuse on PEI- Non-Islanders**



**Figure 4.9** Approximately half of Islanders and two-thirds of non-Islanders have called to report a concern about animal welfare in the past.

**Figure 4.9. Making a call before about animal welfare concerns by survey participants**



**Section 5:  
Enforcement of Animal  
Welfare Laws in PEI**

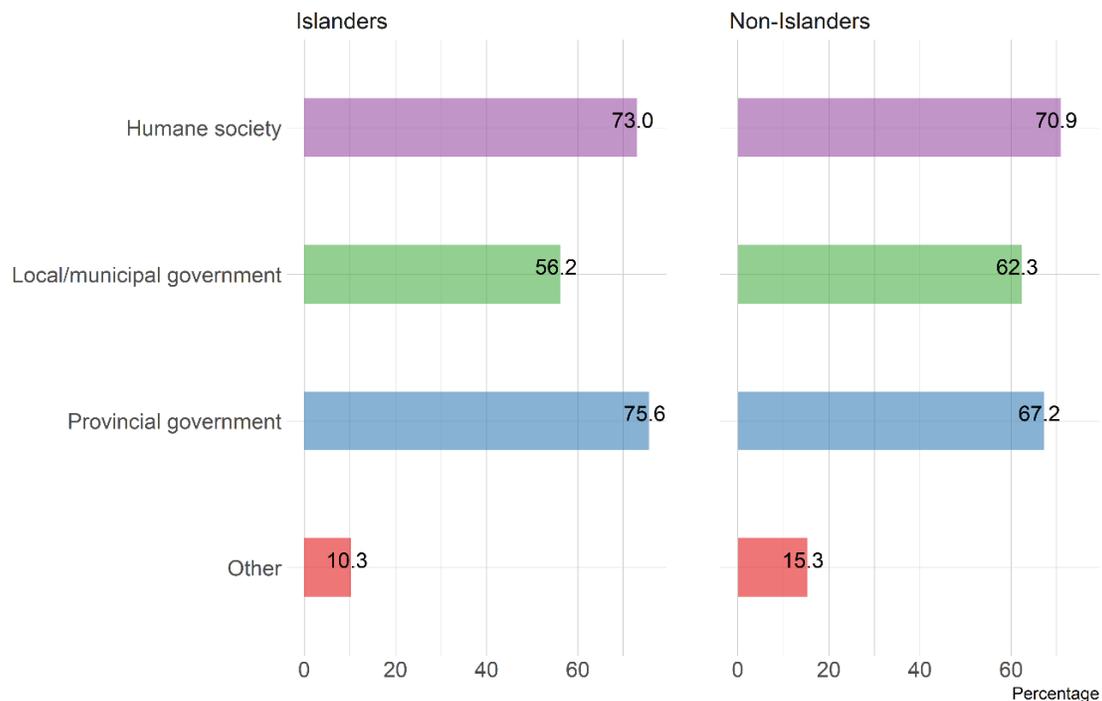


## Enforcement of Animal Welfare Laws

Over 70% of respondents think the Provincial Government or Humane Society should have the power to enforce welfare laws (**Figure 5.1**). In addition, 480 comments were received from participants whose most common suggestion included that the power should be with the police.

The PEI Animal Welfare Act describes, by virtue of their office, that conservation officers, police officers and the provincial veterinarian; in addition to other appointed Animal Protection Officers (APO), have all the powers of an APO.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 5.1. Enforcement of animal welfare laws on PEI to survey participants**

