

PRISON FARMS EXPOSED

REVELATIONS FROM ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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This report is the product of eight years of research and investigation by Evolve Our Prison Farms. It is based on 38,000 pages of documentation obtained through more than 130 Access to Information requests. Complete records are available through Evolve Our Prison Farms.

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Commonly used acronyms:

- AAFC:** Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- CSC:** Correctional Service of Canada
- CDC:** Canadian Dairy Commission
- DFO:** Dairy Farmers of Ontario
- OIC:** Office of the Information Commissioner
- PCO:** Privy Council Office
- PSC:** Public Safety Canada
- PSPC:** Public Services and Procurement Canada

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INTRODUCTION

When I visited the cow barn under construction at Joyceville Institution in November 2023, along with MP Scott Reid, his Office Manager Sandra Finigan, and agricultural journalist Ian Cumming, I suggested that we get a group photo. Cumming said: “The journalist doesn’t become part of the story.” I agreed, and suggested that we take the photo anyway, just to remember.

His comment made me reflect. As founder of Evolve Our Prison Farms, I had found myself, out of necessity, both a part of the prison farm reintroduction story, and citizen journalist. What began as a humble idea had evolved into an advocacy campaign, an opposition campaign, an investigation, and finally, an imperative to document as fully as possible what occurred. This report is the culmination of that journey.

The cover art of *Prison Farms Exposed: Revelations from Access to Information* alludes to the fact that while the Canadian government has been bulldozing its way, metaphorically and literally, past evidential, financial, and ethical restraints in its determination to reestablish farming operations at prisons in Kingston, Ontario, media have failed to report the true nature and trajectory of this covert operation. Instead, they have stoked and marketed a false public impression of the reintroduction of Canada’s prison farms as an unambiguously good news story. This report exposes the facts behind the façade.

From the origins of prison farms as colonial impositions, through decades of producing prison food, this latest iteration of prison farms will be an entirely different incarnation in function, finance, scale, and significance. The stated purpose of the multi-million-dollar cow dairy barn nearing completion at Joyceville Institution is university-partnered research, but documents show that it could be more accurately described as a cover for, or distraction from, the main event, which is an intensive livestock operation milking thousands of goats to supply infant formula exports to China. Why this exploitative business model was chosen, and how it was successfully sold to the public as a prisoner training program worthy of unprecedented levels of financial investment, is a difficult thread to unravel, while the knots of incompetence, deception, harm, and waste in the implementation process untangle to reveal a dense and clandestine story that is being told here for the first time.

Evolve Our Prison Farms has analyzed over 38,000 pages of government records, from over 130 Access to Information requests, and gained perspective and information from interviews, meetings, conversations, and correspondence with past and present correctional staff, ministers, commissioners, politicians, senators, activists, criminologists, farmers, journalists, union representatives, and prisoners. The result is a complex

truth-telling that demands a hearing, and a reckoning, not only from the Canadian government but from the public and media whose neglect of this story has cheated prisoners out of needed programming and resources, cost taxpayers untold millions, and lowered the standards of evidence-based decision-making in public safety, all while branding the story a success.

This prison farm story begins with the 2009-2011 closure of Canada's prison farms under Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservative government. The opposition that played out on a public stage has been dubbed a "**Political Penal Drama**" by academics. What has occurred since then, beginning with the 2015 promise of, and ongoing move towards, the reinstatement of prison farms as a "hallmark" of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal government, could be dubbed the second act. In closing the former prison farms, officials said they were a drain on the Correctional Service of Canada's finances and did not meet vocational training objectives for prisoners. Government documents obtained through Access to Information show these claims to be true. The prison farms also came with a wide range of other problems including quality control, security challenges, health and safety risks, and environmental hazards. Today, officials say that reopening prison farms in Kingston, Ontario, is to provide vocational training for prisoners and to reduce recidivism. Documents show these claims to be false.

This report exposes the political forces manipulating the decision to reopen Kingston's prison farms, dictating the choice of model, and controlling the public branding. Records show that the government quietly shelved reports that it had commissioned, acted against evidence-based recommendations, and misapplied, misinterpreted, or disregarded research; the 2016 public consultation process that justified the decision to reopen the prison farms was orchestrated, skewed, and corrupted; the 2017 entertainment of proposals was feigned; and the chosen prison farm model, announced in 2018, was not only pre-determined but also ethically, environmentally, and legally unsound. While the government has funded and fostered the dissemination of the politically desired narrative, critics have been silenced, and investigations obstructed.

The origins of the reimagined prison farms are exposed in "**Unpublished Agenda**" and "**New Foreign Markets.**" These chapters detail the Canadian government's courting of Feihe International, a Chinese corporation that established the first-ever infant formula production facility in Canada, in Kingston, Ontario, concurrent with the development of plans for a 2,200-goat dairy operation at Joyceville Institution in Kingston. Early official statements lauded this as a "good" and logical opportunity for the Correctional Service of Canada to "play a role" in the production of goat milk-based Chinese infant formula. That openness quickly evaporated once Evolve Our Prison Farms began questioning the ethics and legality of associating underpaid prison labour with a commercial enterprise, let alone one producing goods for export.

With the plan subject to investigation and criticism by Evolve Our Prison Farms, officials shifted to a strategy of plausible deniability during the attempted implementation of the prison farms. Government documents obtained through years of Access to Information requests offered trails of evidence, but redactions and Cabinet Confidence made the connection impossible to map beyond the realm of deniability. In early 2024, however, after six years of pursuing records, Evolve Our Prison Farms finally landed on a “smoking gun” document conclusively linking the prison farm plan with the Chinese infant formula market. Now, as controversial as the prison farm plan is, equally controversial is the conscious and coordinated attempt to cover it up.

The “**To-ing and Fro-ing**” and “**Error in Judgement**” in devising and revising the prison farm plan, is a case study in the consequences of ignoring evidence-based recommendations, breaking conflict of interest policies, and disregarding budgetary boundaries. The resulting “soap opera” shows the folly of tasking an institution with correctional expertise to become competent and competitive in livestock operations. Other correctional programs, “more likely to assist offenders,” have been starved of funds redirected into this flawed enterprise. Environmental regulations have been disregarded, jeopardizing the health and safety of prisoners, correctional staff, neighbours, and ecologically sensitive lands and waterways. Throughout the implementation process, transparency, objectivity, and prudence have taken backstage to the project’s “sensitive” and “super high priority” status to the government.

After peeling back the political layers, this report chronicles the failures of the entire prison farm initiative, due to its complexity and its incompatible political, corporate, and correctional motivations and goals. The new prison farms will not feed prisoners; they will potentially violate international standards for human rights and international trade; they are bleeding money away from effective job-skills training; they are exposing prisoners and staff to hazardous working conditions; and they are exposing animals to risk of abuse and inadequate monitoring in a penitentiary environment. Promotion of the as-yet unrealized farms has been focused on peripheral activities, such as prisoners’ personal gardens and donations to foodbanks, while the costs of prison farm implementation have risen to more than \$56 million.

“**Unwanted**” are the criticisms levelled against Canada’s new prison farm program, which have been muted to control the narrative. This has been achieved through misrepresentation and mockery of critics by officials, media’s failure to provide balanced and fact-based coverage, the silencing of prisoners’ voices, the interference of Public Safety Canada and the Privy Council Office, and the obstruction and circumvention of Access to Information and media requests. These political machinations, effectively deterring all but the most determined inquiring minds, undermine the foundations of democracy.

This explosive, complicated story has been detailed here with as much thoroughness and precision as the information to date allows. It is not complete: the story continues to unfold, the documents continue to emerge, and the official prison farm plan, such as it is, continues to adapt to the pressures, scrutiny, and logistical complexity of establishing commercial-carceral dairy enterprises.

The core enterprise, a 2,200-goat intensive livestock operation, was paused in 2021 after repeated failures to launch, but it has not been cancelled. The Correctional Service of Canada has said that it “will resume” once their financial (political?) situation stabilizes. After citing precarious finances as the reason for pausing the goat program, the Correctional Service of Canada proceeded to invest over \$10 million into building a barn, under construction now for over two years, to milk 30 cows for research, for purposes that remain inexplicable other than as a diversion and as a vehicle to lay the groundwork for the future goat barn.

A timeline of events and influential factors exposes the parallel trajectories of the prison farms and the infant formula factory in Kingston. Appendices to this report include the “smoking gun” document connecting the two operations, parliamentary exchanges in the House of Commons, and a list of Access to Information requests by Evolve Our Prison Farms and Order Paper questions by MP Scott Reid, which provided the source material for this report.

The goal of this report is not only to call for change, but for accountability. Evolve Our Prison Farms no longer advocates any prison farm model, despite our early advocacy for sustainable and ethical solutions. The problematic prison farm program is now too costly, corrupt, and concretized to be resolved or transitioned to a less harmful, less exploitative, more relevant, or less expensive model. The erosion of public trust makes any new foundation impossible to establish, and the lack of evidence that farm work increases post-release employment or reduces recidivism makes the question of alternative prison farm models moot. Beneficial programs such as gardens and horticulture are offered at correctional institutions independent of prison farms, so there is neither logic nor value, in terms of public safety or fiscal responsibility, in the government’s investment of tens of millions into reopening prison farms in Kingston. As logic and evidence have proven rootless and fruitless in the hard and sterile political landscape, all that can be done is to harvest the records and cast a light on this unreported, underreported, and misreported affair, until the final curtain closes on the political penal drama of Canada’s prison farms.

1. “POLITICAL PENAL DRAMA” || PRISON FARMS CLOSE

Between 2009 and 2011, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) closed all six of its federally funded prison farms because they lost money, struggled with quality control, and did not enhance the employability of prisoners.¹ This sparked opposition, particularly against the closure of prison farms at Collins Bay (Frontenac) and Joyceville (Pittsburgh) Institutions in Kingston, Ontario.² The anti-closure activism in Kingston by a group called Save Our Prison Farms, and the political debates surrounding the closures, have been described by academics as a “political penal drama” featuring “actors with vested interests in politics and social movements [acting] as if they were discussing prison(er)s, when they really focused on exogenous issues.”³ The “return”⁴ of Kingston’s prison farms, beginning with 2016 public consultations leading to 2018 federal budget approval, has been politically and dramatically positioned as a response to Save Our Prison Farms activism. However, as will be demonstrated in this report, the revitalization of Kingston’s prison farms has been a second act in a continuing political penal drama, with actors and vested interests, old and new, focused on issues that are exogenous to the interests of prisoners and public safety.

1.1. “Closure of the farms made sense” || Past Prison Farm Problems

Until their closures in 2011, prison farms existed in various forms in Canada for over a century, with origins rooted in colonial land acquisition.⁵ Historically managed by institutional staff, changes began to occur in 1992 when CSC established CORCAN as a Special Operating Agency (SOA) to take over prison industries nationally,⁶ including prison farms.⁷ On CORCAN’s prison farms, inmates were tasked with producing milk, meat, eggs, and vegetables, which were sold by CORCAN to CSC for food service within federal

¹ Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. (2010, March 25). *Evidence*. 40th Parliament, 3rd session, meeting no. 5. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/40-3/SECU/meeting-5/evidence>.

² At the time of the farm closures, the minimum-security unit at Collins Bay Institution was called Frontenac, and at Joyceville Institution, the minimum-security unit was called Pittsburgh. These were amalgamated into clustered multi-level security facilities, in 2013 and 2014 respectively, and they are now referred to singularly as Collins Bay Institution and Joyceville Institution.

³ Goodman, P. & Dawe, M. (2016, July 1). Prisoners, Cows, and Abattoirs: The Closing of Canada’s Prison Farms as a Political Penal Drama. *British Journal of Criminology*, 56(4):793-812.

⁴ While the reopening of prison farms in Kingston has been positioned as a “return” of the former program, the new prison farm model has been fundamentally altered into a commercial undertaking, no longer feeding prisons.

⁵ Struthers Montford, K. (2019, January). Land, Agriculture, and the Carceral: The Territorializing Function of Penitentiary Farms. *Radical Philosophy Review*, 22(1): 113-141.

⁶ “CORCAN is a special operating agency within CSC that is responsible for penitentiary industry” (CSC, 2023. *2023 to 2027 Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy*. PSC A-2023-00438).

⁷ Details can be found in CORCAN’s [Annual Reports](#), which were published almost every year from 1992-2009, reporting on CORCAN’s business activities, revenues, and expenditures. CORCAN no longer issued reports after 2009, the year that the prison farm closures began.

penitentiaries.⁸ At Collins Bay Institution, inmates milked a herd of up to 300 cows and collected eggs from 9,000 hens.⁹ At Joyceville Institution, prisoners worked in a feedlot operation with as many as 600 beef cattle,¹⁰ and prisoners slaughtered and butchered the animals in an onsite abattoir owned by CSC.¹¹ While the goal was for CORCAN to deliver improved results for prisoner employability and generate revenue without “competing” with private industry, CORCAN has consistently struggled to meet these objectives.¹²

Various reports raised concerns about the cost, safety and efficacy of the prison farms, which eventually prompted their closure. Annual reports issued by CORCAN from 1992-2009, and earlier reports by institutional farm staff, identified challenges including inmate escapes from the farms, food quality issues and supply inconsistency, high bacterial counts in milk,¹³ and seepage from manure lagoons.¹⁴ In 2003,

⁸ “In its last full year of operation (fiscal year 2009-2010), the Collins Bay farm sold \$1.63 million of product to CSC, representing 88% of CORCAN’s total sales. Of this amount, \$1.26 million was dairy product (i.e. milk). The Food Services Modernization has since been implemented. CSC now purchases powdered milk” (CSC, 2016, December 16. *Briefing Note to the Commissioner: Reopening of CORCAN Farm at Collins Bay Institution*. CSC A-2019-00085).

⁹ At the time of the Collins Bay farm closure, CSC stated that “The dairy herd which numbers 298 will be sold by auction [and] the 9,000 chickens will be sold as well” (Hutchings, B., 2010, April 31. Kingston Council informed of Correctional Service of Canada’s intention to start prison farm sell off this spring. *EMC News*. CSC A-2018-00310).

¹⁰ Cumming, I. (2023, November 28). Still under construction, prison farms regain their shape. *Ontario Farmer*.

¹¹ Neufeld, C. (2022, August). *Bloody Bad Business: Report on the Joyceville Institution Abattoir* (2nd ed.). Evolve Our Prison Farms. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/bloody-bad-business-report-on-the-joyceville-institution-abattoir/>.

¹² “Opposition to prison industry gradually forced prison managers to [stop] ‘competing’ with private business... This disappointment caused the CSC to again re-examine the role of prison industry in prison life, and a series of reports to the CSC argued for increased government use of prison products, increased public relations activity about prison industry, and more realistic work conditions within prison shops. In 1997, the CORCAN trademark was launched, and a movement toward the present Special Operating Agency called CORCAN began... The future of prison industry is difficult to forecast. Complaints about unfair competition still are received and CORCAN continues to struggle to maintain fiscal break-evens” (Townsend, 1997. *CORCAN Annual Report 1996-1997*. PSC. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/lbrr/archives/csc-arcocan-1996-1997-eng.pdf>). Also: Brownell, C. (2017, August 30). Prisoners making \$1.95 a day want a raise. Taxpayers want a break... it’s time to rethink one of the federal prison system’s most expensive rehabilitation initiatives. *Financial Post*. <https://financialpost.com/news/court-challenge-to-inmate-pay-places-prison-labour-program-in-the-crosshairs>.

¹³ “Of all our problems, the high bacteria count in milk was our most severe” (CSC, 1983. *Agribusiness Workshop Ontario Region*. PSC. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/lbrr/archives/hv%208931.c2%20a4%201983-eng.pdf>).

¹⁴ There was manure lagoon seepage at Stony Mountain (Rockwood) prison farm in Manitoba (CSC, 1983. *CORCAN Conference and Agribusiness Workshop*. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/lbrr/archives/hv%208931.c2%20c75c%201983-eng.pdf>) and also at Joyceville Institution (A&A Environmental Consultants, 2018, December 10. *Environmental Effects Evaluation, 3766 Highway 15, Kingston, ON, Report #4306-Kingston Joyceville Institution*. CSC A-2023-00024). According to the A&A Environmental report, in November 2010, four wells in the vicinity of Joyceville Institution’s manure lagoon were sampled and “showed elevated concentrations of *Escherichia Coli* and Total Coliforms... in all of the wells.” There was concern that this had contaminated the drinking water of neighbouring residents: “A water well survey should be conducted to identify if any domestic water well users may use the shallow aquifer as a primary water source for human consumption.” The A&A report was produced at a time when dairy facility construction was expected to take place on an existing concrete pad, and therefore would not come into contact with “COCs” (contaminants of concern) from the old manure lagoon: “The aforementioned lagoon is situated immediately south of the proposed construction area... The current scope of work is limited to superficial construction... on top of a pre-existing concrete pad... and therefore is not anticipated to influence, alter, or come into contact with any potential COCs that may be present within the lagoon.” As a result of the decision to add cows (see Chapter 4), the construction of the new dairy facilities was resituated directly over the decommissioned manure lagoon: “Soil condition to be considered for the chosen location for the Goat Barn. The concrete rubbles were lay down... for a reason. A lagoon was located there in the past and was removed (decommissioned) in 2013... at location of future Goat Barn” (CSC, 2018, October 11. *Technical Services Comments: Joyceville Minimum Institution Cattle and Goat Barns*. CSC A-2020-00132).

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), commonly known as “Mad Cow Disease,” was identified in prison farm herds.¹⁵ By 2006, “regulatory and commercial concerns,” “lower institutional requirements,” and increased “business line loss” began shutting down CSC’s in-house dairy production¹⁶ and other “farm enterprises.”¹⁷ Quality issues in prison-produced foods were considered inescapable, as described in the minutes from a CSC Agribusiness Workshop: “The quality of the goods is functional to the quality of the employees (inmates); we could also say of the instructor. We all work in this special correctional environment; we do what we can not what we want.”¹⁸

Over and above health and quality concerns, the prison farms were said to suffer “chronic poor fiscal performance.”¹⁹ The Collins Bay farm (cow dairy and egg production) and the Joyceville farm (beef production) had net losses of \$319,000 and \$521,000 respectively in their last full year of operations (2009-2010).²⁰ The annual net loss of all six prison farms nationally was calculated collectively at \$4.1 million, with \$7.5 million in revenues and \$11.6 million in expenses.²¹ In opting to close CORCAN’s agribusiness training line, CSC cited “the significant cost incurred annually to operate these farms” while “very few inmates ultimately find jobs in the agricultural sector.”²²

A 2008 Strategic Review found the prison farms to be overly costly and complex to run, while not contributing to prisoner employability or reductions in recidivism.²³ As a result, CSC and Public Safety

¹⁵ Hagerman, C. (2004, July 12). *CORCAN Annual Report 2003-2004*. PSC.

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/lbrr/archives/csc-arcorcan-2003-2004-eng.pdf>.

¹⁶ “A detailed review of agribusiness operations was undertaken in response to regulatory and commercial concerns, which resulted in the closure of the Rockwood [Institution] dairy” (Hagerman, C., 2006. *CORCAN Annual Report 2005-2006*. CSC. https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2012/scc-csc/PS81-9-2006-eng.pdf).

¹⁷ “Acting on the recommendations of the agribusiness study done in 2006, a number of farm enterprises were downsized or closed during the year” (Sargent, J., 2008. *CORCAN Annual Report 07/08*. CSC.

https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2012/scc-csc/PS81-9-2008-eng.pdf).

¹⁸ CSC (1983). *Agribusiness Workshop Ontario Region*. Government of Canada.

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/lbrr/archives/hv%208931.c2%20a4%201983-eng.pdf>.

¹⁹ Townsend, T. (1997). *CORCAN Annual Report 1996-1997*. PSC. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/lbrr/archives/csc-arcorcan-1996-1997-eng.pdf>.

²⁰ CSC (2017, February 14). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Reopening of CORCAN farm at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institutions*. CSC A-2018-00441.

²¹ CSC (2016, August 15). *Media Lines: Penitentiary farm consultation*. PSC A-2018-00451.

²² Letter from Lori MacDonald, Assistant Commissioner, Public Affairs and Parliamentary Relations, CSC (2009, October 5). CSC A-2018-00310.

²³ “The 2008 Strategic Review process reviewed several key efficiency indicators related to CSC’s institutional farms. Two major findings emerged as key factors contributing to the decision to re-profile prison employment activities: employment statistics and budgetary considerations. With respect to employment statistics, research indicated that the majority of offenders released into the community returned to large urban centres where agribusiness employment opportunities were not available. Regarding the second factor, the Strategic Review process found that the institutional farms were not financially viable and thus funds were redirected to invest in creating alternative employment and training programs that were more likely to assist offenders become employed in the larger urban centres... Since the closing of the farms, CSC has also implemented a modernization of its food services program toward market-place standards [and] CSC no longer

supported the decision to close all federal prison farms, including the two Kingston farms and the farms at Dorchester (Westmoreland) Institution (NB), Stony Mountain (Rockwood) Institution (MB), Saskatchewan (Riverbend) Penitentiary (SK), and Bowden Institution (AB).²⁴ While it is unclear who initiated the Strategic Review and the recommendation to close the farms, what is clear is that CSC endorsed the decision.²⁵ In statements issued throughout 2010, CSC insisted that the decision was “final” because “we would better serve offenders and our communities by offering training programs that focus on skills that lead to employment that is more consistent with the current labour market.”²⁶ Despite the firmness and finality of CSC’s position, parliamentary hearings were held to assess the decision. The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security passed a motion in April 2010, calling upon the Minister of Public Safety “to table forthwith the Strategic Review document referred to by Correctional Service Canada officials,” but the response from the Public Safety Minister at the time, Vic Toews, was that he was “unable to table the Strategic Review document as it remains subject to Cabinet confidence.”²⁷

To date, there is no retrievable record of the oft-cited Strategic Review. Either it never existed as a document, or the record has been destroyed. In 2022, Evolve Our Prison Farms (Evolve) filed an Access to Information (ATI) request for the document from Public Safety Canada. The response letter stated: “A thorough search was conducted and Public Safety Canada was unable to locate any records.”²⁸

In a 2022 interview with Peter Van Loan (the Public Safety Minister who approved the prison farm closures in 2009), Evolve’s founder Calvin Neufeld asked about the Strategic Review and whether the recommendation to close the farms originated with Public Safety or CSC. Specifically, Neufeld asked if he recalled receiving a document from CSC or whether the Strategic Review was more of an informal process leading to an email or verbal recommendation to close the farms. Van Loan responded:

requires the food staples previously provided by the agribusiness operations” (CSC, 2016. *CSC Institutional Agribusiness - Online Public Consultation* [draft]. CSC A-2018-00310).

²⁴ CSC (2016, February 10). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Penitentiary Farm Consultation Process*. PSC A-2018-00451.

