

The bill would enable an inspector to declare any property within five kilometres of an infected area to be deemed temporarily infected. This would assist in preventing the spread of a disease or toxic substance.

If an inspector believes that a larger quarantine area is necessary, the ministry could permit an even larger control area to be declared for a longer period until the situation is resolved.

Bill C-66 also strengthens important rules such as prohibiting individuals to possess or dispose of an imported animal or item known to be in contravention of the act. To accomplish this, the animal inspectors can examine or detain any animal or animal thing which may be diseased or contaminated until a thorough inspection has been conducted.

If the inspector has reason to believe that the animal or thing is contravening the act or could be infected, the inspector may require it to be removed from Canada or forfeited and properly disposed of.

In terms of exportation regulations, Bill C-66 requires all exports of animals, animal products or associated things to specifically meet the certification standards of the importing state. This measure would be effective in enabling Canada from unintentionally exporting a disease or toxic substance which would have damaging repercussions to our international reputation in animal health safety and also cause concern over maintaining our external markets.

This bill does, however, possess an aspect which is worthy of further deliberation in committee. This relates to the issue of cost recovery. Bill C-66 would permit the government, through the animal inspectors, to recover the costs of inspections, treatments or any other necessary services which have previously been provided free of charge.

I believe this matter deserves closer examination so far as this additional cost may have a significant financial impact on some farmers, especially during periods of depressed market prices. I hope that this matter will be discussed in detail during committee stage.

Inspectors able to charge service fees for inspections and treatments reflects a policy similar in nature to privatization. It must be ensured that the quality of these services remain consistent throughout the country.

Government Orders

This additional concern should be given further thought with regard to bird stocks. This bill would allow the Governor in Council to make regulations to maintain or improve the quality of poultry and control or eliminate diseases or toxic substances among birds. I believe that such authority, if exercised properly, would be most beneficial to Canadian poultry producers.

It is also a positive step for this bill to permit the Minister of Agriculture to provide assistance to individuals or governments outside of Canada to aid them in controlling or eliminating a disease or toxic substance which either affects or could affect people or animals within Canada. This measure would indeed be of value in preventing any future cases of disease or toxins from entering Canada.

While the capability to diagnose and control animal diseases and toxins have improved considerably, there is still cause for concern in cases involving foreign animals. Therefore, this foreign assistance is certainly justifiable.

In terms of penalties provided by this bill, the proposed legislation would increase the amount by which individuals are fined for violating the act. It has been determined that existing penalties are not sufficient enough in deterring individuals from repeating an offence.

Bill C-66 allows the Minister of Agriculture to enact regulations permitting the issuance of tickets for minor infractions of the act and regulations. This ticket system gives inspectors the power to issue a ticket, thereby avoiding the often long and expensive court proceedings which are currently required.

The ticket system is, however, worthy of further consideration. Such a system should operate under specific guidelines. The system should be closely examined to ensure that the new enforcement powers assigned to inspectors do not have an unduly negative impact on farmers, particularly small-scale producers. If the ticket system proceeds, then tickets should be issued for reasonable cause and not be too expensive for minor infractions.

With regard to the issue of compensation for farmers who suffer losses of animals due to disease or toxic substances, Bill C-66 provides for the establishment of a new system of compensation. The type of compensation permitted is to be based upon the species and maturity of the average Canadian animal. The maximum compensation available, however, would be set at an amount which would not bankrupt the animal health program. There may of course be cases where the maximum compensa-