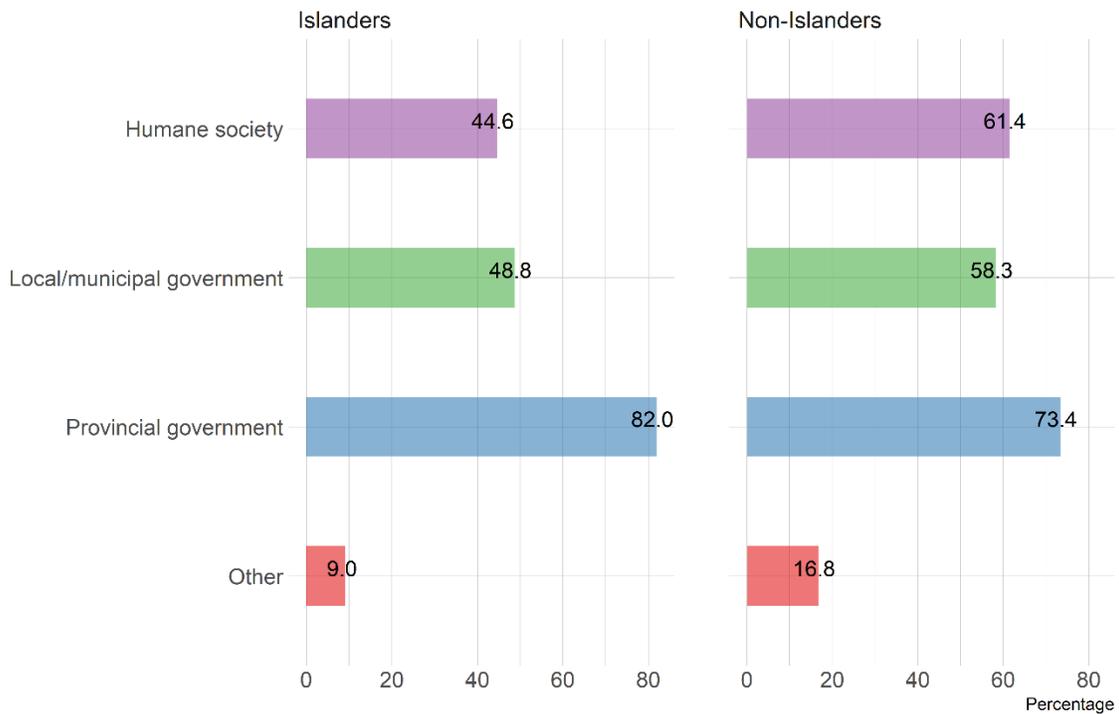


<sup>5</sup> Government of Prince Edward Island Animal Welfare Act April, 2017  
<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/legislation/A-11-2-Animal%20Welfare%20Act.pdf>

## Protection of Farm Animals

Islanders (82%) and non-Islanders (73%) most strongly indicated that the Provincial Government should be responsible for the protection of farm animals, but almost half or slightly more also chose Local/Municipal Governments and the Humane Society as responsible entities (**Figure 5.2**).

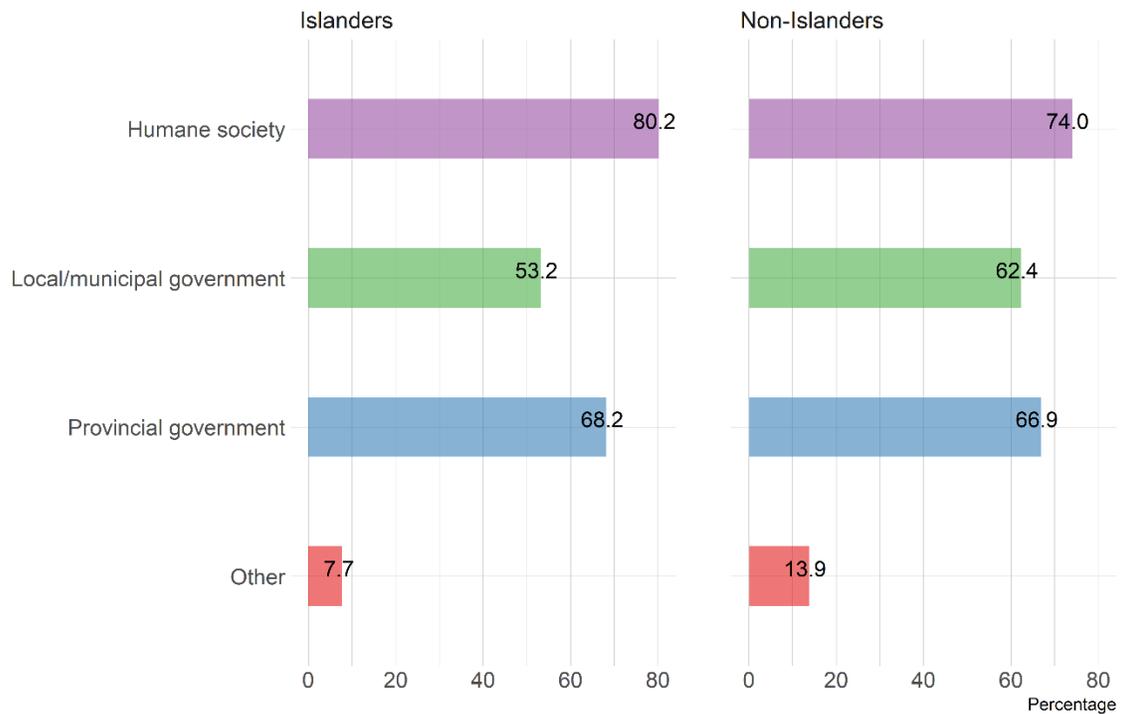
**Figure 5.2. Protection of farm animals on PEI to survey participants**