²⁵ Prior to the oft-referenced (yet never released) “2008 Strategic Review,” there are earlier indications that CSC was looking to get out of farming. A CORCAN CEO reported on “the recommendations of the agribusiness study done in 2006” which resulted in “a number of farm enterprises [being] downsized or closed during the year” (Sargent, J., 2008. *CORCAN Annual Report 07/08*. CSC. https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2012/scc-csc/PS81-9-2008-eng.pdf).

²⁶ This exact line appears in multiple letters issued by CSC in 2010 (Letters from E. Van Allen, Assistant Commissioner, Public Affairs and Parliamentary Relations, CSC, 2010, March 25, April 7, May 3, July 20. Email from Chris Price, Assistant Commissioner, Correctional Operations and Programs, CSC, 2010, March 3. Email from Ellen Henderson, Corporate Communications, CORCAN, 2010, August 24. CSC A-2018-00310).

²⁷ Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. (n.d.). *Government Response*. 40th Parliament, 3rd session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/documentviewer/en/40-3/SECU/report-1/response-8512-403-25>.

²⁸ Letter from Julie Tremblay, Manager, Access to Information and Privacy, PSC (2022, June 24). Response to PSC A-2022-00074.

“I believe it was a recommendation from the Public Safety Department officials, which I assume was based upon the recommendation of Corrections Canada. While the closure of the farms made sense to me based upon the facts, and I obviously supported it – it was not an idea that I generated myself, nor did it originate from my predecessor as Minister. Ultimately, however, politicians should be accountable for these decisions. Had I declined the recommendation, it would not have happened. Or more likely, it would have been proposed by the officials to every successive Minister until one agreed that it was a good idea!”²⁹

The farms were deemed no longer fit for purpose as they were not providing inmates with the skills they needed to be employed post-release.³⁰ Media lines developed for the closures defended the need to provide “a broader array of employment opportunities to offenders beyond agriculture” to better align training programs with “today’s urban labour market.”³¹ In parliamentary testimony on June 11, 2009, CSC Commissioner Don Head explained the rationale for the closures:

“We’re trying to provide opportunities that address the criminogenic needs of offenders. The participation in farm programs don’t necessarily do that. There is more emphasis on trying to meet production quotas than there is in meeting the criminogenic needs of the offenders... we’re also trying to provide employment and employability skills opportunities. That’s not to say that the farm participation doesn’t do that, but we’re trying to find those kinds of skills that will allow offenders to access the more modern job market that they’re going to face when they’re released into the community.”³²

²⁹ Email from former Public Safety Minister Peter Van Loan (2022, June 24). In a telephone interview on June 7, 2022, Van Loan explained that the farms were not beneficial as a vocational training stream. For context, he said that he runs two farms and lives in a farming community, and it’s “near impossible” for anyone outside of the farming community to enter into farming, “especially in areas under supply management” [i.e. cow dairy]. The farm sector “has changed significantly,” it’s “a different economy” and “the same things have happened across the agricultural sector as in retail,” that is, “replacement of labour with capital.” In prisons, “folks are trying to prepare to re-enter society and the goal is to help them be able to stand on their own two feet.” With farm training, “they were never going to get jobs.” It was “a disservice to put prisoners into a training stream that will never actually lead to a job,” and most of the farm training was “stuff you could learn in a day.” As Public Safety Minister, he had asked CSC if the program led to jobs, and “CSC acknowledged there was no employment.” Van Loan described the opposition to the closures and the media coverage as “unfair.” Opponents had a “nice pastoral notion, a romantic idea of what farming is,” but “it’s not what farming is any longer.” Van Loan said that “it’s quite unfair to this [incarcerated] population... [it’s] playing a joke to tell them that this will help them re-enter society when they won’t be able to do it.” As Minister, what was important for him was “getting people on the right path to independence, and the farms did not accomplish that.” For CSC, closing the farms “was all about the money,” reducing financial losses. “Different motives,” but CSC and Public Safety were “in agreement that the farms should close.”

³⁰ Interview with former Public Safety Minister Peter Van Loan (2022, June 7). Also: Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. (2010, March 25). *Evidence*. 40th Parliament, 3rd session, meeting no. 5. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/40-3/SECU/meeting-5/evidence>.

³¹ CSC (2011, July 19). *Media Lines*. CSC A-2018-00333.

³² Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. (2009, June 11). *Evidence*. 40th Parliament, 2nd session, meeting no. 27. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/40-2/SECU/meeting-27/evidence>.

In parliamentary testimony on March 25, 2010, Ross Toller, CSC's Regional Deputy Commissioner, acknowledged that the farms offered "transferrable skills" such as punctuality and teamwork, but argued that "learning those skills in a job that is more likely to give you employment at the end would be quite reasonable."³³ Toller insisted that prison farms do not contribute to employability, saying: "For those people who leave our facilities to seek employment, the agricultural sector is not a viable, realistic market."³⁴

The popular public narrative has been that the decision to close prison farms was the result of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's "tough-on-crime" reforms,³⁵ however the above-mentioned material suggests that the decision to close the farms likely originated with CSC and was based on a variety of reasons that "made sense." The closure of CORCAN Agribusiness was rolled out from 2009 to 2011, starting with the tabling of the federal budget on February 23, 2009.³⁶ All six federally funded prison farms in Canada, including the two in Kingston at Collins Bay (Frontenac) and Joyceville (Pittsburgh) Institutions, were to be closed by 2011, along with the Joyceville Institution abattoir that was used by local farmers. The news drew fervent protest, primarily from farmers in Kingston.³⁷

1.2. "Til the Cows Come Home" || Anti-Closure Activism in Kingston

Many Kingstonians protested the prison farm closures, stating that the program was good for prisoners and that closing the farms was an offence to farmers, as summarized in a government briefing note:

"There was opposition to the closing of the farms from some stakeholders including the farming community, advocacy groups, as well as some politicians... stakeholders such as the National Farmers' Union (NFU) urged the government to reconsider closing the farms, arguing that agricultural skills were in demand and that closing the farms sent a message that agriculture was not important."³⁸

³³ Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. (2010, March 25). *Evidence*. 40th Parliament, 3rd session, meeting no. 5. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/40-3/SECU/meeting-5/evidence>.

³⁴ In 2011, CSC reported that "less than 1%" of offenders released in the previous five years (99 out of 25,000) found work in the agricultural sector, so CSC wanted to invest in alternative training that "that will meet the needs and realities offenders are facing in today's urban labour market" (CSC, 2011, July 19. *Media Lines*. CSC A-2018-00333).

³⁵ Dawe, M. & Goodman, P. (2017, May). Conservative Politics, Sacred Cows, and Sacrificial Lambs: The (Mis)Use of Evidence in Canada's Political and Penal Fields. *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 54(2), 129-146.

³⁶ CSC (2011, July 19). *Media Lines*. CSC A-2018-00333.

³⁷ "At the time of the closures, many members of the public including community farming groups, advocacy groups, citizens, and public figures expressed concern and opposition to the cessation of the penitentiary farm operations. There has been, and continues to be, significant interest from local farmers" (CSC, 2020, June. *Media Lines: Reopening of CORCAN Farm Operations*. CSC A-2020-00407).

³⁸ Abid, Z. (2016, May 16). *MIN# 221198: Background Information Related to Prison Farms*. AAFC A-2023-00128.

The “small but organized”³⁹ anti-closure activists held vigils, spoke to the press, and illegally blockaded the removal of cows from Collins Bay Institution.⁴⁰ Prominent figures such as Margaret Atwood, Sarah Harmer, Fred Penner,⁴¹ and Conrad Black pledged their support to the cause.⁴² The activism was covered by local, national and international media,⁴³ and became the subject of a 2014 documentary titled *Til the Cows Come Home*.⁴⁴

The advocacy group protesting the closures was called “Save Our Prison Farms.” The lead organizers and spokespersons of the campaign were Dianne Dowling, president of the National Farmers Union Local 316, and Jeff Peters, director of the Frontenac Cattlemen’s Association and Beef Farmers of Ontario. Both cited economic interests, particularly the preservation of the Joyceville Institution abattoir, as the primary motivation behind their activism.⁴⁵ In 2010 parliamentary testimony, Dianne Dowling argued that Kingston’s prison farms should be preserved for three reasons:

1. The “potential loss of the farmland,”
2. The “possible loss” of the Joyceville Institution abattoir which allows farmers to “realize more profitability in their businesses,” and
3. The “\$900,000 a year” spent by Collins Bay Institution alone on local farm services.⁴⁶

³⁹ Brief prepared by Elaine Landry, Parliamentary Relations Unit, CSC (n.d.). *Backgrounder*. CSC A-2018-00451.

⁴⁰ “24 Arrested at Kingston Prison Farm Blockade” (2010, August 12). *Frontenac News*.

<http://www.frontenacnews.ca/south-frontenac-news/item/3698-prisonfarms-10-32>. Among those arrested at the blockade was Jeff Peters, later appointed to CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel.

⁴¹ When musician Fred Penner learned about the new prison farm developments, he expressed that he was “So very disappointed to hear this news. Clearly the system is more concerned with making a profit than healing the inmates” (Email from Fred Penner, 2019, May 19). Penner wrote that Evolve’s proposal for the prison farm program “is so very well written that I can only lend my name as support for your efforts” (Email from Fred Penner, 2020, April 23).

⁴² Atwood, M. (2010, July 6). A second chance or a boot in the face. *The Globe and Mail*.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/a-second-chance-or-a-boot-in-the-face/article1212903/>. Also: Goodman, P. and Dawe, M. (2016, July 1). Prisoners, Cows, and Abattoirs: The Closing of Canada’s Prison Farms as a Political Penal Drama. *British Journal of Criminology*, 56(4):793-812.

⁴³ Austin, I. (2016, February 18). Ontario Farmers Fight to Send a Herd of Ex-Cons Back to the Pen. *NY Times*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/19/world/americas/kingston-ontario-cows-prison-farm.html>.

⁴⁴ Epstein, L. (Director). (2014). *Til the Cows Come Home* [Film]. Telltales Media and Milkpail Productions.

⁴⁵ “The latest meeting was held with the Frontenac Cattlemen’s Association and the Local Farmers Union [who] made it clear they do not support the decision to close all farms by March 31, 2011, and will remain active to convince you to reverse this decision. They were, however, pleased with the decision to keep the Pittsburgh [Joyceville] abattoir operational” (CSC, 2009, May 14. *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety Canada: Meeting with the Frontenac Cattlemen’s Association - June 8, 2009 / Update regarding the abattoir operation at Pittsburgh Institution*. CSC A-2018-00333).

⁴⁶ Testimony from Dianne Dowling, President, National Farmers Union, Local 316. Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. (2010, March 30). *Evidence*. 40th Parliament, 3rd session, meeting no. 6. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/40-3/SECU/meeting-6/evidence>.

Peters argued the same: “The abattoir at Joyceville Penitentiary is a critical part of the local food infrastructure [and] the prison farms spend a large amount of money on inputs from local farm businesses.”⁴⁷ As a result of their efforts, the government of Canada committed to reverse the decision to close the Joyceville Institution abattoir,⁴⁸ but the prison farm closures proceeded, and the anti-closure activists rebranded as Restore Our Prison Farms.⁴⁹

These same activists also created a subsidiary group, the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op (PFHC), in 2010.⁵⁰ The goal of the Co-Op was to purchase a portion of CSC’s dismantled dairy cow herd at auction and to preserve the penitentiary herd’s “unique genetics for docility.”⁵¹ This was done in anticipation of an eventual change in government and the hopeful restoration of the prison farms and re-sale of the herd’s genetics to CSC. The Co-Op raised funds with shares selling at \$300 apiece.⁵² PFHC director Jeff Peters stated that an initial “150 people contributed \$50,000” at the time of the prison farm closures, enough to purchase 24 of CSC’s herd at auction.⁵³ Shares in the Co-Op continued to be sold in subsequent years, exceeding 200 members and \$60,000,⁵⁴ although the total amount raised and the total number of shareholders is unknown. The Co-Op’s records are not publicly accessible, but AGM minutes and newsletters have been shared with Evolve by members who also indicated that the Co-Op’s membership records are not available to shareholders, and the Co-Op does not have any governance bylaws.⁵⁵

In the years since the closures, Kingston’s anti-closure activists would do a great deal more than sell shares, lobby for prison farm restoration, and prevent the closure of the Joyceville Institution abattoir. As will be

⁴⁷ Gordanier, B. (2015, June 30). *Resolution 15-10: Joyceville Abattoir [sic]/Frontenac Dairy Farm*. Beef Farmers of Ontario. https://www.ontariobeef.com/media/v42lczcq/2015_resolution_responses.pdf.

⁴⁸ “The Pittsburgh Institution Abattoir was slated to close on March 31, 2011 as part of the strategic review decision to discontinue CORCAN’s agribusiness operations at the six farm sites. A decision was made in April 2009 to maintain an abattoir operation at Pittsburgh provided it was managed on a neutral operational cost basis to CSC in order to stay within the parameters of the strategic review exercise. This decision was communicated to the Frontenac Cattlemen’s Association and the local farmers union on May 13, 2009” (CSC, n.d. *Pittsburgh Abattoir: Scenarios to establish License Fee*. CSC A-2018-00333).

⁴⁹ Scanlan, L. (2015, January 27). Why the prison farm issue won’t go away. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/2015/01/27/why-the-prison-farm-issue-wont-go-away>.

⁵⁰ “Prison farm supporters purchase part of Frontenac Institution’s herd” (2010, August 26). *Frontenac News*. <https://www.frontenacnews.ca/south-frontenac-news/item/3664-prison-farm-10-34>.

⁵¹ Email to Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale (2015, November 24). *Subject: restoring the prison farm program*. PSC A-2018-00451.

⁵² Brosnahan, M. (2015, December 29). *Kingston’s cows are closer to coming home to prison*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/cows-prison-farm-kingston-1.3382238>.

⁵³ Epstein, L. (Director). (2014). *Til the Cows Come Home* [Film]. Telltales Media and Milkpail Productions.

⁵⁴ Atkinson, S. (2023, November 28). Pen farm co-op hopeful cow herd will finally go home. *Ontario Farmer*.

⁵⁵ PFHC Annual General Meeting Draft Minutes (2019, November 21). The Co-Op’s directors are Dianne Dowling (Chair of CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel), Jeff Peters (member of CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel), Dave Perry (CSC employee and former Joyceville abattoir supervisor), and George Sutherland. Until 2023, the Co-Op’s Secretary-Treasurer was Meela Melnik-Proud, who, along with Dowling and Peters, invoiced CORCAN for the sale of cows for the prison farms.

detailed in the next chapters, they secured a government commitment in 2016 to assess the feasibility of reopening prison farms in Kingston. From 2017 to the present, they received ministerial appointments to CSC's Prison Farm Advisory Panel. In 2018, they convinced the Minister of Public Safety to reverse the decision to exclude their cows from the new program, then invoiced CORCAN for the sale of their cows,⁵⁶ contravening federal procurement policies and violating their conflict-of-interest agreement as members of the Prison Farm Advisory Panel (see Chapter 4).⁵⁷

After CSC committed to include cows, Kingston's anti-closure activists held a wrap-up celebration on August 13, 2018.⁵⁸ The Save (Restore) Our Prison Farms campaign has not been active since, although the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op directors on CSC's Prison Farm Advisory Panel continue to lobby for the sale of more of their cows to CSC.⁵⁹ The reopening of Kingston's prison farms has been attributed to the vocal and persistent efforts of Save Our Prison Farms. However, as shown in the next chapter, government records reveal that the impetus to reopen had less to do with responding to community advocacy than it did with furthering political and industry interests.

⁵⁶ Dowling: Undated invoice issued by Dianne Dowling, "board of directors," to CORCAN for the sale of "6 dairy cattle as specified... delivered to Collins Bay Institution, Kingston, Ontario, June 4, 2019" (CSC A-2019-00085). Peters: Invoices issued by Jeff Peters, "Chairman: Pen Farm Herd Co-Op," for the sale of "Prison Farm Herd Co-op Calves," 2020, February 26, March 27, April 29, November 6 (CSC A-2020-00323). Melnik-Proud: CSC, 2019, June 3. *Contract: Dairy Cattle*. Total Estimated Cost: \$4800. Signed by PFHC Secretary-Treasurer Meela Melnik-Proud. Deliverables: "Deliver six dairy cattle with demonstrated lineage to the former Collins Bay Penitentiary Farm dairy herd." Objectives: "Receipt of dairy cattle... which have a documented lineage to the former penitentiary farm herd from the contractor. The Pen Farm Co-Op has indicated a plan related to offender educational support as part of their proposal for sale of the cattle" (CSC A-2019-00146).

⁵⁷ The signed agreement prohibits the Panel members from exercising any influence that "may affect or appear to affect the objectivity or fairness of decisions." A conflict of interest "may be real, potential or perceived in nature" and "may occur when an Advisory Panel member participates in discussion or decision-making about a matter which may financially benefit that member... directly or indirectly, regardless of the size of the benefit" (CORCAN, 2017, June. *Farm Advisory Panel*. Terms signed by CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle and Dianne Dowling. CSC A-2018-00440).

⁵⁸ Save Our Prison Farms (2018, July 20). *The Cows are Coming Home - Monday August 13th Memorial Vigil [and] Community celebration* [Status update]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=954661764731714&set=a.445605698970659>. This was the last post on the campaign's social media page. The website domain www.saveourprisonfarms.ca was abandoned and now redirects to www.evolveourprisonfarms.ca.

⁵⁹ Atkinson, S. (2023, November 28). Pen farm co-op hopeful cow herd will finally go home. *Ontario Farmer*.

2. “UNPUBLISHED AGENDA” || PRISON FARMS REOPEN

On February 27, 2018, Kingston and the Islands MP Mark Gerretsen announced that the newly published Federal Budget 2018 had allocated \$4.3 million in funding over five years for the reopening of prison farms at Collins Bay Institution and Joyceville Institution in Kingston.⁶⁰ Save Our Prison Farms claimed this as a success of their campaign to “bring the cows home,” and media reported it as such.⁶¹ However, on March 7, 2018, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) informed the Prison Farm Advisory Panel that the new prison farms would be producing goat milk, and cows would not be included. The chair of the Panel, Dianne Dowling, told reporters that the prison farms would be supplying goat milk for Feihe International, a Chinese infant formula company building a processing facility in Kingston.⁶² MP Gerretsen openly defended the plan for CSC to “play a role” in Feihe’s production of goat milk-based infant formula.⁶³ CSC confirmed that the shift into commercial goat dairy was “a new beginning for CSC farm operations” but provided no details in formal announcements.⁶⁴ What began as an open secret quickly became classified. As Evolve raised concerns about the ethics and legality of the new prison farm model, and began investigating and opposing it, MP Gerretsen and others retracted their statements, promoting plausible deniability instead.

Details of the prison farm plan were only brought to light years later, and gradually, through Evolve’s investigations and Access to Information (ATI) requests. ATI legislation allows government institutions to withhold information such as “advice or recommendations,” “consultations or deliberations,” “plans or positions,” “contractual details and negotiations,” and “information that could result in a financial loss.”⁶⁵ This means that files obtained by Evolve were often heavily redacted. For example, the minutes from the

⁶⁰ Gerard, S. (2018, February 27). Mark Gerretsen Announces Federal Funding to Reopen Prison Farms. *Kingston Herald*. <https://kingstonherald.com/news/kingston-prison-farms-funding-2010321482>. Of the \$4.3 million, only \$3.7 million was available funding, with the remaining \$600,000 being “the calculated depreciation cost for the model and not actual funding available” (CSC, 2018, May 18. *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada’s penitentiary farm operations*. CSC A-2019-00124).

⁶¹ Examples: Stafford, T. (2018, June 21). The cows are coming home: Prison Farms to be reinstated at both Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions. *Kingstonist*. <https://www.kingstonist.com/news/the-cows-are-coming-home-prison-farms-to-be-reinstated-at-both-joyceville-and-collins-bay-institutions/>. Snowdon, F. (2018, June 21). More than 30 dairy cows now part of the prison farm program in Kingston. *Global News*. <https://globalnews.ca/news/4289722/more-than-30-dairy-cows-now-part-of-the-prison-farm-program-in-kingston/>.

⁶² MacAlpine, I. (2018, March 8). Cows not in initial prison farm plan. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/2018/03/08/cows-not-in-initial-prison-farm-plan>.

⁶³ Allan, M. (2019, June 11). Vigils for ethical prison farms to be held outside Collins Bay Institution. *Kingstonist*. <https://www.kingstonist.com/news/vigils-for-ethical-prison-farms-to-be-held-outside-collins-bay-institution/>.

⁶⁴ CSC (2018, February 28). *Media Lines: Re-opening of CORCAN Farm Operations*. CSC A-2018-00333.

⁶⁵ Examples of exemptions in ATI releases obtained by Evolve. See Government of Canada (n.d.). *Access to Information Act: Plain Language Guide to Exemptions and Exclusions*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/access-information-privacy/aia-plain-language-guide.html>.

meeting in which the Prison Farm Advisory Panel was notified of CSC's goat milk production plans are redacted in their entirety, and the business plans for the prison farms have been wholly withheld by CSC. However, from 2018-2023, Evolve was able to obtain a preponderance of evidence in official documentation that CSC intended for its goat dairy operation to supply the Chinese infant formula market. Finally, in 2024, Evolve obtained the documentary proof (Appendix 1: "Smoking Gun").

This chapter (and the next) exposes some of the negotiations and political commitments that informed the decision to reopen the prison farms, the strategic manipulation of public consultations and messaging, the false promises and misled expectations, and the biased reporting that ensued. It will show how, leading up to the 2018 reopening announcement, CSC was exploring new business models at Public Safety's behest, and the decision to open a commercial goat dairy operation was deeply political. The reopening was shaped by federal government commitments (details in footnote),⁶⁶ the CDC-Feihe deal, restrictions with supply management of the cow dairy sector, and the modernization of food services within the Correctional Service of Canada. This chapter will also show how despite ambitious promises to have the farms operational by 2019, realizing revenues by 2020, and achieving full sustainability by 2021, the rollout has faced repeated delays and costly setbacks that have been ill-reported by the media.