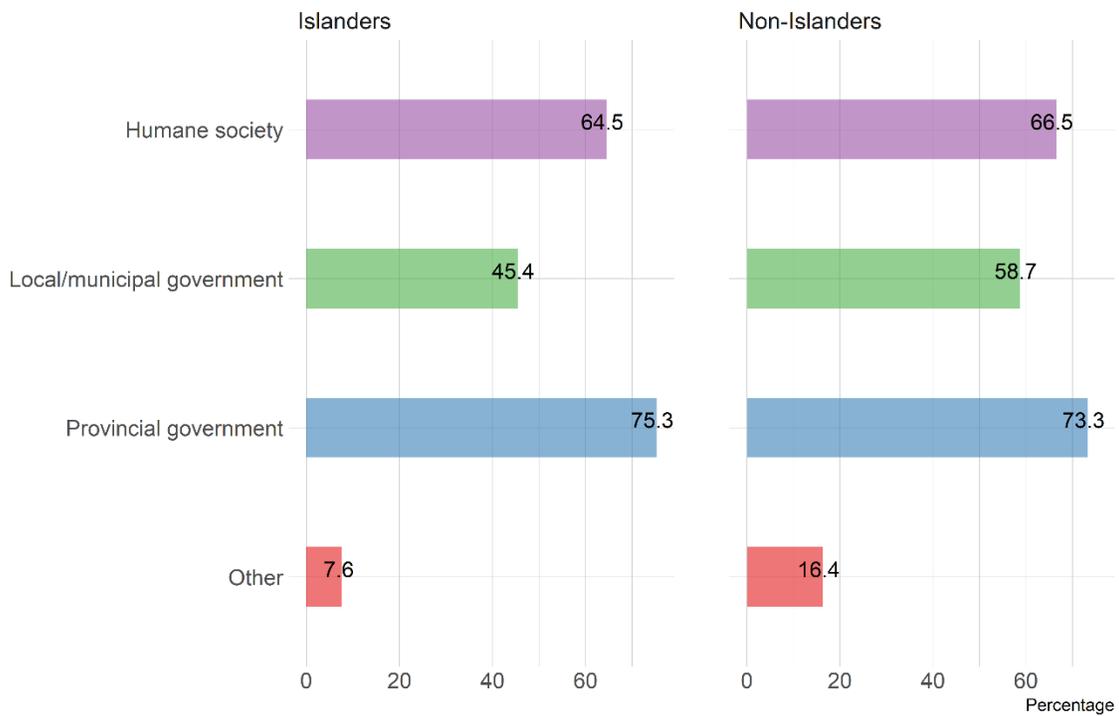
## Protection of Companion and Exotic Animals

Over 70% of respondents think the Humane Society should be responsible for protecting companion animals (**Figure 5.3**), while over 70% think the Provincial government should be responsible for the protection of exotic animals (**Fig 5.4**).