⁶⁶ There are still significant unanswered questions, including whether the Chinese infant formula partnership and the associated idea of using prison farms for commercial milk production originated under the Trudeau Liberals or the prior Harper Conservative government. ATI records show that deals with China's infant formula industry go back to the Harper Conservatives: "Around 2010, there was a project led by Canadian Dairy Manufacturing Inc. [for infant formula] which would have been exported to China. The investors were a team of 8 Chinese and Chinese Canadian individuals [but] for reasons that are not entirely clear, the project ended up in a series of lawsuits and CDM filed for bankruptcy around in 2015" (CDC, 2016, July 2. *SECRET COMMERCIAL CONFIDENTIAL. Background information regarding the involvement of the Canadian Dairy Commission in a project aimed at exporting infant formula to China.* AAFC A-2019-00055). Other records show that there was a "Farm consultation" briefing note sent to the CSC Commissioner in September 2015 while the Harper Conservatives were still in government, one month before the October 2015 election of the Trudeau Liberals (Email from David Molzahn, Manager, Community and Stakeholder Relations, CSC, 2016, December 20. *Subject: BN - Commissioner Farm consultation update Sept 20 2015.* CSC A-2018-00310). Evolve has filed an ATI request for the 2015 briefing notes on the prison farms (A-2023-00449) but CSC has delayed their release. Further evidence that could link the prison farm plan to the Harper Conservatives is found in a July 2016 inquiry from a journalist asking whether CSC's prison farm consultation "started under the new Liberal government or was it a long-standing plan?" CSC discussed how to answer this question: "Timing of launch: true that the news release of June 2nd could suggest that it is a recent initiative, but it doesn't clearly negate the possibility of this announcement being the outcome of something that predates the new government... the first briefing note [on prison farms reopening] goes back to February 2016, but it had been raised and discussed between other areas of CSC and MO prior to us getting involved. I would keep the time reference generic" (Email from Patrice Miron, Director, Communications and Engagement, CSC, 2016, July 7. CSC A-2018-00310).

2.1. “If sentiment prevails” || Charade Consultations

In 2015, the Liberal Party campaigned, in part, on promises to restore prison farms if elected.⁶⁷ In November 2015, one month after the Liberals were elected, CSC issued two briefing notes on “Opportunities for a New CORCAN Agribusiness,” but Evolve’s ATI requests have not yet resulted in the release of these records.⁶⁸ On June 2, 2016, the Liberal government announced in the House of Commons that it would initiate a “feasibility study” into reopening prison farms in Kingston,⁶⁹ and CSC assured that “once the feasibility study is complete, the findings will be posted publicly.”⁷⁰ However, as will be demonstrated, no feasibility study was ever conducted. Instead, there was only a rushed and politically manipulated two-part public consultation. The first part of the public consultation consisted of an online questionnaire hosted on CSC’s website, with the consulting firm Goss Gilroy hired to produce a report on the results; the second part was a Kingston Town Hall event hosted by Minister Goodale and MP Gerretsen, with the Monachus Consulting firm hired to host the event and produce a report on the results.⁷¹ Based on the public consultations, two reports were posted publicly on CSC’s website (since removed), summarizing feedback from the online questionnaire and Kingston Town Hall demonstrating public support for reopening prison farms.⁷² A third report was produced by Monachus Consulting summarizing results of the overall public

⁶⁷ “Saw [sic] our prison farms public meeting.” (2014, February 5). *Frontenac News*. <https://www.frontenacnews.ca/item/7167-saw-our-prison-farms-public-meeting>.

⁶⁸ Evolve obtained an internal CSC email, subject “RE: Request from AAFC re farm closures,” which states: “Please find attached the two recent Briefing Notes on this (from November 2015).” The attachments include “Signed by COM - BN to the Minister - Opportunities for a New CORCAN Agri...” and the email mentions “some older BNs to the Minister on the farms, which relate to legal action surrounding the closures...” (Email from Shannon Muldoon, Manager, Parliamentary Relations, CSC, 2016, May 16. CSC A-2018-00310). It remains unknown what legal action was taken against the closures and whether the same Save Our Prison Farms activists and members of CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel were involved. Evolve filed an ATI request for these 2015 briefing notes with PSC (A-2023-00564) and received a “no records” response in February 2024. Evolve filed an ATI request with AAFC (A-2023-00128) and received a “no records” response in March 2024. When Evolve sent AAFC the email showing that the briefing notes had been requested by AAFC, the ATI analyst stated that the records were likely “destroyed based on the retention policy” (Email from Anne Laniel, Senior Access and Privacy Advisor, AAFC, 2024, March 11). In a final attempt, Evolve filed an ATI request with CSC (A-2023-00449). CSC issued a 60-day extension, setting the legislated release date of the 2015 briefing notes, if they still exist, at May 15, 2024. As of July 2024, the records have not been released.

⁶⁹ MP Mark Gerretsen: “In 2010, the Conservative government of the time closed several prison farms throughout the country, without doing proper consultation... Can the minister provide some input into whether or not the government will continue along the same path, or reverse that decision of the previous government?” Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale: “The short answer is yes. We are launching a feasibility study on restoring prison farms in the Kingston area” (Gerretsen, M. & Goodale, R., 2016, June 2. “Public Safety.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard* 64. 42nd Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/house/sitting-64/hansard>).

⁷⁰ CSC (2016, June 2). *News Release: Feasibility study on the future of Kingston area penitentiary agribusiness announced*. PSC A-2018-00287.

⁷¹ CSC (n.d.). *Penitentiary Farms Background*. Prepared by Leanne McCarthy, Parliamentary Relations Unit, CSC. PSC A-2018-00451.

⁷² Memo by David Molzahn, Manager, Community and Stakeholder Relations, CSC (2016, October 5). *Reports: Town Hall Recommendations and Online Questionnaire*. CSC A-2018-00333.

consultation, and issuing recommendations. There was explicit instruction that the recommendations report was not for public release,⁷³ but through Access to Information its contents are now known.

The unpublished 2016 Monachus report contained the consultants' "professional opinion that the online and Town Hall consultations have not yet provided a solid basis for the government to make a decision as to whether or not to re-establish the farms and agriculture related programming in the Kingston area or elsewhere."⁷⁴ Monachus strongly recommended that the government conduct "a rigorous feasibility study" (including "external analyses" and "extensive consultation" by "external facilitators") before making any decision to move forward. The publicly posted Monachus report (no longer public) indicated that restoring prison farms, dairy in particular, was not feasible due to prohibitive cost, CSC's altered food service, and lack of evidence to support claims of their effectiveness, which were "opinions, based on personal observation and heartfelt beliefs and not upon any rigorous analysis of the actual impact of penitentiary farm programs on either rehabilitation or employability of inmates post release."⁷⁵ There was clear skepticism about the merits of public consultations as the sole basis for federal policy decision-making, an attitude captured in an undisguised exchange between a Monachus consultant and CSC: "It will be most interesting to see if sentiment prevails over good business and regulatory practices."⁷⁶

Of note, the 2016 online questionnaire results compiled by Goss Gilroy found that while there were "perceived benefits" of prison farms, respondents from the Kingston area "had favorable views slightly lower than the national average" as well as a lower percentage of respondents who believed that "there are employment opportunities for released offenders in agribusiness."⁷⁷ Willingness to hire an ex-offender was also "less pronounced" in Kingston than elsewhere in Canada: "One-third (33%) of the 523 respondents who answered the question said they would not hire an offender. This proportion was largely influenced by respondents from the Kingston area, nearly half of whom (45%) held this view. Without this area, the

⁷³ The three reports were "Town Hall report" (Monachus), "Online Questionnaire report" (Goss Gilroy), and "Recommendations report" (Monachus). The recommendations were not to be released publicly: "CSC has committed to making the reports publicly available by the fall of 2016. Monachus consultants recommendations are directed toward CSC and can be provided to the MO [Minister's Office] but not posted publicly... Provide the three documents to the MO. Post the two reports (not the recommendations)" (Memo by David Molzahn, Manager, Community and Stakeholder Relations, CSC, 2016, October 5. *Reports: Town Hall Recommendations and Online Questionnaire*. CSC A-2018-00333).

⁷⁴ Monachus Consulting (n.d.). *Re: Report on the Town Hall Meeting on the Feasibility of Re-establishing Penitentiary Farms at the Joyceville and Collin's Bay Institutions - Recommendations/Next Steps*. CSC A-2018-00333.

⁷⁵ Monachus Consulting (2016, September 19). *Report on the Town Hall Meeting on the feasibility of re-establishing penitentiary farms at the Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions*. CSC A-2018-00333. Formerly posted at <https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/publications/005007-5801-eng.shtml>.

⁷⁶ Email from a Monachus consultant [name redacted but the consultants were Albert Chambers and Myles Frosst] to David Molzahn, Manager, Community and Stakeholder Relations, CSC (2016, August 12). CSC A-2018-00310.

⁷⁷ Goss Gilroy Inc. (2016, September 30). *Online consultation on Institutional Agribusiness Report*. Prepared "from information provided by the Correctional Service of Canada." CSC A-2018-00333. Formerly posted at <https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/publications/005007-5802-eng.shtml>.

national figure would be 28%.” Given these findings, even without the promised (and strongly recommended) feasibility study, if the government’s decision had been *informed* by the results of the public consultation, Kingston’s prison farms would have been the *least* likely to have been restored. What Kingston had that other former prison farm sites did not, however, was proximity to the new Feihe infant formula factory (discussed more in the next chapter).

In early 2016, as CSC was preparing for the public consultations at the direction of Public Safety, CSC included several critical points in the first draft of the online questionnaire, demonstrating concern that a reopened penitentiary program, particularly animal agriculture, would not be financially viable or relevant, and CSC did not wish to explore commercial options.⁷⁸

- “CSC had indicated that it could not operate an animal-based agribusiness and have it be financially profitable.”⁷⁹
- “Since the closing of the farms, CSC has also implemented a modernization of its food services [and] no longer requires the food staples previously provided by the agriculture operations.”
- “As part of this process, we are inviting comments from interested Canadians about potential agribusiness opportunities that are evidence-based [and] avoid unfair market competition and offer value for investment.”⁸⁰

Equally critically, CSC’s original draft of the online questionnaire indicated that a reopened agriculture program would negatively impact CSC’s ability to deliver vocational training programs that enhance employability:

⁷⁸ CSC (2016, September 27). *Penitentiary Farm: Online Public Consultation Questions* [draft]. CSC A-2018-00310.

⁷⁹ CSC had emphasized more than once that both dairy and beef were not financially viable prospects. Another example is found in a CSC email exchange leading up to the public consultation process: “A preliminary cost estimate determined that to reopen a dairy farm, it will cost CSC approximately [redacted] dollars and then it would likely not operate at a profit... Previously, this was not a solution that met the test of value for money. A different option would be to reopen a beef farm. Again, a preliminary cost start-up estimate is [redacted] plus the purchase of cows which would take place at an auction. However, if CSC was to... train offenders in related skills such as mechanical trades required to work on farms, it would cost less and also provide transferable employment skills to offenders” (Email from Patrice Miron, Director, Communications and Engagement, CSC, 2016, April 29. CSC A-2018-00310).

⁸⁰ It is evident from this document that CSC’s position was that if the new government insisted on reopening prison farms, CSC wanted to explore low-cost non-commercial plant-based models with higher potential employment opportunities than the former animal-based operations. Evolve’s proposal fit these parameters exactly but was rejected because, as CORCAN’s CEO explained to Evolve, the government “specifically” wanted dairy operations (Meeting with CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle, 2019, January 30).

“To what extent would you oppose or support institutional agribusiness activities knowing that it means directing financial resources to this business line at the expense of training offenders in other employment industries that have been shown to have higher rates of offender employability upon release?”

All of the above portions of the questionnaire were struck out by Public Safety two days before it went live on June 2, 2016,⁸¹ along with the reasons why the former farms closed (they were not financially viable and did not contribute to employability).⁸² The Public Safety official who removed these points from the questionnaire was Justine Villeneuve, Policy Advisor to Minister Goodale.⁸³ Internally, CSC staff were alarmed at the “many radical changes” that the Minister’s Office had made, and expressed concern that the consultants’ final reports would be similarly manipulated.⁸⁴

ATI records also reveal that CSC objected to the term “feasibility study,” arguing that public consultations are not an objective process, and CSC expressed to Public Safety that an actual feasibility study should be conducted following the public consultations:

“In the HOC [House of Commons] the Minister said he’d be looking into a feasibility study, but the briefing note spoke of a town hall and consultations – [CSC’s David Molzahn⁸⁵] is wondering if this is what was meant by feasibility and is concerned about its objectivity. Regardless, he’d like to see the feasibility study come after the consultations.”⁸⁶

Records show that CSC made numerous requests for an actual feasibility study to be conducted, and fully expected a feasibility study to follow the public consultations. In one example, CSC requested permission from Public Safety “to submit a plan for conducting a feasibility study for reopening a penitentiary farm at

⁸¹ CSC had planned for the questionnaire to open on June 15, 2016, but on May 27, Public Safety informed CSC that they wanted it to go live on June 2 instead, the day that Minister Goodale and MP Gerretsen would deliver their parliamentary exchange announcing the government’s commitment to launch a prison farm “feasibility study” (see footnote 69). With two weeks shaved off the timeline on short notice, CSC was scrambling as “this comes as a bit of a surprise” (Email from David Molzahn, Manager, Community and Stakeholder Relations, CSC, 2016, May 27. CSC A-2018-00310).

⁸² Draft of *CSC Institutional Agribusiness - Online Public Consultation* edited by Justine Villeneuve, Policy Advisor, PSC, and emailed to Scott Harris, Regional Deputy Commissioner, CSC (2016, May 31). *Subject: Prison Farms Questionnaire*. CSC A-2018-00310.

⁸³ Villeneuve’s introduction to Parliament Hill began as campaign manager for Mark Holland, then as legislative assistant to MP Mark Holland (MP Holland was Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and a primary promoter of the new prison farm program along with MP Mark Gerretsen). Prior to the 2015 election of Justin Trudeau as prime minister, Villeneuve served as “special assistant for communications in Justin Trudeau’s office” (Ryckewaert, L., 2018, February 12. Status of Women Minister Monsef hires new D. Comms straight from Public Safety Minister Goodale’s team: Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale has overall seen two of his political staffers depart in recent weeks. *The Hill Times*. <https://www.hilltimes.com/story/2018/02/12/biotechnology-278/224113/>).

⁸⁴ Email from David Molzahn, Manager, Community and Stakeholder Relations, CSC (2016, October 25). *Subject: RE: Farms - Submitting report to MO*. CSC A-2018-00310.

⁸⁵ David Molzahn was CSC’s staff member in charge of coordinating the public consultations.

⁸⁶ Email from Emad Talisman, Junior Policy Analyst, PSC (2016, June 22). PSC A-2018-00451.

Collins Bay or Joyceville Institution,” noting that “the Monachus consultant group also provided their recommendations reiterating the importance of conducting a feasibility study.”⁸⁷ Rather than attending to CSC’s requests and concerns, Public Safety doubled down. Among the last-minute edits made to CSC’s online questionnaire, Justine Villeneuve crossed out the word “consultation” and replaced it with “feasibility study.”⁸⁸

Furthermore, CSC was concerned that the consultations were being specifically geared towards known prison farm supporters and activists, which Public Safety termed “key stakeholders.” Internally, CSC staff commented: “I would advise that I wouldn’t consider the majority of these individuals to be key stakeholders... most [are] regular citizens writing in on how they think working with animals is good for offenders.”⁸⁹ CSC described the “List of Key Stakeholders” as “the key folks we dealt with 5 years ago” (Save Our Prison Farms).⁹⁰

Although cow dairy was later added to the prison farm program at Public Safety’s instruction, documents show that CSC had been strongly reluctant to engage in cow dairy operations again, having made it clear to Public Safety that “The institutional farms were not financially viable as a business line for CORCAN” and “CSC no longer requires milk provided by dairy farms.”⁹¹ In multiple briefing notes between 2016 and 2017, CSC outlined why cow dairy was no longer feasible due to cost, quota, and Food Service Modernization. These were the same reasons cited by Monachus as to why the prospect of restoring cow dairy “in particular” was “prohibitive,” “unrealistic,” and “even less feasible” than the former farm operations, which “were found to be prohibitive for CORCAN... while they were operational.”⁹² After the former prison farm closures were completed in 2011, CSC had standardized its food service nationally, which eliminated the possibility of returning to in-house milk production. CSC also recognized that it would not be viable for a penitentiary agribusiness to sell cow milk commercially due to Canada’s supply management of cow dairy (quota).⁹³ Previously, CSC had received quota exemption from regulators (i.e.

⁸⁷ Email from Patrice Miron, Director, Communications and Engagement, to Amy Jarette, Assistant Commissioner, Communications and Engagement, CSC (2016, September 23). *Subject: Farm consultation speaking points*. CSC A-2018-00310.

⁸⁸ CSC (2016, September 27). *Penitentiary Farm: Online Public Consultation Questions* [draft]. CSC A-2018-00310.

⁸⁹ Email from Leanne McCarthy (2016, November 1). *Subject: RE: Farm stakeholders*. CSC A-2018-00310.

⁹⁰ Email from Stephen Hogan, Regional Director, Communications, to David Molzahn, Manager, Community and Stakeholder Relations, CSC (2016, April 28). *Subject: FW: List of Stakeholders of Farm Consult*. CSC A-2018-00310.

⁹¹ CSC (2016). *CSC Institutional Agribusiness - Online Public Consultation* [draft]. CSC A-2018-00310. After Public Safety’s revisions to the draft questionnaire, these lines were omitted from the final version.

⁹² Monachus Consulting (2016, September 19). *Report on the Town Hall Meeting on the feasibility of re-establishing penitentiary farms at the Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions*. Formerly posted at <https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/publications/005007-5801-eng.shtml>. CSC A-2018-00333.

⁹³ Supply management is a controversial Canadian policy that sees the federal government controlling production of cow milk, poultry and eggs, to regulate pricing and to prevent Canadian dairy products from being undersold (See for example:

Dairy Farmers of Ontario) on provision that the milk from prison farms be used for CSC’s internal purposes only, but following the closures and the implementation of CSC’s Food Service Modernization, the milk marketing boards gained access to the prison market:

“[CSC’s] self-sufficient model marketing milk and eggs without quota was always a sore spot with marketing boards, and processors wanting to sell into prisons. So it was only a matter of time before their continual tag team lobbies to government to shut them down, rumblings of which were heard behind the prison walls, caused a federal government to cave.”⁹⁴

As a result of the changed circumstances, CORCAN had to investigate alternative business models for reopening prison farms in response to the political directive. In February 2016, a briefing note from then-CSC Commissioner Don Head to the Public Safety Minister outlined how the public consultation process would be conducted, following which, by December 2016, “options and recommendations stemming from the consultation process will be developed by CSC.”⁹⁵ Commissioner Head noted that while the results of the public consultations would be made public, the recommendations would be subject to Cabinet Confidence, allowing them to be redacted from Access to Information releases. In December 2016, CORCAN’s then-CEO Christian D’Auray issued a briefing note to the Commissioner outlining three (redacted) recommendations for alternative business models (this briefing note was released in response to an ATI request for “All records containing any mention of Feihe International/Canada Royal Milk and/or infant formula in relation to prison farms”).⁹⁶ It stated:

“Of note, [with the former prison farms] CORCAN was exempt from acquiring Dairy Farmers of Ontario quotas related to supply management. This exemption was granted to CORCAN with the stipulation that all production will be consumed within CSC’s institutions... The Food Services Modernization has since been implemented, CSC now purchases powdered milk. Therefore, should a [cow] dairy farm operation be

McKenna, B., 2017, June 18. Countries pile on in attack of Canada’s dairy regime. *The Globe and Mail*. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/economic-insight/the-world-seems-to-hate-canadas-dairy-supply-management-system/article35353964/>. Also: Al Mallees, N., 2024, March 13. Supply management a ‘sacred cow,’ but politicians want more competition. *The Canadian Press*. <https://globalnews.ca/news/10356123/supply-management-canada/>.

⁹⁴ Cumming, I. (2020, August 11). Former prisoner has reservations about current project. *Ontario Farmer*.

⁹⁵ CSC (2016, February 10). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Penitentiary Farm Consultation Process*. PSC A-2018-00451.

⁹⁶ In January 2017, a nearly verbatim (and similarly redacted) briefing note was issued by CSC Commissioner Don Head to the Public Safety Minister (also released in response to the ATI request for records mentioning Feihe in relation to prison farms). The plan was already clearly established at this point, as the note concludes that by June 2017, CSC will have developed “a detailed business plan / implementation plan for the dairy operations” that will include “an engineering assessment... a detailed costing of the dairy operation... investment in capital (facilities and equipment) [and] an implementation plan” to begin “in fiscal year 2018-2019” (CSC, 2017, January 6. *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Reopening of CORCAN Farm at Collins Bay Institution*. CSC A-2019-00030).

reopened... CORCAN would have to either sell the milk (fresh or powdered) to CSC (which will require a supply management exemption from the Dairy Farmers of Ontario) or attempt to obtain milk quotas and sell the raw milk to the Dairy Farmers of Ontario... For that reason, CORCAN has concentrated its efforts in providing detailed information on the following three options / business model: [redacted]”⁹⁷

Despite the formal recommendations having already been developed by CORCAN in 2016, and approved by the CSC Commissioner and issued to the Public Safety Minister by January 2017, CSC and Public Safety continued to offer assurances to Evolve that no decisions had yet been made and all proposals were being considered. This, as would later be learned, was pretence.

2.2. “Suspicious activity” || Skewed Survey & Tainted Town Hall

One of the most troubling aspects of the public consultations is the evidence of manipulation of CSC’s online questionnaire in such a way as to support the politically desired public feedback, but this is not the only alarming activity revealed in ATI records from the public consultation period. As previously noted, the 2016 public consultations into the “feasibility” of reopening prison farms in Kingston consisted entirely of two elements: an online questionnaire and a Kingston Town Hall event. Not only were these public engagements not objective, as CSC had flagged, but ATI records show that both of these processes were corrupted.

Following Public Safety’s “radical changes” to CSC’s online questionnaire just before it went online, the questionnaire was open for an eight-week period, from June 2 to August 2, 2016,⁹⁸ although CSC experienced technical and political difficulties closing it.⁹⁹ Over the course of the first five weeks, responses

⁹⁷ CSC (2016, December 16). *Briefing Note to the Commissioner: Reopening of CORCAN Farm at Collins Bay Institution*. CSC A-2019-00030.

⁹⁸ CSC (2016, June 2). *News Release: Feasibility study on the future of Kingston area penitentiary agribusiness announced*. PSC A-2018-00287.