**Figure 5.3. Protection of companion animals on PEI**



**Figure 5.4. Protection of exotic animals on PEI to survey participants**



The high percentages of all protection choices for animals show that various groups and entities can and should play a role in protecting animals on PEI. In addition to that, the received comments (~500 comments) indicated that participants think that the Federal Government or police could be responsible for protecting farm, companion, and exotic animals.

## Role of Organization in Investigating Cases of Animal Abuse

Survey participants were given the opportunity to rank the role of “Government appointed individuals employed by the Humane society, Bylaw Officers authorized by Local/municipal government, Staff employed by Provincial government, Police and Conservation Officers” to investigate animal abuse. The majority of Islanders think that government appointed individuals employed by the Humane Society should have a Primary Role in investigating animal abuse, with most other organizations supporting this work. (Table 5.1). Recognizing that the provincial government has a primary responsibility in investigating farm and exotic animal complaints, there needs to be better communication as to what this entails. A large proportion of participants feel the provincial government staff has a role, but that it is supportive.

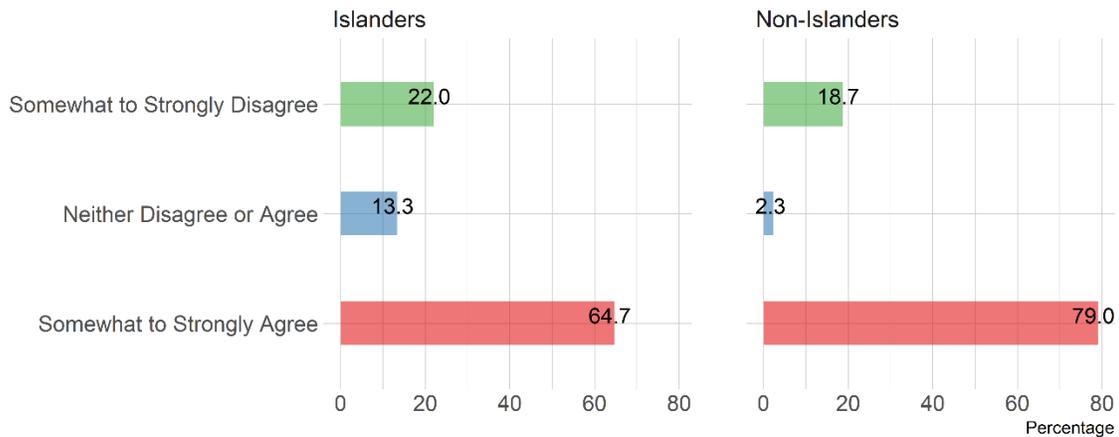
**Table 5.1. Role of organization in investigating cases of animal abuse to survey participants**

	% of Islanders			% of non-Islanders		
	No role	Supportive role	Primary role	No role	Supportive role	Primary role
<b>Government appointed individuals employed by the Humane society</b>	4.8	34.1	61.1	3.8	30.9	65.3
<b>Bylaw Officers authorized by Local/municipal government</b>	6.5	60.7	32.8	6.4	57.0	36.6
<b>Staff employed by Provincial government</b>	12.9	56.9	30.2	13.7	51.5	34.8
<b>Police</b>	7.3	61.7	31.0	6.8	54.0	39.2
<b>Conservation Officers</b>	5.1	42.7	52.2	14.3	41.3	44.4