⁹⁹ Due to technical difficulties, CSC was unable to close the questionnaire until August 4, 2016: “It seems as if there has been some miscommunication/misunderstandings with regards to the closing of the prison farm survey... the survey is no longer searchable on the CSC website, however, the links still work and I can still get to the survey by searching it on Google. Is there any way to stop this? We are still getting survey responses and this survey really just needs to be closed” (Email from Kaitlyn Wardrop, Research Assistant, Research Branch, CSC, 2016, August 4. CSC A-2018-00310). To further complicate matters, CSC had to reopen the questionnaire after the closing date due to comments mistakenly made by Minister Goodale at the Kingston Town Hall on August 16, 2016. A dozen paper copies were filled out by Town Hall attendees and the Minister said they would be included. Internally, CSC noted that this was not allowable as the survey had officially closed and preliminary results were already being tabulated. Integrating twelve responses into the nearly 6000 already compiled would require that the consultants and CSC’s Research Branch “regenerate all the numbers,” a complex process that would require an additional week’s work. In the end, CSC concluded that they had no choice: “The problem is that the Minister said they would be included [and] if the Minister made that commitment then we have to

came in at a predictable pace of “just a few per day.”¹⁰⁰ Then, suddenly, at 10:15 a.m. on Sunday July 10, 2016, “suspicious activity”¹⁰¹ was reported as survey responses began rolling in “several per minute... every minute of a 24 hour day.”¹⁰² What occurred is best summed up in a series of emails between CSC’s manager in charge of the public consultations, David Molzahn, and CSC’s Research Branch Manager Jennie Thompson, as they began raising the alarm to CSC’s IT department:

“We have received in the neighbour[hood] of 1500 responses since 10 am yesterday is there any way to figure out if we are getting spammed?”¹⁰³

“We have received over 1700 response[s] since yesterday.”¹⁰⁴

“The number of responses... seem out of proportion to the pattern. Since the previous email [45 minutes ago], there have been just over 100 more responses.

Friday July 8	8 responses
Saturday July 9	4 responses
Sunday July 10	at 10:15 the responses started one or two per minute till midnight
Monday July 11	several responses per minute starting at 12.01 a.m.” ¹⁰⁵

“Over the weekend the response more than doubled. This morning we have about 4400 responses. We had 1700 when we spoke last week.”¹⁰⁶

“It seems odd that all of a sudden we start getting responses 24 hours a day almost every minute, when in the past we received just a few per day. Something seems outside of the scope of the normal pattern.”¹⁰⁷

“We are now at 4524. That is 23 more than when I last wrote [45 minutes ago]. It just does not make sense to me, especially because that same pace goes right through the night. You can check the log. The pace is pretty much identical every hour. We should not have the same response rate between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. as 8 am to 8 pm.”¹⁰⁸

follow-through on that” (Email exchange between David Molzahn, Manager, Community and Stakeholder Relations, and Andrea Moser, Director, Research Branch, CSC, 2016, August 18. CSC A-2018-00310).

¹⁰⁰ Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, July 12). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹⁰¹ Email from Peter Crane, CSC (2016, July 13). CSC A-2018-00310

¹⁰² Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, July 12). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹⁰³ Email from Jennie Thompson, Research Manager, Research Branch, CSC (2016, July 11). A-2018-00310.

¹⁰⁴ Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, July 11). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹⁰⁵ Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, July 11). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹⁰⁶ Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, July 12). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹⁰⁷ Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, July 12). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹⁰⁸ Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, July 12). CSC A-2018-00310.

“Is there any way that you can check to see if the system has been hacked and is sending out repetitive responses... What is happening is not logical. People are not sending in responses every minute of a 24 hour day. Besides, I periodically check the content of the responses and it appears to me that some are repetitive... I am not at all convinced that what we are experiencing is simply an enthusiastic response that began precisely at Sunday at 10:15. What does it take to verify if we have been hacked?”¹⁰⁹

“We have 4778 responses. We received 3000 between the weekend [Sunday] and today [Wednesday].”¹¹⁰

These accelerating concerns over a potential “malicious attack” were brought to the attention of one person in CSC’s IT department, Peter Crane, who was casually and persistently dismissive, calling “the small amount of data being added on” a mere “pocket of enthusiasm,” and proffering vague and irrational excuses.¹¹¹ ATI records do not provide any evidence that the situation was ever properly investigated, or that anyone outside of a very small circle of staff was ever notified of the problem. CSC had originally “thought we might get 300” responses to the online consultation but ended up with nearly 20 times the anticipated number of responses with a final tally of 5,890,¹¹² of which 4,190 were generated following the onset of “suspicious activity.”¹¹³ Since then, the government has frequently touted the “overwhelming” public support for reopening prison farms demonstrated by the “nearly 6,000 responses” to the online consultation.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, July 12). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹¹⁰ Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, July 13). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹¹¹ Peter Crane, who presumably worked in CSC’s IT department (ATI records do not contain his title or email signature), countered the concerns raised by Molzahn and CSC’s Research Branch with reassurances that there was nothing wrong: “I can’t find anything suspicious. Some interest has been generated. I will keep my eyes on the logs just to be safe.” When Molzahn pressed, Crane admitted that it could be “a malicious attack, but it seems unlikely based on the small amount of data added on.” Crane suggested that a recent CBC article “could account for the upsurge.” Molzahn replied “That would account for some of the uptake but we have had news stories all along and CSC has even tweeted announcements a few times resulting in only minor increases. The response this weekend, continuing into today, has more than doubled the responses.” CSC’s Research Branch found that the CBC article Crane was pointing to had been published several hours *after* the “suspicious activity” had started, so they were “not really sure what is going on.” In response, Crane called it just “a pocket of enthusiasm.” As thousands of “repetitive responses” kept pouring in, Molzahn pressed again, and again Crane suggested that it could be linked to a news story, this time pointing to a *Toronto Sun* article published a day *after* the problem started (<https://torontosun.com/2016/07/11/trudeau-reopening-prison-farms--e-i-e-i-oh>). Molzahn replied, “I get the interest due to the article [but] check the log...” Crane replied “Hmm. I will pursue the matter.” Crane again suggested that the activity looked “legitimate.” He assured Molzahn that he would “check the logs [for] any suspicious activity” but he “probably won’t be able to get to it until next week” (Email exchanges with Peter Crane, CSC, 2016, July 12 & 13. CSC A-2018-00310). Records do not show any further investigation or discussion of the matter.

¹¹² Memo by David Molzahn, Manager, Community and Stakeholder Relations, CSC (2016, October 5). *Reports: Town Hall Recommendations and Online Questionnaire*. CSC A-2018-00333.

¹¹³ As noted by Molzahn, the number of responses received prior to the “suspicious activity” had been 1,700.

¹¹⁴ “There were nearly 6,000 responses and almost 300 participants at a town hall during consultations on the feasibility of re-opening the penitentiary farms in 2016... The relaunch of the farms follows extensive consultation with community members in the Kingston area, who have been overwhelmingly supportive” (CSC, 2019, August 15. *News Release: Penitentiary farms officially relaunched*. CSC A-2019-00503).

Even before the suspicious activity began, ATI records show that CSC’s coordinator of the public consultations, David Molzahn, was growing concerned about the direction things were taking, and distrustful of the political manipulation that appeared to be occurring. When he shared the online consultation link to a researcher at Justice Canada, Molzahn said:

“The document on-line was edited pretty heavily by the MO [Minister’s Office] just before it was posted, so does not fully reflect what we would have preferred to have as background material... Be happy to share more if you would like.”¹¹⁵

Also prior to the onset of the suspicious activity, an email from Molzahn offers a glimpse into the early questionnaire results, which appeared to favour small-scale horticultural projects:

“As of this morning, we have 1022 respondents to the online consultation event. One recurring theme, at this point, is that CSC should consider more greenhouse operations. The range of plants should include flowers, shrubs and vegetables. We will see if that theme holds throughout the experience.”¹¹⁶

This provides evidence that the online consultation results were not originally on a trajectory that would have supported a decision to reopen dairy operations. There is also evidence that many of the comments that were coming in were not supportive of agribusiness as an employment training line in general. When the questionnaire closed, Molzahn forwarded a series of responses to an individual (name redacted) “to give you a flavour of what we are hearing on the survey.”¹¹⁷ The examples highlighted by Molzahn include:

“I believe that the government needs to ensure that the CSC’s agribusiness is not making the life of local farmers more difficult.”

“The skills of working with cattle and crops are very specific and limited in transferrability [sic].”

“There could be conflicting markets.”

¹¹⁵ Email from David Molzahn, CSC, to Susan McDonald, Justice Canada (2016, June 10). CSC A-2018-00310. In reply, McDonald invited Molzahn to “meet up for a coffee down the road and you can give me the good, the bad and everything else!!”

¹¹⁶ Email from David Molzahn to 17 CSC National Headquarters staff (2016, June 8). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹¹⁷ Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, August 4). CSC A-2018-00310.

“The incarcerated trainees would have a much higher chance of further employment with non-agriculture jobs.”

“Having been in the dairy business and worked with multiple different private farming operations... almost all [are] family run [so] there is a very real reluctance to have a family having to interact with someone who has been in the federal prison system.”

“There are few jobs in dairy farming.”

“Education that offers literacy and numeracy skills then vocational training in the highest demand service industries is the best bet.”

“Again not useful skills. Products just compete with family farms.”

“You don’t hear about job fairs or demand for staff to work at farms. You do hear about new construction or places looking for electricians, mechanics, etc. As the baby-boomers continue to retire, many of those jobs will need to be filled. Unfortunately farming isn’t one of them.”

“The government needs to start making sensible decision and pay attention to citizens opinion... we need to think about how much money it is going to cost us to re-open. Is the gain worth the cost. In this situation, I don’t think so.”

“The farms are closed. The cost to re-open them seems far more than the gain.”

“Training in the trades would benefit inmates far more than agriculture. Agriculture has gone more tech based and requires less workers than it did before plus there are very few job opportunities. Speciality trades such as construction, electrician, plumbing, HVAC, etc will always be necessary.”

“Farming is a hard job and the rewards are far less than they were in the past. With the corporate farms now pushing the profits down, I don’t see how agribusiness is the best possible opportunity after an inmate is released.”

There are many internal exchanges between Molzahn and CSC’s Research Branch that exhibit a crescendo of skepticism and concern over the merits of the public consultations. They note, for example, that “Our process to date has been driven by MO [Minister’s Office]” and results from the consultations would:

“be treated differently than a regular research product given that it is a response to MO direction vs a CSC research project... we are doing this project for the MO [Minister’s Office] so you are right that the process is not the usual way [and] the MO will approve what is released... this is not the same as a traditional research project.”¹¹⁸

CSC’s Research Branch underscored the illegitimacy of the consultation results from a research perspective: “Given that the sample is one of convenience, it is not possible to use inferential statistics with this data. So, there will be no discussion of ‘statistical significance’ when speaking about this data.”¹¹⁹ It is evident that CSC did not anticipate that the prison farm consultations would spiral into another iteration of a “political penal drama.” Early in the process, CSC staff were “doubtful that we will get an overwhelming response to this consultation.”¹²⁰ They laughingly commented that “apparently there is faith that the farms will be reopened.”¹²¹ CSC’s Research Branch considered the project “so minor they wondered if we needed to work with them at all.”¹²²

As CSC staff attempted to roll out the public consultations in a professional and evidence-based manner, they struggled with how to address questions of market competition, financial viability, and lack of relevance to employability “in a way that keeps to the political agenda.”¹²³ CSC’s project manager Molzahn wanted the public consultations to go “broader” than Kingston to explore how agribusiness could apply “in Toronto or Kitchener or Ottawa [to] help people see the transition from prison to city [and] bring a counter point to those whose sole reason is to see CSC get back into dairy farming in Kingston. It is quite clear to me that there are several agenda’s [sic] at play.”¹²⁴

As the level of political manipulation and interference in the public consultations intensified, so did CSC’s level of concern, with Molzahn expressing frustration and reluctance to proceed:

“This suggests further that there is an unpublished agenda for the Farms. I wonder if we could learn what it is. It would make the next steps much easier for us. I am hesitant to proceed with a consultation process without a bit more clarity.”¹²⁵

¹¹⁸ Emails between David Molzahn and CSC’s Research Branch (2016, June 7). *Subject: RE: follow-up questions regarding objective analyst for the prison farm roll-up.* CSC A-2018-00310.

¹¹⁹ Email from Jennie Thompson, Research Manager, Research Branch, CSC (2016, June 7). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹²⁰ Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, May 19). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹²¹ Email from [name redacted] to David Molzahn, CSC (2016, August 9). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹²² Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, May 27). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹²³ Email from [name redacted] to David Molzahn, CSC (2016, August 4). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹²⁴ Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, July 19). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹²⁵ Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, May 13). CSC A-2018-00310.

This apprehensive statement was made after Public Safety’s Press Secretary Scott Bardsley intervened in May 2016 to stop CSC from exploring potential uses for the farmland.¹²⁶ This already strong sense of unease was expressed before Molzahn and colleagues witnessed and weathered Public Safety’s last-minute manipulation of the online consultation questions, the aggressive acceleration of the public consultation timeline, and the suspicious activity in the online consultation which began on Sunday June 10, 2016. On Monday June 11, 2016, Public Safety ordered CSC to issue the news release announcing the Kingston Town Hall event.¹²⁷

In preparation for the Kingston Town Hall, CSC’s Research Branch made one thing clear: that the preliminary results from the online questionnaire were not to be brought into the Town Hall. The results were still being assessed by CSC’s Research Branch and the Goss Gilroy consultants who were hired to produce the final report on the online consultation. Before any information could be made public, CSC’s Research Branch had to vet both the accuracy and the interpretation of the data. It was also considered crucial that results from one part of the public consultation not enter into and thereby influence the other part:

“All of the numbers will be crunched as of tomorrow; however, I would not recommend that you share any details of these numbers until the consultant has prepared the report. The numbers have not been completely vetted until we have reviewed the first draft of the report and see how these numbers have been interpreted. Furthermore, the town hall meeting is another piece of the consultation, which should not be influenced by the findings of the online consultation. You don’t want to lead the town hall consultation in any one direction.”¹²⁸

¹²⁶ After Public Safety approved CSC’s outline for a nationwide consultation plan in February 2016, and then changed the plan in April 2016 to focus on Kingston only, CSC prepared in May 2016 to publish an “Expression of Interest for Agricultural Lands” in Kingston as part of the “process to assess the feasibility of re-establishing agriculture offender employment initiatives.” When Public Safety found out, Senior Advisor Scott Bardsley reacted with an emphatic high priority message (emphasis his): “Please **hold and do not publish**. My colleague Justine Villeneuve, our policy advisory [sic] on CSC, will be discussing serious concerns in the Minister’s Office about this with Scott Harris [CSC Regional Deputy Commissioner]” (Email from Scott Bardsley, Press Secretary, PSC, 2016, May 12. CSC A-2018-00310). The reason why Public Safety would stop CSC from exploring options for farmland use only makes sense in light of what is now known about the government’s predetermined plan. At the time, CSC staff had no way of understanding Public Safety’s reaction, but this appears to be the point at which they realized that the process would not be objective or within CSC’s control.

¹²⁷ The news release was delayed slightly as it had to go through CSC’s vetting process, and Public Safety had again shaved weeks off CSC’s original timeline on short notice. CSC staff scrambled to meet Public Safety’s rushed demands: “FYI - we were told we needed to put out a release asap yesterday afternoon. This is a different situation. I will provide more context offline” (Email from Amy Jarette, Assistant Commissioner, Communications and Engagement, CSC, 2016, July 12. CSC A-2018-00310).

¹²⁸ Email from Jennie Thompson, Research Manager, Research Branch, CSC (2016, August 9). CSC A-2018-00310.

CSC's Research Branch informed Molzahn that preliminary data from the online questionnaire could be shared with the Monachus consultants hired to conduct the Town Hall meeting, with the bold disclaimer (emphasis theirs): "Please note at this time, **this data should not be shared beyond the consultant.**"¹²⁹ Molzahn replied with the reassurance that "The facilitators are quite professional. I am certain they have handled raw data in their roles as facilitators in the past and will not compromise the town hall meeting."¹³⁰

Despite CSC's emphatic clarity, the consultants did exactly what they were instructed not to do: they brought the unvetted preliminary results into the Town Hall meeting, and even shared wrong numbers and erroneous interpretations of the results, which ended up on the record in the resulting transcript and final report on the Town Hall consultation, and associated media coverage. The fallout of this is captured, again, in a series of emails that show CSC's sense of alarm at how this could have happened, and the consequences this would have on the legitimacy and objectivity of the public consultation:

"The town hall consultation document [has] a section on the 'findings' of the online consultation and several points of interpretation and numbers are not correct. Larry [Motiuk] was already unhappy that David released these numbers to the facilitators and subsequently reported in the media (which of course we told him not to do in no uncertain term). I am recommending that all references to the findings be removed... and quite frankly some[one] should speak to David or his boss about how unacceptable this is."¹³¹

"We shared the data so that the consultant who was doing the quantitative analysis could do his work within the established timelines and we told David that the data was not to be used by the facilitators for the town hall."¹³²

"In fact, the data presently shared in this document are not correct and were never correctly interpreted or relayed to the Canadian public. If the information included here was shared and is now part of the public record, it is unfortunate, since it is full of errors."¹³³

"The final decision regarding the numbers in the report is that they should stay even if they are wrong as they were made part of the Public record by the town hall consultants... I have to say I am terribly disappointed

¹²⁹ Email from Andrea Moser, Director, Research Branch, CSC (2016, August 10). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹³⁰ Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, August 9). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹³¹ Email from Jennie Thompson, Research Manager, Research Branch, CSC (2016, September 11). *Subject: Re: Prison Farm Townhall report - Problem.* CSC A-2018-00310.

¹³² Email from Andrea Moser, Director, Research Branch, CSC (2016, September 12). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹³³ Email from Lynn Stewart, Ph.D., C.Psych., Senior Research Manager, Research Branch, CSC (2016, September 13). *Subject: RE: review town hall meeting report.* CSC A-2018-00310.

with the outcome... I am also greatly concerned that none of this is ever going to be discussed with David, which means that he will not learn the impact of his decisions.”¹³⁴

It appears that CSC’s Research Branch believed that Molzahn had not informed the Monachus consultants that they were not to share any data, preliminary or otherwise, from the online consultation at the Town Hall event. However, ATI records show that when Molzahn sent the preliminary data files to Monachus on August 11, 2016, he included the clear disclaimer from the research team in bold font (“**this data should not be shared beyond the consultant**”) and underscored that it cannot be made public until “all data and the final report has been approved.”¹³⁵ A Monachus consultant (name redacted) replied with one word, “understood.”¹³⁶ In another email, two days prior to receiving the data, a Monachus consultant acknowledged that they would not share the online consultation information, although they did mention an “exception... to make a few, short comments about what was heard in the on-line survey – but again this would involve only some headlines about what was heard.”¹³⁷ In the same email, the consultant commented that “lines of communication with the CSC communicators and the Minister’s office are still a bit shaky.” The meaning of this statement is open to interpretation, but it may suggest that the consultants were receiving conflicting messages from CSC and the Minister’s Office, which could explain why the consultants did precisely what CSC had instructed them not to do.

ATI records show that the Public Safety Minister’s Office was invested in the outcome of the Town Hall meeting, with Minister Goodale himself choosing the venue,¹³⁸ and his Office reserving the right to review and approve the meeting facilitator.¹³⁹ Questions arise from irregularities in the selection and hiring of the chosen facilitator (Monachus). For the first phase of the public consultation process, CSC had hired Goss Gilroy to write the report on the results of CSC’s online questionnaire following a Request for Proposals (RFP) and standard bid evaluation process.¹⁴⁰ However, ATI records suggest that Monachus had been preselected to facilitate the Town Hall and to produce the final reports on the Town Hall and the overall public consultation process.¹⁴¹ It was on July 26, 2016, that CSC issued the RFP for a consultant to produce

¹³⁴ Email from Jennie Thompson, Research Manager, Research Branch, CSC (2016, September 12). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹³⁵ Email from David Molzahn, CSC, to a Monachus consultant (2016, August 11). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹³⁶ Email from a Monachus consultant to David Molzahn, CSC (2016, August 11). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹³⁷ Email from a Monachus consultant to David Molzahn, CSC (2016, August 9). CSC A-2018-00310.

¹³⁸ “The Minister has asked if we could use Memorial Hall as the venue” (Email from Kyle Lawlor, Regional Communications Manager, CSC, 2016, July 4. *Subject: Memorial Hall*. CSC A-2018-00310).

¹³⁹ “The MO wants to review the facilitator” (Email from David Molzahn, CSC, 2016, July 4. CSC A-2018-00310).

¹⁴⁰ Email from Danielle Cameron, Procurement Officer, CSC (2016, July 26). *Subject: RFP 21120... Statistical Analyst*. CSC A-2018-00310. The contract was awarded to Goss Gilroy on August 4, 2016: “I will advise the contact at Goss Gilroy that they are recommended for Contract award” (Email from Danielle Cameron, Procurement Officer, CSC, 2016, August 4. CSC A-2018-00310).

¹⁴¹ A “facilitator plan” was submitted by CSC’s Regional Deputy Commissioner Scott Harris to the Public Safety Minister’s Office on July 2, 2016. ATI records show that CSC staff were perplexed when they did not hear back from Public Safety for

the report on the first part of the public consultation (the online questionnaire), and on that same day, CSC's David Molzahn wrote that the contract for the second part of the public consultation "will be with Monachus consulting," but "until the contract is signed, we should not be providing this information publicly."¹⁴²

As has been documented, the federal government's decision to reopen prison farms was based entirely on a public consultation that did not constitute a feasibility study, was not objective, and still failed to provide a solid basis for a decision.¹⁴³ Worse, the first part of the consultation was politically manipulated to support a desired conclusion, the bulk of responses were generated by unexplained suspicious activity, and the second part of the consultation was contaminated by the inappropriate introduction of inaccurate data from the first part. Since the government's strategy was to base its decision solely on a demonstration of public support, it would have presented an element of risk if the support did not manifest sufficiently to justify the investment. At every stage of the process, Public Safety intervened to prevent CSC from having any authority to objectively explore the feasibility of reopening prison farms, pointing to awareness that an objective assessment would not have resulted in the politically desired results.

Following the release of the manipulated, tainted, erroneous, and erroneously interpreted "findings"¹⁴⁴ of the public consultations, news outlets across Canada picked up a Canadian Press story announcing that "the consultation report released by CSC" showed "large recognition of the value of institutional agribusiness and thus, a strong support for re-establishing penitentiary farms [to] help the rehabilitation of inmates."¹⁴⁵ Internally, the response from CSC's Research Manager was an appalled ".....aghhhhhhh."¹⁴⁶

nearly two weeks, given the aggressive timeline that Public Safety had set. Then on July 15, 2016, Molzahn emailed Harris: "Scott, 2 sites with Monachus" (Email from David Molzahn, CSC, 2016, July 15. *Subject: some web sites with monachus.* CSC A-2018-00310).

¹⁴² "Our contract will be with Monachus consulting. The lead consultant will be [redacted]. That being said, until the contract is signed, we should not be providing this information publicly" (Email from David Molzahn, CSC, 2016, July 26. CSC A-2018-00310).

¹⁴³ "It is our professional opinion that the online and Town Hall consultations have not yet provided a solid basis for the government to make a decision as to whether or not to re-establish the farms and agriculture related programming in the Kingston area or elsewhere" (Monachus Consulting, 2016, August 16. *Re: Report on the Town Hall Meeting on the Feasibility of Re-establishing Penitentiary Farms at the Joyceville and Collin's Bay Institutions - Recommendations/Next Steps.* CSC A-2018-00333).

¹⁴⁴ "There is no point mincing word[s] – particularly when, as you point out, there are implications for the Service [and] very concerning points around the interpretation of the 'findings'" (Email from John Weekes, Ph.D., Senior Research Manager, to Lynn Stewart, Ph.D., C.Psych., Senior Research Manager, Research Branch, CSC, 2016, September 13. *Subject: RE: Feedback on the report.* CSC A-2018-00310).

¹⁴⁵ Media monitoring summary shared by Dena Derksen, CSC (2016, November 10). "Support grows for prison farms" (2016, November 10). *The Canadian Press*. Picked up by *Ottawa Sun*, *Times Colonist*, *Kingston Whig-Standard*, *Radio-Canada*, *Global News*, *City News*, *Chronicle Herald*, *The Spectator*, and dozens of other news outlets and radio stations. CSC A-2018-00310.

¹⁴⁶ Email from Jennie Thompson, Research Manager, Research Branch, CSC (2016, November 10). CSC A-2018-00310.

2.3. “NO – this would be a conflict” || Prison Farm Advisory Panel

Following the conclusion of public consultations in 2016, CSC received instruction from Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale to “take concrete action” to reopen Kingston’s prison farms and to establish a seven-member Prison Farm Advisory Panel “by the end of February 2017.”¹⁴⁷ This Panel, which consisted almost entirely of individuals affiliated with Save Our Prison Farms, was appointed by Minister Goodale on May 11, 2017¹⁴⁸ to provide “non-binding recommendations and advice to CSC about potentially reopening the penitentiary farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions.”¹⁴⁹ While a citizen advisory panel appointed by the federal government would be expected to aspire to a high level of balanced representation and commitment to evidence-based policy recommendations, that standard was not met in this case. Nearly all, or all, members of the appointed Panel were in positions of conflict of interest, and shared a single-minded goal of instating dairy operations and a stated unwillingness to consider any prison farm models that were not based on animal agribusiness.¹⁵⁰

The appointed Panel members were:

- Dianne Dowling (beef and dairy farmer, NFU regional president, and SOPF spokesperson)
- Jeff Peters (beef farmer, NFU regional director, and SOPF spokesperson)
- Bridget Doherty (Sisters of Providence, and SOPF spokesperson)
- Tony Straathof (dairy and veal farmer, NFU provincial director, and SOPF supporter¹⁵¹)

¹⁴⁷ CSC (2017, February 14). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Reopening of CORCAN farm at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institutions*. CSC A-2018-00441.

¹⁴⁸ CSC (2017, May 11). *News Release: Advisory panel for the reopening of Penitentiary farms at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institutions announced*. https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/news/2017/05/advisory_panel_forthereopeningofpenitentiaryfarmsatcollinsbayand.html.

¹⁴⁹ CSC (2019, July 2). *Media Lines: Reopening of CORCAN Farm Operations*. CSC A-2018-00441.

¹⁵⁰ A CSC briefing note states that members with specific expertise “to advise on the re-launch of the dairy operations” were sought (CSC, 2017, March 16. *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Establishment of Advisory Panel for CORCAN Farms*. CSC A-2019-00030). During Evolve’s presentation to the Panel in August 2017, it was made clear that the Panel would not consider any prison farm model that did not include dairy operations, as recorded in the meeting minutes: “the recommendations from the Farm Advisory Panel will include animal operations” (CSC, 2017, August 2. *Record of Discussion: Farm Advisory Panel*. CSC A-2018-00440).

¹⁵¹ “The recent news article from the CBC stating Kingston’s cows are closer to coming home, is encouraging news to many supporters of the federal prison farm program that had been cancelled in Kingston, stated Tony Straathof, president of the Renfrew County National Farmers Union... Recently, the Pen Farm Co-op released a statement saying it received a commitment from the federal government to re-open the prison farm operation in Kingston... Mr. Straathof said, ‘The board of the co-op plans to meet government officials later this month to plot out plans to get the farm online’ [and] Diane [sic] Dowling of the Pen Farm Co-op, said it could take about \$2 million to re-establish the prison farm” (“Renfrew County National Farmers Union cautiously happy about the prison farm news,” 2016, January 28. *Renfrew Mercury*. <https://issuu.com/renfrewmercury/docs/renfrew012816>).

- Alec Ross (school board trustee, and SOPF supporter¹⁵²)
- Catherine Latimer (Executive Director of the John Howard Society, and SOPF supporter¹⁵³)
- Bruce Vandenberg (goat milk broker)

There are no available ATI records that show any process in the recruitment, selection, or appointment of the Panel members, so how the Panel membership was determined, and by whom, are questions that have not been fully answered.¹⁵⁴ There was only one member of the Panel who was not from the Kingston region or affiliated with the special interest groups (Save Our Prison Farms and the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op) that have an ideological and financial stake in the reopening of the prison farms and the sale of cows to CSC. This was Bruce Vandenberg, owner of Mariposa Dairy, a goat dairy broker business in Lindsay, Ontario, 250 km from Kingston. Co-owned by Gay Lea,¹⁵⁵ Mariposa Dairy receives half of all goat milk produced in Ontario.¹⁵⁶ Vandenberg also stands out as he was not on the original proposed Panel roster. An ATI

¹⁵² Alec Ross has been credited as a photographer for SOPF events, and he also claimed credit for the photo of the Pen Herd cows that was distributed to the press by MP Mark Gerretsen without photo credit. After sharing the photo, Evolve received the following email from Ross: “I noticed your poster (on Facebook) for the Evolve Our Prison Farms vigils at Collins Bay. The photo of the cows on the poster was taken by me, but used (and altered) by EOPF without my permission. This is a blatant violation of copyright. Please remove the image from your advertising immediately” (Email from Alec Ross, 2019, June 12). Calvin Neufeld replied: “We were unaware of this. The photo was issued by the Office of MP Mark Gerretsen. It is in common use across numerous sites which either credit Gerretsen’s office or use it without credit. Our non-commercial use of the photo is a direct reference to a current affairs public image in common use that has become symbolic of the cows at the prison farms. If you wish to pursue this, you will need to provide proof that you are indeed the photographer, explain how copyright applies given the circumstances of its release and public use, and explain why you are targeting us uniquely (unless you’re issuing similar “cease and desist” notices to all others who have used the image). As a member of the Prison Farm Advisory Panel with a mandate to promote partnerships, it would be problematic for you to pursue this. The prison farms are a federal program. It would be inappropriate and undemocratic for the Advisory Panel to exercise control over the only images that are publicly available, allowing free use by everyone except us on personal grounds. That said, if you feel very strongly about this, please feel free to call me if you would like to discuss further” (Email from Calvin Neufeld, 2016, June 17). Ross did not reply.

¹⁵³ In 2017, Catherine Latimer and Dianne Dowling promoted the Save Our Prison Farms campaign at an event hosted by Queen’s University Chaplain Kate Johnson and the visiting Guelph Summer Lectures Club (Guelph Summer Lectures Club, 2017, May 24. “Prison Reform Lectures.” Hosted at Queen’s University Theological Hall). At this event, Latimer referred to the leaders of Save Our Prison Farms, Dianne Dowling and Jeff Peters, as “dear friends” and “colleagues.” Evolve requested meetings with Latimer in 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021, but never received a reply.

¹⁵⁴ Given the heavy representation by the “key stakeholders” who were affiliated with Save Our Prison Farms and the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op, it is conceivable that the Panel roster may have been proposed by, or influenced by, the person who was appointed as the Panel chair, Dianne Dowling, lead spokesperson for Save Our Prison Farms and director of the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op. Evolve has attempted to trace the origins of the Panel roster through ATI requests without success. However, as documented in Evolve’s 2019 complaint filed with the federal Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner: “In a meeting with Kingston MP Mark Gerretsen on February 28 2017, Mr. Gerretsen told us candidly that ‘Minister Goodale has regular phone calls with Dianne Dowling’ and added that he has ‘never seen someone at that level routinely calling a private citizen to discuss matters of policy’” (Evolve Our Prison Farms, 2019, May 2. *Prison Farms Conflict of Interest*. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Prison-Farm-Conflict-of-Interest-and-Ethics-Complaints-2018-2019.pdf>). Direct personal communications between Dowling and Goodale during the time that the Panel roster was being composed could explain the absence of any paper trail.

¹⁵⁵ Gay Lea (2016, November 16). *News Release: Gay Lea Foods announces record investment*. <https://www.gaylea.com/news/about-us/gay-lea-announces-investment-transform-canadian-dairy>.

¹⁵⁶ Scott, L. (2023, April 4). “Mariposa Dairy.” Legislative Assembly of Ontario. *Official Report of Debates (Hansard) No. 62A*. 43rd Parliament, 1st session. https://www.ola.org/sites/default/files/node-files/hansard/document/pdf/2023/2023-04/04-APR-2023_L062A.pdf.

release of “records containing any mention of Feihe... in relation to prison farms”¹⁵⁷ included a briefing note with the original proposed membership for CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel. All of the proposed members were appointed but the last name is redacted. Underneath is a handwritten comment by Minister Goodale: “NO – this would be a conflict. See changes.”¹⁵⁸ The replacement proposed by Minister Goodale for this still unidentified candidate was Vandenberg,¹⁵⁹ whose business Mariposa Dairy and affiliated Gay Lea were consulted by CSC and Feihe on building up Ontario’s goat dairy industry. The chair of CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel told the *Kingston Whig-Standard* that the expectation was for CSC to sell its goat milk through a broker rather than negotiate a contract directly with Feihe,¹⁶⁰ which could explain why Vandenberg was selected to replace the candidate who apparently posed a more direct conflict of interest. It is likely, then, that the original proposed Panel roster included an individual who was associated with Feihe.¹⁶¹

As to the other six members who were all affiliated with the “Save Our Prison Farms coalition”¹⁶² (openly boasted in formal announcements by the government and CSC), Evolve filed complaints with the federal Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner Mario Dion in 2018 and 2019.¹⁶³ Evolve submitted documents detailing Minister Goodale’s multiple in-person and teleconference meetings with the individuals who requested, and then received, the ministerial appointments, in addition to other preferential treatment that was exercised in their favour based on their affiliation with Save Our Prison Farms. Section 7 of the Conflict of Interest Act (Preferential Treatment) states: “No public office holder shall, in the exercise of an official power, duty or function, give preferential treatment to any person or organization based on the identity of

¹⁵⁷ CSC A-2019-00030.

¹⁵⁸ CSC (2017, March 16). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Establishment of Advisory Panel for CORCAN Farms*. CSC A-2019-00030.

¹⁵⁹ Minister Goodale signed the briefing note, with his handwritten notes flagging the conflict and recommending that it “Would be wise to go with... Bruce or Sharon Vandenberg” instead (CSC, 2017, March 16. *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Establishment of Advisory Panel for CORCAN Farms*. CSC A-2023-00391).

¹⁶⁰ “Diane [sic] Dowling of Save Our Prison Farms agreed that no contract for milk supply has been signed between the CSC and Feihe, but that it’s easy to draw a connection... ‘But there has to be a contract signed. And in the goat business, that’s often done through a broker’” (Balogh, M., 2019, August 12. ‘The animals set me right’. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/news/local-news/the-animals-set-me-right>).

¹⁶¹ Evolve has methodically verified that this proposed Panel briefing note was not somehow released in error in response to requests for records that mention Feihe in relation to the prison farms. The same briefing note was released by both CSC and Public Safety in response to similarly worded ATI requests in 2018 and 2019. In 2024, Evolve filed a request again specifically for CSC briefing notes that mention Feihe, and this same document was once again released. There is no other content in the briefing note other than the proposed Panel roster and the one redacted name and bio.

¹⁶² CSC (2017, May 11). *News Release: Advisory panel for the reopening of Penitentiary farms at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institutions announced*. https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/news/2017/05/advisory_panel_forthereopeningofpenitentiaryfarmsatcollinsbayand.html.

¹⁶³ Evolve Our Prison Farms (2018, July 27 & 2019, May 2). *Prison Farms Conflict of Interest*. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Prison-Farm-Conflict-of-Interest-and-Ethics-Complaints-2018-2019.pdf>.

the person or organization.”¹⁶⁴ Following his 2018 investigation, Commissioner Dion concluded, inaccurately, that Minister Goodale had not been involved in the Panel appointments:

“According to the information my Office has gathered, Mr. Goodale did not appoint the members of the advisory panel [and] Mr. Goodale did not exercise any official power in relation to the appointment of the members of the advisory panel.”¹⁶⁵

This conclusion is contradicted by numerous records obtained by Evolve, including emails from Save Our Prison Farms leadership requesting the appointments, and then thanking Minister Goodale for having invited them to join the Panel, as well as a response to a 2017 Order Paper question in which Minister Goodale himself indicates that he was responsible for selecting the Prison Farm Advisory Panel appointees: “The Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness is responsible for selecting the community members of the Advisory Panel for the Reopening of Penitentiary Farms.”¹⁶⁶ Evolve submitted several such records to Commissioner Dion in May 2019 with a request to re-investigate, given that the documents demonstrate:

“that there is a transparent trail of evidence connecting Minister Goodale personally with the process of selecting and appointing the panel members; that the selection was directly related to their identities with Save Our Prison Farms and the Pen Herd Co-op; that this is well known among members of the Kingston community; and that any effort on the part of Minister Goodale to distance himself from the process did not occur prior to our Conflict of Interest complaint. We therefore also have reason to believe that Minister Goodale provided false or misleading information to the Ethics Commissioner in the course of your investigation last year.”¹⁶⁷

In response, Commissioner Dion reversed course, stating that Minister Goodale had not denied his involvement in the panel appointments, and therefore had not provided false or misleading information. To rationalize this, Commissioner Dion claimed that he had not actually investigated or communicated with Minister Goodale at all, stating that his conclusions “were not based on statements by the Minister but rather on information gathered from you and from public sources.” Commissioner Dion conceded that:

¹⁶⁴ Justice Laws Website. *Conflict of Interest Act* (S.C. 2006, c. 9, s. 2). Government of Canada. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-36.65/FullText.html>.

¹⁶⁵ Letter from Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner Mario Dion (2018, August 21).

¹⁶⁶ House of Commons (2017, September 19). *Order Paper Question No. Q-1158*. Reply to MP Dean Allison by Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Ralph Goodale. CSC A-2019-00124.

¹⁶⁷ Evolve Our Prison Farms (2018, July 27 & 2019, May 2). *Prison Farms Conflict of Interest*. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Prison-Farm-Conflict-of-Interest-and-Ethics-Complaints-2018-2019.pdf>.

“Even though it now appears that Minister Goodale did approve the appointment of Farm Advisory Panel members, concerns of preferential treatment in contravention of section 7 would still require a connection between the Minister and one of the Panel members associated with Save Our Prison Farms or the Pen Farm Herd Co-operative [and] I find the notion that any person’s identity may have played a role in the matter to be too remote to give reason to believe a contravention of section 7 of the Act may have occurred.”¹⁶⁸

As detailed elsewhere in this report, members of CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel repeatedly violated their conflict of interest agreement with CSC, while CSC repeatedly violated federal procurement policies in their selective and piecemeal purchases of cows from their Advisory Panel members. The terms of the Panel appointments were set at a maximum of five years (May 2022 expiry) but after seven years the same Panel members remain, although the numbers have dwindled. By 2021-2022, Panel meeting minutes show attendance was reduced to only three or four members, and there have been two known resignations (Bruce Vandenberg and Alec Ross) and no new appointments.¹⁶⁹ The remaining Panel members continue to press for the sale of their final inventory of Pen Herd cows to CSC.¹⁷⁰ It remains to be seen whether Bruce Vandenberg (Mariposa Dairy/Gay Lea) will eventually be involved in brokering CSC’s goat milk, and if so, whether that conflict of interest would also be regarded as “too remote.”

2.4. “The latest greatest best option” || The Pretence of Proposals

During the 2016 public consultation process into reopening prison farms, the government invited ideas and proposals from the public. One proposal was developed by Save Our Prison Farms for cow dairy operations producing artisan cheese for prisoners and the military base in Kingston.¹⁷¹ Another proposal was developed by Evolve, which formed in 2016 as a coalition of citizens and academics, for a prison farm model that would focus on plant-based agriculture, with the possibility of returning the former Pen Herd cows under an animal-assisted therapy model. That proposal was first presented in 2016 to the leadership of Save Our Prison Farms, with a request to include it within their advocacy portfolio.¹⁷² The proposal was rejected by

¹⁶⁸ Letter from Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner Mario Dion (2019, November 19).

¹⁶⁹ Email statement from Kevin Antonucci, Senior Communications Advisor, CSC (2023, October 20).

¹⁷⁰ Atkinson, S. (2023, November 28). Pen farm co-op hopeful cow herd will finally go home. *Ontario Farmer*.

¹⁷¹ MacAlpine, I. (2018, March 8). Cows not in initial prison farm plan. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*.

<https://www.thewhig.com/2018/03/08/cows-not-in-initial-prison-farm-plan>.

¹⁷² Meeting with Save Our Prison Farms leaders Dianne Dowling, Bridget Doherty, and Sister Pauline Lally, in the Motherhouse of Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul in Kingston, January 26, 2017. Save Our Prison Farms was comprised of groups and individuals with different areas of focus, including farmers, farming associations, politicians, nuns, prison abolitionists, and others. There was no single definition of what constituted the movement other than a shared objective of a restored prison farm program. The campaign’s slogans included “Prison farms belong to all

Save Our Prison Farms on the basis that it precluded dairy, so the proposal was submitted separately to CSC and the federal government in January 2017 under the name Evolve Our Prison Farms.¹⁷³

On June 27, 2017, Evolve was granted a meeting with Justine Villeneuve, Policy Advisor to Minister of Public Safety Ralph Goodale, to present the prison farm proposal which, as ATI records now show, was ideally aligned with CSC's original envisioned parameters for the program, and could have been achieved at minimal cost and complexity compared to dairy operations. In this meeting, Villeneuve conceded that a therapeutic model for the Pen Herd cows was advantageous because "you wouldn't have to kill them."¹⁷⁴ She encouraged Evolve to present the proposal to CSC's Prison Farm Advisory Panel, stating that "we don't have a perfect model yet [and] that's the job of the advisory panel, to explore what the ideal model is going forward." Evolve expressed concern, based on prior experience, that the proposal would not be given fair consideration by the Panel members, a majority of whom were Save Our Prison Farms members who had already rejected Evolve's proposal. Villeneuve assured Evolve that the Panel would be "open-minded" and would not "impose their personal position on this" because their task is to help the government come up with "the latest greatest best option" in building a farm that is innovative, sustainable, and "reflective of the 21st century." Villeneuve's comments were reminiscent of Minister Goodale's address at the Kingston Town Hall meeting in August 2016: "We want to get this right. That's the reason why we have undertaken a feasibility study... Mr. Trudeau wants this to be a hallmark of his government, committed to listening to Canadians and committed to making evidence-based decisions."¹⁷⁵

During the June 2017 meeting, Villeneuve offered assurances that no decision had been made and that Evolve's proposal was one that the government was "very open to considering." When asked whether Public Safety had received the 3,500-signature petition that Evolve had submitted to Minister Goodale and MP Gerretsen five months earlier, in January 2017, she said she had not seen it "but that doesn't mean it's not in the bowels of one of the departments and on its way."¹⁷⁶ She assured Evolve that she would look into it but then never replied to follow-up inquiries.

Canadians. Stop ignoring democracy." Despite this, the organizers of Save Our Prison Farms rejected Evolve's proposal and publicly opposed Evolve's advocacy, with some even accusing Evolve of attempting to "co-opt" the prison farm "movement" (Email from Mara Shaw, Executive Director, National Farmers Union, 2020, March 13).

¹⁷³ Evolve Our Prison Farms (2017, January). *Position Statement*. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Evolve-Our-Prison-Farms-Proposal-FINAL.pdf>.

¹⁷⁴ Notes from Evolve's meeting with Justine Villeneuve, Policy Advisor, PSC (2017, June 27).

¹⁷⁵ PSC (2016, August 17). *Transcript: Town Hall regarding re-establishing prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions*. CSC A-2018-00310.

¹⁷⁶ Notes from Evolve's meeting with Justine Villeneuve, Policy Advisor, PSC (2017, June 27).

On August 2, 2017, when Evolve’s proposal was formally presented to the Prison Farm Advisory Panel, it was rejected for the expected reason that only animal-based agribusiness would be supported. CSC’s minutes from the meeting state that the Advisory Panel was willing to collaborate on the plant-based portions of Evolve’s proposal but Evolve would “need to compromise some points, as the recommendations from the Farm Advisory Panel will include animal operations.”¹⁷⁷ The Panel requested that Evolve support dairy operations and then “work with them on elements of operations that do not involve animals,” such as the crops that would be grown to supply feed and bedding for the livestock operations. In other words, the Panel’s proposed “compromise” was for Evolve to accept and support the established plan for dairy operations. The Panel’s “open-mindedness” evaporated after Evolve left the meeting. The minutes show that the Panel advised that future communications with Evolve be handled “separately” by CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle, “as the EVOLVE Our Prison Farms group is strongly opposed to the type of farming operations the Farm Advisory Panel is recommending and they do not seem willing to collaborate and blend both types of operations.”

After the meeting, Hartle sat down for a private conversation with Evolve representatives Calvin Neufeld, Franceen Neufeld, and Sue Donaldson. Hartle indicated that she would be submitting “three formal recommendations” to the Public Safety Minister by the end of August 2017, and would include Evolve’s model among the recommendations.¹⁷⁸ Later, however, she urged Evolve not to invest further time or money into proposals or advocacy efforts, citing the government’s directive to invest “specifically in dairy.”¹⁷⁹ Conspicuously, there is no documentary record of Hartle’s three formal recommendations in Access to Information releases. The only records that exist to substantiate this claim are in the form of statements to media by the chair of CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel, Dianne Dowling,¹⁸⁰ and minutes from a Pen Farm Herd Co-Op AGM.¹⁸¹ As recorded in the AGM minutes, CORCAN’s three formal recommendations in late 2017 were:

1. Dairy Farm model – 50 to 80 cows and pork for a cheese plant controlled and run by CORCAN.
2. Dairy model as in #2 but with public/private partnerships managing the plant.
3. Evolve model – plant based that would take the herd back on a sanctuary basis.

The AGM minutes state (quoted as written):

¹⁷⁷ CSC (2017, August 2). *Record of Discussion: Farm Advisory Panel*. CSC A-2018-00440.

¹⁷⁸ Meeting between Evolve and CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle (2017, August 2).