## Prohibition Sale, Trade and Exhibition of Exotic Animals on PEI

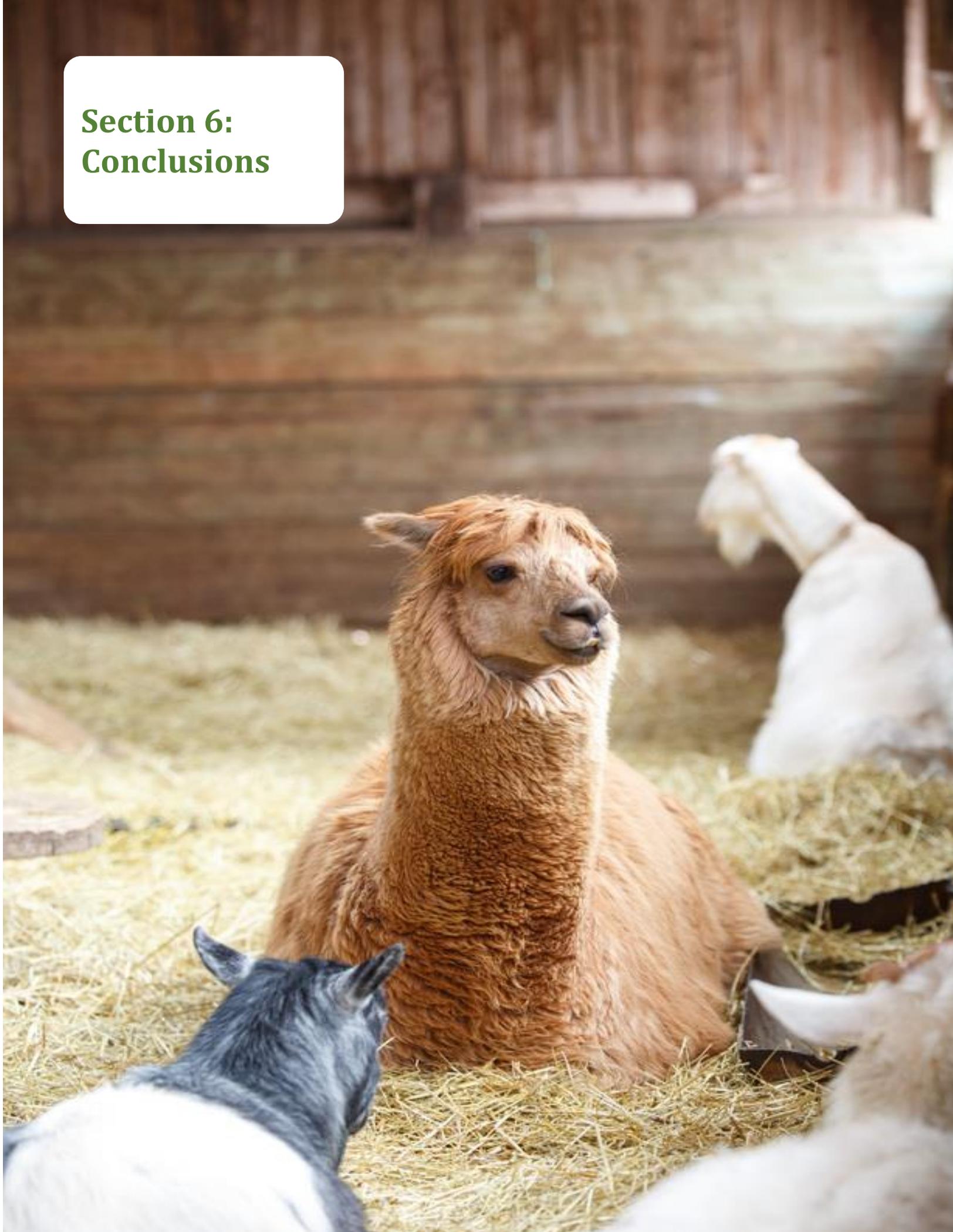
When survey participants were asked if they agreed that the sale, trade and exhibition of exotic animals on PEI be prohibited, 64.7% of Islanders and 79% of non-Islanders indicated that they somewhat to strongly agree with this statement (**Figure 5.5**). Given the high level of agreement with this question, it suggests there is growing acknowledgment that these types of animals require specialized care and such specific needs make them less suitable as pets or as part of displays. This finding will require further discussions and collaborations across provincial government departments if policy and/or regulatory changes are pursued.

**Figure 5.5. Survey participants level of agreement on prohibiting the sale, trade and exhibition of exotic animals on PEI**





## Section 6: Conclusions



## Conclusions

The survey results indicate that animal welfare is extremely important to the majority of Islanders. The excellent number of responses, the proportion of general public respondents and good geographical representation across the Island give evidence to the importance of animal welfare to all Islanders, not just special interest groups, which made up the majority of non-Islander responses.

While Islanders feel that animal welfare on PEI has been improved in the last 10 years, they still feel many areas could be further developed. The word clouds were very helpful in identifying some of the aspects of animal welfare Islanders would like to see improvement in, most notably puppy mills and wildlife. The responses regarding the sale, trade and exhibition of exotic animals also indicate Islanders would like to see work done in this regard.

Islanders also strongly indicated they would like to be more informed about animal welfare laws. Many responses showed a lack of understanding/confusion in the process for reporting animal welfare concerns, where authorities for investigations lie and whom to call when animal welfare concerns have been identified. The government needs to clearly outline the process for reporting and investigating animal welfare concerns for each type of animal population.

Respondents indicated the places they look for such information and whom they trust to receive this information from. Government must leverage the relationships with these trusted entities and methods of communication to ensure the public has easy access to transparent and clear steps in the animal welfare reporting and investigation process and animal welfare laws and policy. The public must be given the knowledge they need to confidently report suspicion of animal welfare issues and trust that they will be dealt with appropriately.

## Recommendations

Based on this reports' findings, Islanders feel that animal welfare on PEI has improved over the last 10 years. Many initiatives that aim to improve Islanders knowledge, attitudes and practices toward animal welfare are already taking place across PEI, however, more work is needed.

A strategic approach to addressing the animal welfare concerns and increasing the knowledge of Islanders on animal welfare laws and policies could include the following:

- ✓ Regularly share and update information such as “frequently asked questions” about the PEI Animal Welfare Act and Regulations and relevant codes of practice through

the government website, social media, and trusted partners such as practising veterinarians.

- ✓ Provide education sessions to the general public regarding animal welfare.
- ✓ Provide summary statistics regarding animal complaints and resolution.
- ✓ Provide clarity and information about who should be contacted to address farm, companion or exotic animal welfare concerns.
  - A step-by-step guide of what happens from the initial complaint to the proper authority to the resolution of the problem should be made available to the public.
  - Develop an online complaint tool to report animal welfare concerns on PEI.
- ✓ Develop continued educational offerings with welfare focuses for veterinarians to ensure they are sharing the best evidence welfare standards with clients.
- ✓ Continue to support industry groups on projects with an animal welfare focus.
- ✓ Consider policies and regulations related to wildlife welfare, dog breeding and the sale, trade and exhibition of exotic animals on PEI.

# TECHNICAL APPENDIX:

## Survey Design and Administration

An online survey was developed using QuestionPro (www.questionpro.com) between December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, and February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The survey consists of 29 closed- and open-ended questions over four sections, and responses were anonymous.

The first section contained eight questions that pertained to the participant's knowledge about the farm and companion animals' welfare on PEI.

The second section consists of six questions and focused on participant's knowledge and attitude toward reporting animal welfare concerns on PEI

The third section has six questions about participant's opinion on who should enforce animal welfare laws on PEI

The fourth section consisted of nine questions about the demographic's characteristics of participants. It also included questions about having or interacting with farm or companion animals.

## Analysis groups

The following groups were used to stratify the analyses:

1. **Islanders:** participants who live in one of the PEI counties (Kings, Queen or Prince County).
2. **Non-Islanders:** participants who live outside PEI, either in other provinces in Canada or other countries, also participants who preferred not to say where they live were added to this group.

## Data Analysis

Collected data were downloaded from QuestionPro in an Excel file and then imported into R statistical software version 3.3.0 (R Development Core Team 2018, R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria) for cleaning and analysis.