¹⁷⁹ Meeting between Evolve and CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle (2019, January 30).

¹⁸⁰ MacAlpine, I. (2018, March 8). Cows not in initial prison farm plan. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/2018/03/08/cows-not-in-initial-prison-farm-plan>.

¹⁸¹ Minutes. *Pen Farm Herd Co-Op 8th Annual Meeting* (2017, November 10).

“Models submitted in September 2017, but there can’t be any announcement without funding, and that will come or not come with the March 2018 budget... Costs – referring to Mark Gerretsons \$5 million figure. Fielded by Dianne Dowling... no definite answer, big difference between a farmers estimate and CSC’s estimate – it could end up costing 3 times as much.”

This raises questions about Hartle’s August 2017 assurance that she would be submitting three formal recommendations, including the models proposed by Save Our Prison Farms and Evolve Our Prison Farms. The first question is why there is no record of these submissions in Access to Information releases. The second is why recommendations were even being issued at that point, when records show that dairy operations were pre-determined.¹⁸² A December 2016 briefing note shows that Hartle’s predecessor as CEO of CORCAN, Christian D’Auray, had already issued three (redacted) recommendations for business models for the farms,¹⁸³ and by February 2017, “milking cows and goats” was already CORCAN’s “proposed plan.”¹⁸⁴ The “smoking gun” document (Appendix 1) shows that the plan for goat milk production at Joyceville Institution “to sell milk to Feihe International Inc.” was in place from at least March 2017.¹⁸⁵ However, this same document makes reference to options for how cows could be incorporated at Collins Bay Institution. The “preferred option” was “Option 3,” which was to produce cow milk for sale to a company in Brampton that would process it into powdered milk. This option clearly did not prove viable as it was never pursued, but based on this, it is evident that goat milk production was the established plan, and the only three “options” being explored by D’Auray in 2016 and Hartle in 2017 related to how cows could be added.¹⁸⁶

All of these developments were being closely monitored by the federal government. Following Evolve’s presentation to the Advisory Panel, CSC received a call from Justine Villeneuve in the Public Safety

¹⁸² As discussed in more detail in the next chapter, the government’s directive was clearly for the dairy goat operation, a plan that had been established from at least as early as March 2017, and likely as early as May 2016.

¹⁸³ CSC (2016, December 16). *Briefing Note to the Commissioner: Reopening of CORCAN Farm at Collins Bay Institution*. CSC A-2019-00030.

¹⁸⁴ CSC (2017, February 14). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Reopening of CORCAN farm at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institutions*. CSC A-2018-00441.

¹⁸⁵ Email from Normand Payette, Special Advisor, PSC (2017, March 1). *Subject: RE: Meeting with CORCAN on Prison Farms*. CSC A-2018-00310.

¹⁸⁶ If Hartle did include Evolve’s proposal among her three formal recommendations for incorporating cows, it remains unexplained why the decision was initially made to exclude cows entirely, risking the controversy that erupted from CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel, rather than adopt CORCAN’s third recommendation (Evolve’s therapeutic model) when the obstacles to cow dairy made the other options unviable. It could have been related to the Panel members’ adamant opposition to Evolve and ideological defence of dairy that made therapeutic alternatives untenable. The government may have decided that excluding cows entirely would be preferable to any appearance of “taking sides” on that matter, especially when records show that cows were not the objective for Public Safety and were not supported by CSC.

Ministry requesting an update on the meeting.¹⁸⁷ CORCAN’s Kelly Hartle reported that “The Evolve Our Prison Farms organization made a presentation to the Advisory Panel... Overall the meeting went very well and the Advisory Panel was quite engaged.”¹⁸⁸ Evolve’s experience of the meeting, however, was not so positive. Representatives of Evolve, including co-founders Calvin Neufeld, Franceen Neufeld, and Queen’s academic Sue Donaldson, outlined the advantages of an animal-assisted therapy model for the restored prison farm program, the lower costs, and the environmental and employability benefits associated with plant-based opportunities.¹⁸⁹ This model would have resolved the problems identified by Monachus Consulting, enabled therapeutic human-animal interactions, and would not have required any new infrastructure construction.

Rather than discussing the merits of Evolve’s proposal, or considering the evidence that was presented, the Panel was defensive, discourteous, and confrontational. For example, the Panel joked that all animal agriculture is plant-based because the animals eat plants; the Panel asked if Evolve would prefer that the animals just be buried on site instead of being butchered; and the Panel accused Evolve of using “inflammatory” language such as “slaughter” and “forced insemination” (Hartle reiterated this to Evolve after the meeting, attributing the Panel’s negative reaction to Evolve’s use of “inflammatory” language). Evolve emailed one particularly unsettling exchange from the meeting to Dr. Karen Davis, president and founder of United Poultry Concerns, who later published it in a chapter on interspecies sexual assault in *For the Birds: From Exploitation to Liberation*, namely:

“Our government appointed dairy, goat and beef farmers to advise on the return of Canada’s prison farms. When our group Evolve Our Prison Farms addressed the prison farm advisory panel, our respectful and professional presentation was met with accusations and thinly veiled contempt. We were accused, among other things, of using ‘inflammatory’ language, such as ‘forced’ insemination. I asked the accuser [dairy and veal farmer Tony Straathof], to explain to the Corrections staff in the room what artificial insemination involves. I asked if it involves (with cows) the insertion of an arm and an insemination gun. He answered yes. I told him that’s forced. He said, emphatically and repeatedly, “No. Believe me. I know. They want you to do it. They want it. They want it. They want it.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Email from Nick Fabiano, Assistant Commissioner, Communications and Engagement, CSC, to Kelly Hartle, CEO, CORCAN (2017, September 11). *Subject: Farm Panel Meeting*. CSC A-2018-00332.

¹⁸⁸ Email from Kelly Hartle, CEO, CORCAN (2017, September 11). *Subject: RE: Farm Panel Meeting*. CSC A-2018-00332.

¹⁸⁹ Evolve Our Prison Farms (2017, January). *Position Statement*. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Evolve-Our-Prison-Farms-Proposal-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁹⁰ Email from Calvin Neufeld (2018, April 15). Quoted in Davis, K. (2019). *For the Birds: From Exploitation to Liberation*. Lantern Books, 72.

Evolve representatives can attest that while Straathof spoke those words, he hammered his fist on the table. Scholar Sue Donaldson also reported this exchange to the Minister of Public Safety, saying:

“[Straathof] made the comment about cows ‘wanting it’ (in re artificial insemination) [which] shapes a disturbing and callous mentality towards animals, one that teaches people to ignore signs of distress and resistance, and [to] superimpose ideologies of animal use in which they ‘ask us’ to harm them.”¹⁹¹

Not only was Evolve and its members openly ridiculed in meetings, but officials actively ignored their advocacy efforts. By December 2017, Evolve had amassed over 12,000 signatures in its petition. Once the petition closed, it was formally submitted to MP Gerretsen and Minister Goodale in a public demonstration involving a four kilometre march by supporters carrying Evolve signs from Collins Bay Institution to MP Gerretsen’s office, and a copy of the signatures was mailed in a large box to Minister Goodale through registered mail.¹⁹² Despite numerous follow-ups by Evolve, no response or acknowledgement of Evolve’s 2017 petition (submitted with 3,500 signatures in January 2017 and 12,000 signatures in December 2017) was ever issued from either MP Gerretsen’s office or the Public Safety Ministry, nor has any record of the petition submissions come out through ATI requests.

The prison farm public consultations were tailored to Save Our Prison Farms. Not only were the group’s organizers given exclusive access to the Minister of Public Safety through multiple meetings and teleconferences,¹⁹³ following which they received ministerial Panel appointments, but they also exerted influence over the Town Hall meeting, requesting changes to the format to assure that Save Our Prison Farms would receive preferential focus. The meeting format had been planned to allow an open mic segment, with participants limited to two minutes of speaking time, but Save Our Prison Farms requested “3-4 slots of 5-8 minutes each... for speakers representing key perspectives,” and “we would strongly encourage the consultants to avoid an ‘open mic’ approach at the Town Hall, as it... will favour aggressive [sic] and loud individuals who do not necessarily represent our community.”¹⁹⁴ This, they argued, was a “more democratic approach.”

¹⁹¹ Email from Sue Donaldson to Minister Ralph Goodale (2018, March 5). PSC A-2018-00300.

¹⁹² Crosier, S. (2017, December 10). March supports new prison vision. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/2017/12/10/march-supports-new-prison-vision>.

¹⁹³ Evolve’s meeting requests to Public Safety Minister Goodale were declined. Likewise, Evolve’s meeting requests with each successive Public Safety Minister (Blair, Mendicino, Leblanc) were declined or ignored.

¹⁹⁴ Email from a Save Our Prison Farms activist [name redacted] to Kyle Lawlor, Regional Communications Manager, CSC (2016, August 15). *Subject: RE: Farms*. CSC reluctantly agreed to the arrangement: “We will accommodate the three speakers that the Save our Farm people want to speak” but otherwise “we will keep to the original plan in terms of speaking etc. and not be ‘more democratic’ in our approach” (Email [name redacted], 2016, August 15. CSC A-2018-00310).

As the consultants reported on the public consultations, CSC’s Research Branch expressed serious concerns as to the subjectivity of the consultations, and the political implications of a government being pressed to make a decision based on illegitimate information (emphasis theirs):

“Most critically, the report uses the discussion of members of the public during a Town Hall meeting and an online consultation to derive strongly worded recommendations to the government. The recommendations are based on opinions yet they are communicated as though it’s the information that should be considered in decision-making, e.g., participation in prison farm program reduces recidivism is an opinion, there is no research demonstrating this to be a fact. *It should be very clear that the results of the meeting are based on the participants’ input and should form only one element in the consideration of a final decision that the government would make.* We suggest that the authors refrain from referring to the next steps as recommendations... The report is strongly worded and I am concerned that it will put the government in a difficult position if it’s not changed prior to publication.”¹⁹⁵

Despite being biased and involving numerous irregularities, the supposed insights from the Kingston Town Hall and the online questionnaire were used to justify the investment into a new prison agribusiness in Kingston. In light of the evidence that the plan for the prison farms to supply Feihe International had been decided at least as early as March 2017, and likely much earlier (as detailed later in this report), the events that occurred during the public consultation process – including the assurances that no decisions had been made, the gestures of entertaining proposals such as Evolve’s, and the disappearance of Evolve’s petitions – take on a troubling pallor.

2.5. “The Chinese Baby formula plant” || The “Good” Goat Opportunity

While all public discussions on the prison farms revolved around the “return” of the former Pen Farm cows, records show that both MP Mark Gerretsen and members of Save Our Prison Farms were aware of the goat milk production plan before any announcement had been made. Minutes from a November 2017 Pen Farm Herd Co-Op meeting record “Mark Gerretsen’s address to shareholders”¹⁹⁶ in which he encouraged members to support the goat plan so that CSC can “play a role” in “the goat plant” (Feihe’s Kingston

¹⁹⁵ Emails from Lynn Stewart, Senior Research Manager, CSC (2016, September 12 & 13). *Subjects: RE: review town hall meeting report & RE: Feedback on the report.* CSC A-2018-00310.

¹⁹⁶ MP Gerretsen’s routine attendance at PFHC meetings, providing regular updates to shareholders, raises questions about his interest and involvement in the group.

plant).¹⁹⁷ MP Gerretsen explained that “The demand for goats will be high with the new factory. There is no quota involved and it is a good opportunity.” Although this was months before CSC had made any announcement, and before any federal funding had been allocated for the prison farms, MP Gerretsen outlined the “five year plan for \$5 million dollars” for goat milk production at Joyceville Institution. The question was raised by an unidentified person: “The Chinese Baby formula plant – will it compete?” This was “fielded by Dianne Dowling,” CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel Chair: “Baby formula that will be exported to China, so no.”

Earlier evidence that MP Gerretsen and the leadership of Save Our Prison Farms had exclusive advance knowledge of the commercial focus of the new prison farms is found in an email from Dianne Dowling to Minister Goodale in August 2016. Immediately following the Kingston Town Hall hosted by MP Gerretsen and Minister Goodale, a private meeting was held by the minister with the Save Our Prison Farms leaders, in which Minister Goodale discussed “removing the operation of the farms from CSC” in favour of potential “partnerships that could be established,”¹⁹⁸ suggesting an intention for the prison farms to be operated under a public-private partnership.¹⁹⁹ Though redacted, the release of 2016-2017 briefing notes in response to ATI requests for records mentioning Feihe in relation to prison farm plans, suggests that the public-private partnership options being explored were associated with Feihe. With Feihe’s facility built just five kilometres from Collins Bay Institution and 25 kilometres from Joyceville Institution, establishing a large goat dairy operation in such proximity would have significantly reduced milk transportation costs for Feihe, which was a top factor in the company’s choice of location.²⁰⁰ There may also have been the added political motivation that a federally funded prison farm producing goat milk for Feihe provided a discrete avenue for the Canadian government to subsidize dairy exports, which otherwise may not have been permissible under a new international agreement signed by the Canadian government.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ Minutes. *Pen Farm Herd Co-Op 8th Annual Meeting* (2017, November 10).

¹⁹⁸ Email from Dianne Dowling to Minister Goodale (2016, September 1). PSC A-2018-00440.

¹⁹⁹ Further evidence is found in Panel meeting minutes following the March 2018 announcement that the farms would only involve goats. The Panel discussed “options for business to business partnerships” for the goat milk production (CSC, 2018, March 26. *Record of Discussion: Farm Advisory Panel*. CSC A-2018-00440).

²⁰⁰ Early CDC records show CDC CEO Jacques Laforge [JL] and Feihe [F] executives discussing the factors under consideration for choice of location: “Currently the preferred site is in Kingston... F needs data and numbers to support their decision... JL: If F wants to stimulate growth in goat milk... means transportation costs for F for goat milk... Transportation of goat milk to the plant will be at the expense of F, contrary to cow milk... CDC would need BIG support from gov... Need to talk to minister and AAFC... Emphasis on goat milk” (CDC, 2016, June 15. *CONFIDENTIAL: June 15, conference call with Chinese delegation, J. Laforge, P. Doyle, G. Paquette*. CDC A2-2019-00001).

²⁰¹ In 2015, World Trade Organization members reached an agreement in Nairobi, Kenya, on export subsidies in the agriculture sector: “According to this agreement, Canada is to eliminate all export subsidies for dairy products by the end of 2020” (CDC, 2018, June 1. *Corporate Plan 2017-2018 to 2021-2022*. CDC A2-2019-00001).

While reopening Kingston’s prison farms may have seemed, on the surface, to be a relatively minor regional affair, the planning, implementation, and public relations were closely monitored by the federal government, including the prime minister’s inner circle. Emails obtained from the Privy Council Office reveal awareness of the plan to replace the former prison farm model with a commercial goat operation to support the infant formula export market, and equal awareness that members of CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel would not be pleased when they learned that their cows were not going to be included along with the goats as they expected. Records show that on March 5, 2018, two days before the Panel was to be notified of the decision, a person responsible for Issues Management in the Prime Minister’s Office (name redacted) asked PCO Senior Analyst Christine O’Nions, “When does that become public now?” O’Nions replied, “The meeting with the advisory committee is this Wednesday. CSC Corcan will explain that this is the first phase and they will be starting with goats... But no cows for now.”²⁰² A few months later, on the day of the prison farm media event in June 2018, O’Nions joked with a colleague (name redacted) about “the Corrections event today featuring the cows and goats that inmates will use to make infant formula for Chinese babies... Supply management/Chinese/NAFTA/untainted-because-it’s-made-in-Canada baby formula.”²⁰³

Evidence of awareness of the plan for prison farms to support Feihe’s infant formula production for export is found throughout ATI records across government agencies and actors, from CSC to the Privy Council Office to Public Services and Procurement Canada, as well as Members of Parliament and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. In the available body of records, never did these officials discuss the ethical and legal implications of entangling prison farm labour with an international enterprise. Instead it was either promoted as a “good opportunity,” treated as not newsworthy, or privately mocked for its absurdity but advanced nonetheless and protected from entering into public awareness.

2.6. “It’s illegal” || Exporting Prison-Produced Goods

One other aspect of the prison farm plan that does not appear to have been well thought out is whether it is legal for the Correctional Service of Canada to produce and sell commercial goods that will enter into international supply chains. In 2020, Evolve reached out to Charles Burton, professor of Political Science at Brock University (now retired), former diplomat at the Canadian Embassy in Beijing, and senior

²⁰² Emails between Christine O’Nions, Senior Analyst, PCO, and PMO Issues Management (2018, March 5). *Subject: Cows*. PCO A-2022-00162.

²⁰³ Email from Christine O’Nions, Senior Analyst, PCO (2018, June 21). PCO A-2022-00162.

consultant on Chinese affairs to agencies of the Government of Canada.²⁰⁴ In a brief phone exchange, Evolve described the new prison farm model to Burton, who immediately replied: “They can’t do that. It’s illegal. GATT/WTO.”²⁰⁵

The World Trade Organization’s General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (WTO/GATT) is an international agreement between 23 countries, including Canada and China, and encompasses trade rules “Relating to the products of prison labour.”²⁰⁶ Clarity on this issue was obtained through a legal review conducted for Evolve in 2020 by the Queen’s Business Law Clinic, which concluded that while the new prison farm model may not strictly be illegal, it is certainly “uncharted territory.”²⁰⁷ The Law Clinic could find “no legal rules around the produce from prison farms, nor are there rules regarding prison-produced exports from Canada,” for the simple reason that there is no precedent. However, in addition to the “plausible argument” that using prison labour “to supply milk for the manufacture of baby formula... constitutes a criminal offence and violates fundamental human rights” (see Chapter 5), it is grey legal territory under international trade laws, and runs contrary to Canada’s own laws strictly prohibiting *imports* of prison-produced goods:

“Canada does not seem to have laws prohibiting prison-produced goods being exported from the country. Legislation and government sites/documents are silent about the exporting of prison labour goods, which is unprecedented in Canada. However, Canada does have strict laws against importing prison-produced goods. Tariff No. 9897.00 prohibits the importation ‘of goods manufactured or produced wholly or in part by prison labour.’ Any imported goods found to have been produced by prison labour are refused entry. Canada does enforce this law heavily as there are many cases where products were banned entry.”

According to the Law Clinic, it appears that these rules are designed to be enforced by the *importing* country, therefore, “As long as China is willing to purchase the product, Canada will be able to trade without problems.”²⁰⁸ Although the government has never admitted the plan to use prison farms to supply Feihe’s exports to China, Public Safety officials have insisted, under questioning, that the government of Canada has “ratified”²⁰⁹ the legal requirements and is confident that the new commercial prison farms will comply

²⁰⁴ See Charles Burton: Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute. Canada Strong & Free Network.

<https://canadastrongandfree.network/speakers/charles-burton/>.

²⁰⁵ Phone call with Charles Burton (2020, February 14).

²⁰⁶ Shang, X., & Van Limberghen, G. (2017). How Could Prison Products Come into the International Market? Analysis of the Consistency between WTO and ILO Rules. *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 2017(3), 70-82.

<http://www.theartsjournal.org/index.php/site/article/view/1133/550>.

²⁰⁷ Sahar, A. & Adebisi, T. (2020, April 6). *Memo Re: Prison labour goods exported*. Queen’s Business Law Clinic.

²⁰⁸ Summary of the Queen’s Business Law Clinic review, “Legal Issues Arising from the Export of Prison-Sourced Infant Formula,” available at <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/exporting-prison-produced-goods/>.

²⁰⁹ Damoff, P. (2022, May 5). “Labour.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 065*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-65/hansard>.

“with all of Canada’s international obligations.”²¹⁰ Even if the government is correct, which remains disputable on a number of grounds, it presents a double standard for the federal government to invest in a supply chain of prison-produced goods for export when Canada has a strict moral and legal stance against the *import* of prison-produced goods.

The questionable legality of CORCAN’s new agricultural business line is not limited to international standards for human rights and trade. As a Special Operating Agency, CORCAN is required by legislation to have an Advisory Board as an independent oversight body (this is distinct from, and not to be confused with, the Prison Farm Advisory Panel).²¹¹ CORCAN’s website states that they have an Advisory Board which is “necessary” for CORCAN to operate.²¹² In 2020, Evolve submitted an inquiry to CSC’s media department asking who is on CORCAN’s Advisory Board.²¹³ CSC responded: “The CORCAN Advisory Board membership is currently under review with appointments anticipated in the near future. Updates will be posted on CSC’s website.”²¹⁴ Evolve asked for “a clear answer as to current (or recent) Advisory Board membership,” and CSC provided 11 names.²¹⁵ To find out more information, Evolve filed an ATI request with Public Safety, since the Minister is responsible for appointing CORCAN’s Advisory Board.²¹⁶ The resulting document showed that the last CORCAN Advisory Board members’ terms expired in 2013-2014, and CORCAN has been operating without an Advisory Board since.²¹⁷ When Evolve presented this information to CSC’s media department asking whether the Advisory Board is a legislated requirement, or

²¹⁰ Mendicino, M. (2022, April 8). “Labour.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 056*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-56/hansard>.

²¹¹ “The Minister shall appoint a committee, to be known as the Advisory Board of CORCAN, consisting of not more than 12 persons chosen from the fields of business, non-profit organizations, labour and government and from the general public, to support the operation of CORCAN” (Corrections and Conditional Release Regulations, last amended 2019, November 30. *Section 108 (1): CORCAN*. Government of Canada. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-92-620/page-7.html#h-948545>).

²¹² “The CORCAN Advisory Board was established pursuant to the creation of CORCAN as a Special Operating Agency in 1992. CORCAN’s Advisory Board is appointed by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness as legislated through Section 108 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Regulations (CCRR)... The CORCAN Advisory Board is a necessary and important part of CSC’s mandate” (CSC, 2024, January 2. *CORCAN advisory board*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/programs/corcan/corcan-advisory-board.html>).

²¹³ Email from Calvin Neufeld (2020, September 21). *Subject: CORCAN Advisory Board*.

²¹⁴ Email statement from Marie-Pier Lécuyer, Media relations advisor, CSC (2020, September 28).

²¹⁵ “The most recent Advisory Board members included the following individuals, whose names were publically [sic] posted online: Marc Brooks; Bernard Cormier; Eric Crowell; Craig Hill; Peter Lawlor; Kelly Lendsay; Joe Bova; Shaun Harbottle; Michael Morrison; Arthur Field and Shannon Coombs” (Email statement from Marie-Pier Lécuyer, Media relations advisor, CSC, 2020, October 8). Following Evolve’s inquiries, CSC updated its website to state: “As previous board members’ terms have expired, it is anticipated that appointments will be made in the near future to support us in fulfilling our mandate and provide non-binding recommendations and advice to CORCAN. In the interim, CORCAN engages on a regular basis with a variety of other CSC stakeholder committees as well as the CORCAN Farm Advisory Panel” (this paragraph has since been removed but it remains retrievable in internet archives: <https://web.archive.org/web/20221222092423/https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/corcan/002005-0007-en.shtml>).