The number and proportion of participants for each question were estimated, and Z-test statistics were then used to compare the proportions within each group. A p-value of <0.05 and a 95% confidence interval were used to determine statistical significance.

For open-ended questions, word clouds were created for two-words (Bigram) analysis. Words that did not provide meaningful content (e.g., also, therefore) were deleted. This was done to filter for the most relevant words and enhance the readability of the final word cloud. The responses were imported into R-software to display the words used more frequently in larger fonts graphically.

## Survey Questions

Hello,

The Department of Agriculture and Land is conducting this survey to understand

- public knowledge,
- attitudes, and
- practices towards animal welfare in Prince Edward Island.

Your responses will help the Department to identify gaps in animal welfare laws and policies on PEI.

The survey will close on [insert date].

### Time

This survey will take 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

### Prize Draw

If you complete this survey, you can choose to be entered to win [insert prize]. If you choose to enter the prize draw, your contact information will be kept separate from your survey responses.

### Privacy

This survey will not ask you to identify yourself. Information is collected under section 31(c) of Prince Edward Island's Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act as it relates directly to, and is necessary for improving the animal welfare system in PEI. The final report will contain a summary of responses only (individual responses will not be shared).

### Contact

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact [reg@gov.pe.ca](mailto:reg@gov.pe.ca).

### Terms

**Animal welfare:** means the physical and mental state of an animal in relation to the conditions in which it lives and dies. An animal experiences good welfare if the animal is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear and distress, and is able to express behaviours that are important for its physical and mental state. Good animal welfare requires disease prevention and appropriate veterinary care, shelter, management and nutrition, a stimulating and safe environment, humane handling and humane slaughter or killing. While animal welfare refers to the state of the animal, the treatment that an animal receives is covered by other terms such as animal care, animal husbandry, and humane treatment.

**Animal abuse:** includes physical abuse (includes the infliction of injuries or causing unnecessary pain, such as inappropriate methods of training), sexual abuse (includes any

sexual conduct with animals, which may or may not result in physical injury to the animal), emotional abuse (include repeated or sustained 'mental violence' such as withholding social interactions), neglect (failure to provide adequate levels of food, water, shelter, and veterinary care to animals causing poor physical condition), and staging animal fights.

## Section I: Animal Welfare in PEI

1- How important is the welfare of animals to you?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important
- No opinion

2- On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is it to you that the welfare of animals is protected in PEI? '1' means "not at all important" and '10' means "very important".

1 (Not at all important)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 (Very important)

3- In general, do you think that the welfare of farm animals in PEI (e.g., cows, horses, chickens, pigs, etc.) needs to be improved?

- Yes, certainly
- Yes, probably
- No, probably not
- No, certainly not
- Don't know

4- In general, do you think that the welfare of companion animals in PEI (e.g., cats, dogs, hamsters, rabbits, etc.) needs to be improved?

- Yes, certainly
- Yes, probably
- No, probably not
- No, certainly not
- Don't know

5- In general, over the last 10 years, do you think that the welfare of animals in PEI has...?

- Improved a lot
- Improved a little
- Remained about the same
- Deteriorated a little

- Deteriorated a lot
- Don't know

6- Would you like to be more informed about the animal welfare laws in PEI?

- Yes, certainly
- Yes, probably
- No, probably not
- No, certainly not
- Don't know

7- If you were looking for information about animal welfare laws in PEI, which of the following sources would you prefer to use? Please tick all that apply:

- Television
- Radio
- Daily local newspapers
- National newspapers and magazines
- The Internet
- Discussions with relatives, friends, or colleagues
- Books, brochures, or information leaflets
- Other (specify .....)
- I am not sure
- Never look for such information

8- Which of the following sources do you trust the most to provide accurate animal welfare information? Please rank with '1' being "trust the most" and '7' being "trust the least"

- Veterinarians
- Animal welfare advocates
- Government
- Farmers
- Agriculture Industry groups
- Agriculture associations (i.e. National Farmers Union (NFU), Federation of Agriculture).
- Universities/scientists
- Media

## **Section II: Reporting Animal Welfare Concerns in PEI**

1- Who would you contact if you had concerns about the welfare of farm or agricultural animals (e.g., cows, horses, chickens, pigs, etc.)? Please tick all that apply:

- Local humane society
- Provincial Veterinarian
- Municipal office or city/town hall

- Police
- Provincial government such as Department of Agriculture and Land
- I don't know who to call
- Other, please specify .....

2- Who would you call if you had concerns about the welfare of companion animals (e.g., cats, dogs, hamsters, rabbits, etc.)? Please tick all that apply:

- Local humane society
- Provincial Veterinarian
- Municipal office or city/town hall
- Police
- Provincial government such as Department of Agriculture and Land
- I don't know who to call
- Other, please specify .....

3- Who would you call if you had concerns about the welfare of exotic animals (e.g., snakes, birds that are non-native to PEI, etc.)? Please tick all that apply:

- Local humane society
- Provincial Veterinarian
- Municipal office or city/town hall
- Police
- Provincial government such as Department of Agriculture and Land
- I don't know who to call
- Other, please specify .....

4- How likely are you to report a case of animal abuse?

- Extremely likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Extremely unlikely
- I don't know

5- On a scale of 1 to 10, with '1' meaning "less likely" and '10' meaning "more likely", how likely are you to report:

	1 (less likely)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 (more likely)
An animal that is abandoned										
An animal in distress										
Suspicious or illegal activity involving animals										

Inadequate care for an animal														
-------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

6- Have you or someone in your household ever made a call concerning the welfare of an animal?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**Section III: Enforcement of Animal Welfare Laws in PEI**

1- Who do you think should have the power to enforce animal welfare laws? Please tick all that apply:

- Humane society
- Local/municipal government
- Provincial government
- Other (please specify .....)

2- Who do you think should be responsible for the protection of farm animals? Please tick all that apply:

- Humane society
- Local/municipal government
- Provincial government
- Other (please specify .....)

3- Who do you think should be responsible for the protection of companion animals? Please tick all that apply:

- Humane society
- Local/municipal government
- Provincial government
- Other (please specify .....)

4- Who do you think should be responsible for the protection of exotic animals? Please tick all that apply:

- Humane society
- Local/municipal government
- Provincial government
- Other (please specify .....)

5- Who do you think should be responsible for investigating cases of animal abuse?

	No role	Supportive role	Primary role
Government appointed individuals employed by the Humane society			
Bylaw Officers authorized by Local/municipal government			
Staff employed by Provincial government			
Police			
Conservation Officers			

6- Who else do you think should be responsible for investigating cases of animal abuse?

.....

7- Do you agree that the sale, trade and exhibition of exotic animals (e.g., snakes, iguanas, etc.) in PEI be prohibited?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Disagree or Agree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Section IV: Demographic Information

1- Please select your age range

- 0 – 17 years
- 18 – 24 years
- 25 – 44 years
- 45 – 64 years
- 65 years and over
- Prefer not to say

2- Gender

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to say

3- Do you live in

- Kings county
- Queens county
- Prince county
- Canada but outside PEI

- Outside Canada
- Prefer not to say

4- Education level

- High school graduate or less
- Diploma, trade or college degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Professional degree (MD, DVM)
- Doctorate degree
- Prefer not to say

5- Do you consider yourself as:

- General public
- Animal welfare advocate
- Consumer
- Veterinarian
- Animal welfare enforcement
- Researcher/academic
- Producer
- Government
- Industry representative

6- Do you have any companion animals now or have you in the past?

- Yes
- No

7- Do you have any farm animals (including horses) now or have you in the past?

- Yes
- No

8- Do you interact with animals as part of your job or business?

- Yes
- No
- Not right now, but I have in the past

9- Do you have any additional thoughts and/or opinions about animal welfare in PEI that you would like to share?

.....