²¹⁶ A-2020-00214.

²¹⁷ PSC (n.d.). *CORCAN Advisory Board: Ministerial Appointments since January 2010*. PSC A-2020-00214.

whether it is optional, CSC did not respond for a month, then informed Evolve that further inquiries could no longer be submitted to the media department.²¹⁸ Evolve challenged this, and media access was restored two months later, but CSC's media department never answered that question.

Other documents obtained by Evolve show that CSC requested permission from at least three successive Ministers of Public Safety to revitalize CORCAN's Advisory Board. In April 2019, CSC requested approval from Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale,²¹⁹ who did not approve the request.²²⁰ In September 2020, CSC requested approval from Public Safety Minister Bill Blair,²²¹ who appears to have approved the request in March 2021.²²² However, for reasons unknown, in February 2022, CSC requested approval again, this time from Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino.²²³ Minister Mendicino's response to the request is redacted, but as of 2024, there have been no appointments, and CORCAN continues to operate without an Advisory Board.

This raises serious questions about the legality not only of CORCAN's commercial agribusiness enterprise, but all prison industries operating in Canada in the absence of legislated oversight. As documented here and elsewhere in this report, a series of significant and concerning changes have occurred within CSC and CORCAN since 2009, the year the farm closures began. These include: the cessation of CORCAN's Annual Reports; the consolidation of CORCAN's financial reporting into CSC's broader financial reporting;²²⁴ the

²¹⁸ "Please note that, going forward, we ask that you send us your questions using the following CSC Feedback form page... Thank you for your interest in our important work" (Email from Marie-Pier Lécuyer, Media relations advisor, CSC, 2020, December 10).

²¹⁹ CSC (2019, April 8). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Nominations for Appointment to the CORCAN Advisory Board*. PSC A-2023-00024.

²²⁰ "The last CORCAN Advisory Board meeting was in 2013, and the previous Advisory Board members' appointments have since expired... Revitalizing the CORCAN Advisory Board will ensure CSC can meet its legislative requirements... In April 2019, a briefing note... was submitted to the former Minister of Public Safety [Ralph Goodale] to request approval of the appointment of eleven community members to the CORCAN Advisory Board, however the request was not approved" (CSC, 2020, September 28. *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: CORCAN Advisory Board*. PSC A-2023-00024).

²²¹ CSC (2020, September 28). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: CORCAN Advisory Board*. PSC A-2023-00024.

²²² "In March 2021, the former Minister of Public Safety [Bill Blair] approved the revitalization of the CORCAN Advisory Board and for CSC to contact eleven candidates to confirm their interest... Your decision and signature confirming the appointments is requested by March 10, 2022, which will allow CSC to hold a first meeting in April 2022. The Advisory Board's input is important to CORCAN's stability and operational decision making... as per Section 108 of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Regulations* (CSC, 2022, February 10. *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety: CORCAN Advisory Board*. PSC A-2023-00024).

²²³ CSC (2022, February 10). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety: CORCAN Advisory Board*. PSC A-2023-00024.

²²⁴ "The accounts of CORCAN Revolving Fund have been consolidated with those of the organization and all inter-organizational balances and transactions have been eliminated" (CSC, 2014, September 11. *Statement of management responsibility, including internal control over financial reporting 2013-2014*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/corporate/transparency/reporting/financial-statements/statement-management-responsibility-2013-2014.html>).

modernization of CSC’s food services and elimination of CORCAN’s Advisory Board; and from 2020-2026 (the implementation years for the prison dairy enterprises), CORCAN obtained special authority to increase its drawdown limit (the threshold for expenses to exceed revenues) from \$5 million to \$20 million.²²⁵ The COVID-19 pandemic is cited as the reason for this threshold increase, but without it, CORCAN would not have been able to invest tens of millions into the construction of dairy facilities, or to keep the prison farm program afloat in the absence of revenues (see Chapter 4). The financial impacts of prison farm implementation have been substantial for CORCAN, threatening its future.²²⁶ A 2022 briefing note reveals that the “pause” of the goat program was ongoing due to CORCAN’s position of financial instability and “uncertainty moving forward.”²²⁷

Together, the trajectory of changes introduced in recent years has made CORCAN less transparent, less accountable, and less financially viable. They have also made CORCAN more politically manoeuvrable, and able to carry out the unprecedented level of spending²²⁸ required for the prison farms and dairy facility construction at Joyceville Institution. The questionable legality of CORCAN’s commercial prison farms, CORCAN’s decade-long legislative non-compliance, and the apparent political will to keep CORCAN unaccountable to independent oversight, all merit scrutiny by journalists and by federal authorities.

While officials and activists celebrated the decision to re-open Kingston’s prison farms, there were a range of questionable political and financial interests that informed that choice. Access to Information requests have revealed that the public consultations into re-opening the program were little more than a charade, behind which there were conflicts of interest and suspicious activities advancing an unpublished agenda for Canadian prisons to supply a foreign market with goat milk.

²²⁵ Treasury Board of Canada. *Supplementary Estimates (A), 2020–21*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/tbs-sct/documents/planned-government-spending/supplementary-estimates/supplementary-estimates-a-2020-21.pdf>.

²²⁶ While the COVID-19 pandemic no doubt contributed to CORCAN’s financial challenges, records show that CORCAN’s financial troubles predate the COVID-19 pandemic, and align with the prison farm implementation. Before prison farm implementation began, CORCAN was in a strong financial position: “In 2017-18, [CORCAN’s] revenues were the highest achieved” (Email from Leanne McCarthy, Director, Parliamentary Affairs and Ministerial Services, CSC 2019, February 18. *Subject: Update on CORCAN and Prison Farms*. CSC A-2019-00124). After prison farm implementation began, records show a steady drop from that peak: in 2018-2019, CORCAN’s revenues were \$84M, reduced to \$80M in 2019-2020, then to \$62M in 2020-2021 (CSC, 2022, January 10. *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety: CORCAN Financial and Operational Update*. CSC A-2022-00099).

²²⁷ “CORCAN still holds a significant amount of uncertainty moving forward. CORCAN will continue to monitor the situation and implement measures for operational efficiency to re-establish financial stability... As part of these continued measures, it is necessary to maintain the pause in the implementation of the goat operations” (CSC, 2022, January 10. *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety: CORCAN Financial and Operational Update*. CSC A-2022-00099).

²²⁸ Evolve is unaware of any prisoner training program in CORCAN’s history that approaches the cost of the reopened prison farms in Kingston.

3. “NEW FOREIGN MARKETS” || BIG NEW DEALS & GOATS

In 2016, the Canadian government secured a deal with Feihe International to build the first-ever infant formula production facility in Canada, valued at between \$225 million to \$335 million.²²⁹ Negotiations centred on how much cow and goat milk Canada could provide for Feihe and how much product would be exported to China (85%) versus how much would stay in Canada (a fraction of the remainder).²³⁰ At the time, the goat milk industry was nascent in Canada, with the total nationwide production amounting to less fluid goat milk than Feihe needed.²³¹ In 2017, the Ontario government “indicated a large scale goat farm in Ontario” as “a strong possibility” to contribute to the required supply for Feihe.²³²

²²⁹ The total amount of the investment is unclear. Media reports and ATI records variously cite \$208 million, \$225 million, \$300 million, \$332 million, and \$335 million. The most referenced number is \$225 million, while a letter from Feihe’s General Manager Zhiwen Yang to AAFC Minister Lawrence MacAulay (2018, October 16) values the investment at \$332 million (AAFC A-2019-00055). Some government funding was based on a percentage of the total project value. According to reports, Feihe has a record of questionable business practices, including inflating value (“Blue Orca shorts Chinese infant milk formula company Feihe,” 2020, July 8. *Global Times*. <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1193862.shtml>).

²³⁰ The forecasted markets for Feihe’s infant formula, in their funding application to the CDC, was 85% to “Chinese Consumers,” 5% to “CDC (Cream),” and 10% to “Other consumers (HK, Macao, Malaysia, Vietnam, Burma, India and North America)” (CDC, 2016, November 22. “Confidential” *Milking Access for Growth (MAG) Application*. Company: *Canada Royal Milk ULC Feihe*. CDC A2-2019-00001). “The Feihe project was the first one approved” under the CDC’s newly created MAG funding program (CDC, 2017, January 23. *FEIHE-CDC MEETING: Summary of Discussions*. CDC A2-2019-00001). Canada also created a controversial ultra-low-cost category of milk, “Class 7,” for Feihe: “On July 13, 2016, the Dairy Farmers of Canada and dairy processor associations (provincial and national) announced... the introduction of a new pricing class (class 7)... AAFC anticipates that it could have a significant impact on the project envisioned by Feihe [sic].” The following year, in 2017, Canada was forced to eliminate Class 7 in trade negotiations with the United States: “The CUSMA trade negotiations made sure this [infant formula] plant was specifically targeted. The total amount of baby formula that Canada was now ‘allowed’ to export from dairy cow’s milk was a fraction of this plant’s capacity. It had been promised to be filled, by government and dairy officials, within the recently invented Class 7, which the trade negotiations also squashed. Feihe folks were livid” (Cumming, I., 2023, March 28. *Complex formula indeed*. *Ontario Farmer*).

²³¹ “In 2018 the whole of Canada produced less fluid goats’ milk (62.2 million litres) than the 75 million litres of raw milk a year Feihe will need” (Hirtenfelder, C. & Prouse, C., 2022, September. *Milking economies: Multispecies entanglements in the infant formula industry*. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, 5(3), 1296-1318. <https://doi.org/10.1177/25148486211036113>). The researchers calculated that 68,493 goats would be needed to produce the amount of fluid goats’ milk required to meet Feihe’s needs, while MP Gerretsen estimated that Feihe would require milk from 150,000 goats, a percentage of which “would be coming from Corrections Canada” (Allan, M., 2019, June 11. *Vigils for ethical prison farms to be held outside Collins Bay Institution*. *Kingstonist*. <https://www.kingstonist.com/news/vigils-for-ethical-prison-farms-to-be-held-outside-collins-bay-institution/>).

CDC records state that Feihe’s original business plan was for total annual production of 60,000 MT [metric tonnes] of infant formula, of which 10,000 MT would be goat-based (another document said 20,000 MT), requiring 75 million litres of goat milk annually (CDC, n.d. *CONFIDENTIAL: INVESTMENT PROJECT in CANADA. COMPANY: FEIHE INTERNATIONAL INC.* CDC A2-2019-00001). Following the US-imposed trade tariffs on infant formula exports out of Canada, which apply only to formula made from supply-managed cow dairy, not goat dairy, Feihe’s plan changed to 30,000 MT of cow-based formula, to fit within the export threshold, and 30,000 MT of goat-based formula: “China FDI [foreign direct investment] into Canada’s agriculture and agri-food sector... is based almost entirely on Feihe announcing... an infant formula manufacturing plant in Kingston, Ontario... to manufacture up to a reported 60,000 metric tonnes (MTs) of infant formula when it is fully operational (30,000 MTs from goat’s milk and 30,000 MTs cow’s milk)” (AAFC, 2018, October 12. *Chinese Agri-Food Investment Impact*. Prepared by Ken Nakagawa. AAFC A-2019-00055). As a result of the CUSMA trade agreement, the amount of goat milk that Feihe would need increased as much as threefold from the original 75 million litre estimate, compounding the problem and political pressure of securing an adequate supply of goat milk for Feihe.

²³² CDC (2016, November 22). “Confidential” *Milking Access for Growth (MAG) Application*. Company: *Canada Royal Milk ULC (Feihe)*. CDC A2-2019-00001.

Canadian government connections with Feihe have been closely guarded. For example, in June 2016, a meeting was arranged for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) Minister Lawrence MacAulay to attend the signing of a secretive agreement between CDC CEO Jacques Laforge and Feihe Chairman Leng Youbin, with the agenda warning that there must be “NO media report on signing.”²³³ In preparation for the December 2016 announcement that Feihe would be building its processing facility in Kingston, media lines cautioned that if anyone asks about the milk supply for Feihe: “PLEASE DO NOT ANSWER THIS QUESTION.”²³⁴ Equally guarded have been the connections between CSC and the CDC-Feihe deal, and how the idea came about for prison labour and prison infrastructure to be used to facilitate this transnational deal. Newly released documents, however, have made the plan for CSC’s agribusiness to supply Feihe irrefutable. On February 12, 2024, Evolve obtained a new 10,000-page Access to Information release. On page 7,011 were minutes from a March 2017 meeting between Public Safety officials and then-CORCAN CEO Christian D’Auray, stating: “Joyceville: goat milk operation; plan is to sell milk to Feihe International Inc. that will produce infant formula in Kingston.”²³⁵

This chapter unravels the connections between the Feihe-CDC deal and CSC’s goat milk production plans, before unpacking in more detail how CSC’s efforts to deliver on its goat farm mandate resulted in a cascade of problems, delays, and runaway costs.

3.1. “Directly linked to the Gov of China” || The Feihe-CDC Deal

Feihe’s infant formula processing facility is one of the largest Foreign Direct Investments in Canada’s history. According to China’s embassy in Ottawa, it is “China’s biggest investment in Canada’s agri-food

²³³ “Finalizing Proposed Agreement to be signed... Meeting with Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay. 17:00 Signing of the agreement between FEIHE (Chairman Leng) and CDC (Jacques Laforge, CEO) NO media report on signing” (CDC, June 24, 2016. *Infant Formula Production in Canada: Investment Project from China. Program of Visits - Chairman Leng. 25-29 June 2016.* CDC A2-2016-00002).

²³⁴ CDC (2016, December 1). *CONFIDENTIAL: LIMITED DISTRIBUTION. Media Lines.* CDC A2-2016-00002. A few months later, in June 2017, a Canadian government memo (marked “SECRET”) detailed a meeting on “Foreign Investment in Dairy Processing for Infant Formula.” In attendance were John McCallum, Ambassador of Canada to China, an AAFC representative, a Chinese government minister, CDC CEO Jacques Laforge, and Feihe Chairman Leng Youbin. It was discussed that, prior to Feihe’s December 2016 announcement, “the CDC had also signed a confidentiality agreement and a cooperation agreement with FeiHe [sic]” (AAFC, 2017, June 30. *SECRET: Scenario Note: Luncheon with Zhi Shuping, Minister, Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine, Jacques Laforge, Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Dairy Commission and Leng Youbin, Chairman, Feihe.* AAFC A-2018-00071).

²³⁵ Email from Normand Payette, Special Advisor, PSC (2017, March 1). *Subject: RE: Meeting with CORCAN on Prison Farms.* CSC A-2018-00310.

sector so far and it is also Canada's largest-ever foreign investment in the field."²³⁶ To secure this deal, various meetings were held in the City of Kingston and in an Ottawa mansion between Feihe executives, Chinese investors, and Canadian officials.²³⁷ Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (the agency governing the Canadian Dairy Commission) was directly involved in the deal described as "the only recent and significant Chinese agri-food investment into Canada."²³⁸

According to CDC records, the working relationship between the CDC and Feihe began in April 2016,²³⁹ the same month that CSC "submitted a proposed plan to Ralph Goodale" for the prison farms,²⁴⁰ and proceeded with stunning speed. By December 2016, Feihe announced its plan to build an infant formula factory in Kingston,²⁴¹ the same month that Public Safety demanded that CSC's "options and

²³⁶ "China's Feihe invests 234 million U.S. dollars in Canada's agri-food" (2017, August 8). *Xinhua*. http://ca.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zjwl/201708/t20170810_4665211.htm.

²³⁷ Cumming, I. (2021, May 12). Complex formula: Government documents show the complicated five-year political path for Kingston's Feihe plant. *Ontario Farmer*. The listed officials include Lawrence MacAulay (AAFC Minister), John McCallum (Canadian Ambassador to China), Jacques Laforge (CDC CEO), Jim Leal (Ontario Minister of Agriculture), Mark Gerretsen (MP, Kingston and the Islands), Sophie Kiwala (MPP, Kingston and the Islands), Bryan Paterson (Mayor of Kingston), and Chinese government officials and Feihe executives. Representatives of Kingston, including the Mayor, City Councillors, and provincial and federal members of parliament, have all been involved in promoting both the Feihe deal and CSC's goat milk production plan.

²³⁸ AAFC (2018, October 12). *Chinese Agri-Food Investment Impact*. Prepared by Ken Nakagawa. AAFC A-2019-00055.

²³⁹ CDC (n.d.). *Media Lines*. CDC A2-2016-00002. The CDC-Feihe relationship may have begun earlier. After the CDC's deal fell through with other Chinese infant formula investors (Canadian Dairy Manufacturing Inc) in 2014, CDC records state: "Much effort has been made to forge Canadian-Chinese partnerships in the powdered infant formula industry. From May 2014 to February 2018, nine trips were made to China, including J Laforge, Wang Pei, and/or Gaetan Paquette," and the only outcomes listed are "Feihe investment in a plant in Kingston [and] Potential for a second Feihe plant (in Western Canada)" (CDC, 2019, January 22. *Commission Board Meeting: Excerpt from the Minutes of the CMSMC, July 26 and 27, 2018*. CDC A2-2019-00001). It is therefore possible, or likely, that negotiations between the CDC and Feihe predate April 2016, and could go as far back as 2014.

²⁴⁰ Abid, Z. (2016, May 16). *Background Information Related to Prison Farms*. AAFC A-2023-00128.

²⁴¹ Kingston was Feihe's selected location months before the December 2016 announcement. CDC's agenda for a Feihe delegation visiting Canada from September 11-23, 2016, states that the purpose was "to initiate site buying process and negotiations with Kingston" and to sign a Letter of Intent with OMAFRA. The Chinese delegation included Feihe Chairman Leng Youbin and Chinese Communist Party Secretary Shuwei Wang, for the signing of a "CDC-FEIHU Agreement" and preparing for the Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang to meet with Prime Minister Trudeau on September 21, 2016, to discuss Canada-China partnerships including Feihe (CDC, n.d., *INFANT FORMULA PRODUCTION in CANADA: INVESTMENT PROJECT from CHINA: FEI HE*. CDC A2-2016-00002). Prior to this, in July 2016, a joint announcement had reportedly been made at a private meeting by the Chinese ambassador Luo Zhaohui and the AAFC Deputy Minister Andrea Lyon saying that Feihe would be building "a powder plant" in Canada and the Chinese Prime Minister would be in Canada in the fall of 2016 to sign "a memorandum of understanding" (Cumming, I., 2016, August 2. Chinese firm is the facilitator for the right projects. *Ontario Farmer*). AAFC records show Lyon strongly reacting to the article, adamantly denying any "involvement whatsoever" in "the announcement of this investment" (Email from Andrea Lyon, Deputy Minister, AAFC, 2016, December 14. AAFC A-2019-00055). The journalist who reported Lyon's announcement with Chinese officials had been informed of it the day after the meeting took place, and shown pictures, in an on-the-record interview with Louise Jiang Birch, Director of CEFC Canada, a branch of CEFC China Energy and one of the facilitators behind the Feihe project. One of the largest companies in China, CEFC was declared bankrupt in 2020 after its founder was charged with economic crimes, and it was reported that "CEFC China used its complex web of affiliated companies to facilitate fake deals, inflate trade figures and obtain bank loans to fuel its aggressive expansion" (Tianqin, J. & Wei, H., 2019, April 9. *Citic Advances Deal to Buy Czech Assets of CEFC*. *Caixin Global*. <https://www.caixinglobal.com/2019-04-09/citic-advances-deal-to-buy-czech-assets-of-cefc-101401817.html>. Also: Shen, T., 2020, April 25. *Fallen Energy*

recommendations stemming from the consultation process” be presented to Minister Goodale, “subject to Cabinet Confidence.”²⁴² April 2016 to December 2016, therefore, emerges as the key timeframe for the planning process of both the prison farms and Feihe, just as 2019 to 2020 was the anticipated timeframe for the start of both CSC’s goat milk operations and Feihe’s infant formula operations.²⁴³ As will be discussed later, the delayed rollout of both also ran in parallel, although for different reasons.

The Canadian government’s relationship with Feihe merits some examination to understand how the Correctional Service of Canada could have found itself embroiled in this broader partnership. This is particularly important as the dealings between the CDC and Feihe are rife with potentially inappropriate agreements and conflicts of interest.

There were two key players in the Canadian political arena who were primarily responsible for securing Feihe’s investment in Canada: Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), and Jacques Laforge, CEO of the Canadian Dairy Commission (CDC), a Crown corporation and a branch of AAFC under the authority of Minister MacAulay. When Laforge stepped down as the CDC CEO in May 2018, the CDC Board expressed “concern that it may be difficult for the CDC to explain its relationship with Feihe with Jacques Laforge gone.”²⁴⁴ After waiting the minimum length of time required by federal conflict of interest laws, Laforge joined the Board of Directors of Feihe in June 2019,²⁴⁵ with a reported annual salary of \$353,000.²⁴⁶ This potential conflict of interest was anticipated by Minister MacAulay, who in September 2017 approved a letter accepting Jacques Laforge’s forthcoming resignation and advising Laforge, beneath a redacted section, to consult with the federal Conflict of Interest and Ethics

Conglomerate CEFC Declared Bankrupt. *Caixin Global*. <https://www.caixinglobal.com/2020-04-25/fallen-energy-conglomerate-cefc-declared-bankrupt-101547143.html>).

²⁴² CSC (2016, April 15). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Kingston Area Penitentiary Farm Consultation Process*. PSC A-2018-00451.

²⁴³ “Feihe International’s Kingston Plant... is set to open in 2019” and “to start processing in 2020” (AAFC, 2017, September 11. *Dairy Farmers of Ontario - Input DMM 234606*. AAFC A-2019-00055).

²⁴⁴ CDC (2018, May 10). *Draft Minutes: Commission Board Meeting*. CDC A2-2019-00001.

²⁴⁵ “[Laforge] admits he’s nervous about the potential consequences of taking on this role. ‘I know Feihe’s a good company, but companies are companies. They go sideways once in a while’... CBC News asked Laforge about his decision to accept this work at a delicate time in Canada–Chinese relations. ‘Believe me ... don’t think that’s not crossing my mind,’ he said. ‘It’s too late now’” (McGregor, J., 2020, January 19. *Public servant who promoted \$225M baby formula plant now sits on Chinese investor’s board: Jacques Laforge ‘opened up the doors’ for Feihe as CEO of Canadian Dairy Commission*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/laforge-cdc-feihe-board-appointment-1.5375209>).

²⁴⁶ According to this report, only nine Feihe executives earn higher salaries than Laforge, with Feihe Chairman Leng Youbin earning \$57 million annually (“Jacques Laforge Net Worth,” 2024, March 1. *Wallmine*.

<https://ca.wallmine.com/hkse/6186.hk/officer/2009936/jacques-laforge>). Forbes listed Feihe’s Youbin among “China’s Richest 2020” with an estimated net worth of \$9.9 billion (Flannery, R., 2020, November 11. *China Feihe’s Hong Kong IPO Proves Lucrative For Founder Leng Youbin*. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/russellflannery/2020/11/11/china-feihes-hong-kong-ipo-proves-lucrative-for-founder-leng-youbin/>).

Commissioner.²⁴⁷ Laforge did not do so: “Despite his direct dealings with Feihe as a public official, Laforge told CBC he did not clear his new job with the federal ethics commissioner.”²⁴⁸ Adding to the potential conflicts of interest, the Chinese investors with CEFC, who were the “main facilitators” of the Feihe-CDC deal,²⁴⁹ announced in 2016 that they were investing millions into Minister MacAulay’s nephew’s small bakery business in Smiths Falls, Ontario.²⁵⁰

The cozy relations between Canadian and Chinese government officials changed abruptly in December 2018 with Canada’s arrest of Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou and China’s retaliatory arrest of Canadian diplomats Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig.²⁵¹ Swiftly, MacAulay was shuffled out of his longtime position as AAFC Minister in March 2019 and repositioned as Minister of Veterans Affairs. He was the fifth to fill the role in less than four years, replacing Jody-Wilson Raybould who said she had been “demoted” to the Veterans position from her prior role as Minister of Justice over her refusal to be complicit

²⁴⁷ AAFC (2017, September 7). *Memorandum to the Minister from the Deputy Minister: Letter to Incumbent Chief Executive Officer at the Canadian Dairy Commission*. AAFC A-2017-00146.

²⁴⁸ McGregor, J. (2020, January 19). *Public servant who promoted \$225M baby formula plant now sits on Chinese investor’s board: Jacques Laforge ‘opened up the doors’ for Feihe as CEO of Canadian Dairy Commission*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/laforge-cdc-feihe-board-appointment-1.5375209>.

²⁴⁹ Cumming, I. (2021, May 12). *Complex formula*. *Ontario Farmer*.

²⁵⁰ A journalist attended the meeting with the CEFC investors and interviewed Spencer: “In 2013 [Will Spencer] opened rND Bakery in Smiths Falls on a shoestring budget ‘of \$300 and a drum kit.’” Spencer said he had travelled to China with CEFC investors on September 5, 2016: “On Sept. 8th I baked them some of my products and we signed the contract on Sept. 9th.” Spencer “was proudly identified by the company as the nephew of then Minister of Agriculture Lawrence MacAulay,” and “outlined how millions more in funding will fall into place as they expand.” The announcement at the “invitation-only supper at CEFC reception headquarters in Ottawa... also had Dr Yvon Martel, former head of research for Agriculture Canada, now a consultant for CEFC” (Cumming, I., 2016, November 8. *Ottawa bread-making business draws Chinese interest: The company, which makes premium non-allergenic breads, has signed a partnership deal with Chinese investors*. *Ontario Farmer*). While CEFC was courting Canadian officials, the energy conglomerate was making “lucrative” investments into U.S. politics as well, such as millions invested by CEFC in 2017 into “entities controlled by Hunter Biden” (Viser, M. et al., 2022, March 30. *Inside Hunter Biden’s multimillion-dollar deals with a Chinese energy company*. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/03/30/hunter-biden-china-laptop/>). As previously noted, CEFC declared bankruptcy in 2020 after its chairman and high-level staff were arrested for economic crimes and bribery. Another point of interest is that ATI records show the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) raising concerns over potentially fraudulent activities involving the CDC and Feihe. In 2019, the CDC Board expressed concern over a possible fraud investigation following an OAG review of CDC operations. The CDC considered conducting a fraud risk assessment “if the issue of a non-representative or under qualified CDC board (due to its three-person membership) is raised again by the OAG (as it did in the last special examination)” (CDC, 2019, June 5. *Draft Minutes: Commission Board Meeting*. CDC A2-2019-00001). While this is not a specific area of investigation for Evolve, and it is unknown whether this contributed to the Auditor General’s concerns, ATI records obtained by Evolve show that CDC CEO Laforge had a “special advisor,” Wang Pei, whose name appears in nearly all CDC records related to the CDC-Feihe partnership. The various titles attributed to this advisor include “Asia Market Consultant,” “CDC’s China representative [and] former Embassy employee,” “Program Manager Technical Services, Compliance and Assessment Services, Canadian Dairy Commission,” “the lead on the [Feihe] file at CDC,” “Special Advisor to the CEO, China Lead,” “Chinese market analyst (and door opener),” and “International Business Advisor to CEO.” One document stands out in particular: in a California meeting of Feihe executives in April 2016 (the month that the CDC claims its relationship with Feihe began), Wang Pei is listed as “President of CDC.” No other CDC or Canadian officials were at the meeting (Feihe, 2016, April 28. *Meeting Minutes of CDC and Feihe team*. CDC A2-2016-00002).

²⁵¹ Boyko, J. (2022, July 19). *Meng Wanzhou Affair (Two Michaels Case)*. *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/meng-wanzhou-affair>.

in the Trudeau-SNC-Lavalin scandal.²⁵² Years later, as tensions moderately cooled, MacAulay returned to his position as AAFC Minister in July 2023. That same month, the Canadian government signaled its intent to allow Feihe to begin operations after “deteriorating relations between the governments of Canada and China on other fronts [had] led to government officials not making decisions or taking actions to allow the plant to fully manufacture,” and in September 2023, Feihe Chairman Youbin came to Canada to “clear all the remaining hurdles” with government officials.²⁵³

While Feihe had anticipated that its infant formula operation would begin in 2019 (the year CSC anticipated that its goat operation would begin), the sudden onset of Canada-China tensions unquestionably contributed to the multi-year freeze, as reflected in ATI records.²⁵⁴ Since the 2016 fanfare over Feihe’s establishment of the Canada Royal Milk factory in Kingston, the facility has remained dormant. After Macaulay’s return as AAFC Minister, however, and the Feihe Chairman’s visit soon after, it was announced in December 2023 that “Canada Royal Milk is expecting to receive the necessary approvals to begin production of infant formula for the Canadian market in early 2024.”²⁵⁵ In March 2024, eight years after the deal began and five years after Feihe had expected to be operational, Canada Royal Milk finally received the required approval.²⁵⁶

One last important aspect in understanding the significance of the CDC-Feihe deal is the money. According to media reports, Feihe received at least \$24 million in Ontario provincial funding and \$15 million from the Canadian federal government through the CDC’s Matching Investment Fund (MIF), although it is not clear how much was ultimately committed or granted in the end.²⁵⁷ According to ATI records, the maximum funding that the MIF selection committee can approve is \$300,000, yet Feihe was approved for 50 times that threshold by the CDC Board (\$15 million), which was 535 times the amount given to the average MIF

²⁵² Brewster, M. (2019, March 2). *MacAulay says he wants to speed up missing pay for shortchanged veterans*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/macaulay-veterans-payments-1.5039856>.

²⁵³ “Health Canada and CFIA have still not granted official approval, but as of July ‘have no more questions,’ [Laforge] said” (Cumming, I., 2023, September 5. CRM still not at capacity but officials hopeful. *Ontario Farmer*).

²⁵⁴ In one 2019 email exchange between Global Affairs Canada (GACC) and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), an official wrote: “Understand that the current state of Canada-China relationship has affected GACC’s ability to prioritize [or] influence... Feihe’s relationship with regulators” (Email from Dr. Gary Little, Agriculture and Food, Trade Commissioner, Canadian Embassy in Beijing, China, 2019, May 5. CFIA A-2023-00006).

²⁵⁵ Canada Royal Milk (2023, December 8). *Statement on infant formula production for the Canadian marketplace*. <http://www.canadaroyalmilk.com/archives/827>.

²⁵⁶ Records show that Feihe and CDC were meeting with CFIA and Health Canada officials in 2016 and preparing clinical trials for submission to Health Canada in 2017. Meetings, inspections, and audits were conducted throughout 2018. Feihe expected the CFIA licence to be issued in 2019 (CDC A2-2019-00001). In its formal announcement, however, Feihe underplayed the long delay: “After a lengthy process of nearly two years, Canada Royal Milk has now received both Health Canada and CFIA approval” (Canada Royal Milk, 2024, March 27. *Canada Royal Milk receives Canadian Food Inspection Agency approval to begin infant formula production*. <http://www.canadaroyalmilk.com/archives/1357>).

²⁵⁷ Cumming, I. (2021, May 12). *Complex formula*. *Ontario Farmer*.

grant recipient.²⁵⁸ There are also records of the CDC’s CEO Laforge and Feihe executives discussing “shares” and “legal changes” that would be required to facilitate such a partnership between the Canadian government and Feihe, raising questions about what kind of financial and business relationship had originally been envisioned.²⁵⁹ Other records show that the company received additional money from a variety of Canadian public funds. Emails obtained from the City of Kingston show that, in 2016, the “Province of Ontario has been able to bring the financial incentive up to what Feihe has expected, approximately \$27M,” while Kingston’s then-MPP Sophie Kiwala was negotiating with the province to secure “an additional \$5M for site preparation from the province, which Bill Harvie from OMAFRA supports.”²⁶⁰ An undated letter from the Ontario government further assures Feihe that they will be eligible for subsequent “longer term funding” which “can often exceed what the company first received on the initial investment.”²⁶¹ When dollar amounts were not specified in the non-redacted portions of ATI records obtained by the CBC in 2017, journalist Janyce McGregor questioned “how much taxpayers are contributing to the deal.”²⁶² Separate from Canadian public funding, Feihe’s Kingston facility was financed by the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), a Chinese State-Owned Enterprise.²⁶³ Feihe itself

²⁵⁸ “The Matching Investment Fund, launched in 2009, has financed 28 innovation projects that have received a total of \$782,000 [averaging \$28,000 apiece]” (CDC, 2017, April 1. *SECRET: Corporate Plan 2017-2018 to 2021-2022*. CDC A2-2019-00001). “The maximum amount that the MIF selection committee can approve [is] \$300,000. The application was therefore referred to the Board of the CDC in June 2017... the CDC board agreed to grant \$15 million to Canada Royal Milk as part of the MIF... If questioned by industry stakeholders/media: The CDC has approved a MIF application by Canada Royal Milk. As a general policy, we do not disclose the amounts relative to individual companies.” [Emphasis as recorded in text] (CDC, 2017, July 12. *CONFIDENTIAL: Canadian Dairy Commission Communication Plan MIF to Canada Royal Milk*. CDC A2-2019-00001). This is in addition to the other noted examples of exceptional treatment given to Feihe by the CDC, including the new grant program (MAG/Milking Access for Growth) and the ultra-low-cost Class 7 milk pricing category that appear to have been specifically created by the CDC for Feihe.

²⁵⁹ CDC (2016, June 15). *CONFIDENTIAL: June 15, conference call with Chinese delegation, J. Laforge, P. Doyle, G. Paquette*. CDC A2-2019-00001.

²⁶⁰ Email from Carey Bidtnes, Business Development Officer, KEDCO (2016, September 14). *Subject: Confidential Update - Chinese Project*. City of Kingston MFIPPA.

²⁶¹ Letter from George Borovilos, Director, Business Development Branch, OMAFRA, to “Mr. You-Bin Leng, President and CEO, Feihe [sic] International Inc.” (n.d.). CDC A2-2016-00002.

²⁶² McGregor, J. (2017, August 3). *New Chinese baby formula plant to buy Canadian milk — but at what price?* CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/feihe-plant-trade-1.4228502>.

²⁶³ “Feihe’s Kingston team will be hosting a delegation of three executives from the Industrial & Commercial Bank of China... Feihe has a strategic alliance with them in China so they are coming to see the project. ICBC is a Chinese multinational banking company, and the largest bank in the world by total assets and by market capitalization. It is one of China’s ‘Big Four’ state-owned commercial banks...” (Email from Carey Bidtnes, Business Development Officer, KEDCO, 2016, December 5. *Subject: Invitation: Meeting with Feihe & Industrial & Commercial Bank of China (ICBC)*. City of Kingston MFIPPA). A series of emails between KEDCO and TD Bank also confirm that the Feihe facility was being financed by ICBC, and that City of Kingston employee Carey Bidtnes was acting as Feihe’s spokesperson: “Thank-you for your email about the new manufacturing facility that Feihe International will build in Kingston. At this point in time, the company has requested that inquiries come through me... Feihe [sic] is partnered with Industrial and Commercial Bank of China... ICBC is a partner in their Chinese operations and will support the Canadian project... I passed along your contact information to Feihe last week. At this point, the company has requested that all inquiries come through me, and I need to respect their request... If you have a contact with ICBC, perhaps you could discuss your services with them... I asked them how they would like to handle inquiries, and they have requested that I remain the contact for the near future. So, I am afraid that I cannot share a contact with you... I have spoken with Feihe’s Kingston team, and they are not interested in meeting with banks or financial institutions” (Emails from Carey Bidtnes, Business Development Officer, KEDCO, to

was founded as a State-Owned Enterprise²⁶⁴ and remains “directly linked to the government of China” according to Canadian government records.²⁶⁵ All of this, and the costly and covertly orchestrated plan to use Canadian prison labour to supply this Chinese corporation, should at the very least have been subjected to journalistic scrutiny, if not judicial inquiry.

3.2. “Plan is to sell milk to Feihe” || The Feihe-CDC-CSC Connection

Another key challenge of the Feihe-CDC deal was how Canada planned on supplying Feihe with the amount of goat milk it required. Cow milk requirements were assured through an agreement with the CDC but goat milk is not supply managed by the federal government and it is a small industry in Canada. In 2018, AAFC discussed the challenge of securing the required supply of goat milk for Feihe, noting that most goat milk in Ontario (the province producing over half of all goat milk in Canada) is controlled by Gay Lea and Mariposa Dairy (Gay Lea owns shares in Mariposa Dairy): “The [Feihe] plant will need 75 million litres of goat’s milk per year. Right now, Ontario’s annual production is around 43-46 million litres... In 2019 I expect price wars for the milk (current buyers include Saputo, GayLea/Hewitt’s, Mariposa Dairy, etc).”²⁶⁶ At the same time, in 2018, CSC was consulting Gay Lea for the prison farm goat procurement, as well as the owner of Mariposa Dairy, Bruce Vandenberg (a member of CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel).²⁶⁷

Considering that, as of 2016, the federal government was scrambling to secure enough goat milk supply for Feihe, it was assumed that this was behind CSC’s announcement in March 2018 that goats, not cows, would be the focus of the new penitentiary agriculture program.²⁶⁸ CSC never denied the allegations but publicly

Jonathan Speers, TD Commercial Banking, in 2016 and 2017. City of Kingston MFIPPA). In September 2018, Bidtnes left KEDCO to work for Feihe as “the human resources manager who also acts as the company’s spokesperson” (McGregor, J., 2021, April 12. *Foreign workers assigned unsafe housing during contracts at Ontario baby formula plant*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/foreign-workers-milk-plant-1.5967593>).

²⁶⁴ Flannery, R. (2019, December 9). There’s No Place Like Home: Feihe Moves Listing To China, CEO Becomes Billionaire. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/russellflannery/2019/12/09/theres-no-place-like-home-feihe-moves-listing-to-china-ceo-becomes-billionaire/>.

²⁶⁵ On October 23, 2018, AAFC Minister MacAulay’s office requested “an urgent briefing on the Feihe issue” after receiving an invitation to meet with the Chairman of Feihe. AAFC staff advised that “(we) should meet them to understand where they are coming from as they are directly linked to the Gov of China,” adding “One additional twist: PMO [Prime Minister’s Office] will participate in this briefing” (Email exchanges between Fred Gorrell, Assistant Deputy Minister, International Affairs, CFIA/AAFC, Chris Forbes, AAFC, and Frederic Seppely, AAFC, following a meeting request from Carey Bidtnes on behalf of Leng Youbin, Chairman, Feihe, 2018, October 23. AAFC A-2019-00055).

²⁶⁶ Email from Olivier Charbonneau-Beaulieu, AAFC (2017, April 5). *Subject: Goat farming seminars held in preparation for the opening of FeiHe’s infant formula plant in Kingston*. AAFC A-2019-00055.

²⁶⁷ Emails between Terry Lister, CORCAN, Bruce Vandenberg, Mariposa Dairy/CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel, Ove Hansen, Gay Lea, and Kevin Weaver, Dairy Goat Industry Advisor, Gay Lea (2018, November 7). PSPC A-2018-01048.

²⁶⁸ MacAlpine, I. (2018, March 8). Cows not in initial prison farm plan. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/2018/03/08/cows-not-in-initial-prison-farm-plan>.

maintained that the market for its goat milk would be determined *after* its goat farm was established, a tactic of plausible deniability that proved surprisingly effective given the weakness of the argument and the obviousness of the connection.²⁶⁹

Even though many articles made the connection between CSC and the Feihe deal,²⁷⁰ most of which resulted directly from Evolve’s research and outreach, reporting on the matter was muted. Numerous ATI records show federal agencies anticipating controversial media coverage of CSC’s goat program, only to express surprise (and relief) when it did not manifest. For example, when PSPC issued the first tender to acquire goats for CSC, a procurement officer wrote:

“This is an update [on] one of the higher profile cases here... Communications did draft up Media Lines ML CSC Livestock Oct 2018 DRAFT v2.doc, although the procurement did not receive media coverage here in Kingston -- a bit of a surprise given that the prison farm issue is really quite a significant topic here in Kingston.”²⁷¹

In another example, when CSC staff and CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle were discussing a response to MP Reid’s allegation in 2022 “that CSC was sending infant formula to China based on milk produced by goats,” an officer from CSC’s Parliamentary Relations Unit, Jordan Crosby, recalled that when CBC News published a series of exposés on Kingston’s Feihe infant formula factory the previous year,²⁷² it was “One of my few panic moments.”²⁷³

Articles that were neutral or positive about CSC’s plan to farm goats to supply Feihe received no public commentary from CSC or Public Safety. Articles criticizing this plan, however, were countered with resounding responses from CSC stating that contracts had not yet been established and therefore any “speculation” that CSC’s milk will be supplied for export was “not grounded in fact,” an effective deterrent

²⁶⁹ CSC (2019, July 30). *Media Lines: Reopening of CORCAN Farm Operations*. ATI A-2019-00325.

²⁷⁰ See “Prison Farms & Feihe Connection” <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/prison-farms-feihe-connection/>.

²⁷¹ Email from Rick Calich, PSPC (2019, January 16). *Subject: FW: 21C41-189474 Goats*. PSPC A-2019-00259.

²⁷² McGregor, J. (2021, March 30). *Workers feared for safety at Ontario baby formula plant*. CBC News.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-royal-milk-plant-safety-concerns-1.5967372>. Also: McGregor, J. (2021, March 31). *Workers at baby formula plant claim harassment by managers*. CBC News.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/harassment-allegations-canada-royal-milk-plant-1.5967470>. Also: McGregor, J. (2021, April 12). *Foreign workers assigned unsafe housing during contracts at Ontario baby formula plant: documents*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/foreign-workers-milk-plant-1.5967593>. Even though Evolve made numerous submissions of evidence of the CSC-Feihe connection to CBC’s Janyce McGregor (and others) from 2017 to 2021, none of the CBC’s articles on Feihe mentioned the prison farms, and none of the CBC’s articles on the prison farms mentioned Feihe, to CSC’s relief.

²⁷³ Email exchanges between Jordan Crosby, CSC Parliamentary Relations Unit, Colette Cibula, Kelly Hartle, and others (2022, March 22). CSC A-2022-00099.

to any journalist or news editor.²⁷⁴ In response to formal inquiries by MP Scott Reid, CSC and the federal government did not deny that the prison farms would supply Feihe, only that there are “currently” no contracts or supply arrangements between CSC and Feihe “with respect to labour [or products generated] through CSC’s penitentiary farm operations.”²⁷⁵

Although it took years to obtain the conclusive evidence, there were ample indicators that the timing of the ‘restoration’ of prison farms and the opening of a goat-milk-based infant formula factory in Kingston were linked. As previously noted, Kingston and the Islands MP Mark Gerretsen declared at a community meeting in 2017 that CSC had a “good opportunity” to enter commercial goat milk production for Feihe, as “there is no quota involved” and “the demand for goats will be high with the new factory.” Also as noted, MP Gerretsen was recorded saying that the new prison farm model provided an “opportunity for the correctional institution to play a role” in Feihe’s operations, but his statements were not the only source of evidence. Minutes from CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel meeting in 2017 discuss the “Kingston baby food plant (goat’s milk) 2020 start date” and the need for “a script to utilize for the community in discussions.”²⁷⁶ CORCAN’s 2018 Business Plan stated that it would “focus its marketing efforts on developing more Public-Private Partnerships (PPP),” and CORCAN’s growth strategy over the next three years included entering “new foreign markets.”²⁷⁷ The chair of CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel, Dianne Dowling, confirmed to media that CSC’s decision to enter goat milk production was “definitely” related to the marketing opportunity with Feihe.²⁷⁸ In a March 2019 interview, CSC’s Regional Manager Chris Staley said that the goat dairy was to be the “major livestock enterprise” of CSC’s prison farm, and the article states that the milk is “destined for Feihe.”²⁷⁹ Furthermore, after the CDC CEO Jacques Laforge stepped down from his government position to join Feihe’s Board of Directors, the news coverage sparked “urgent” communications between CSC and Public Safety regarding CSC’s goat milk production plans.²⁸⁰ It was

²⁷⁴ Robitaille, I. (2021, March 17). Clarity needed on prison farm program, says CSC. *The Hill Times*.

<https://www.hilltimes.com/story/2021/03/17/clarity-needed-on-prison-farm-program-says-csc/272156/>

²⁷⁵ House of Commons (2019, May 2). *Order Paper Question No. Q-2494*. Reply to MP Scott Reid by Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Ralph Goodale. PSC A-2019-00099.

²⁷⁶ CSC (2017, December 5). *Record of Discussion: Farm Advisory Panel*. CSC A-2018-00440.

²⁷⁷ CSC (n.d.). *CORCAN Business Plan 2018-2019 to 2020-2021*. CSC A-2018-00323.

²⁷⁸ MacAlpine, I. (2018, March 8). Cows not in initial prison farm plan. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*.

<https://www.thewhig.com/2018/03/08/cows-not-in-initial-prison-farm-plan>.

²⁷⁹ Atkinson, S. (2019, March 26). New prison farm structure is taking shape. *Ontario Farmer*. The article text was circulated internally by CSC with “destined for Feihe” highlighted. The email discussion is redacted except for a pasted media line, presumably reminding (or warning) CSC personnel not to confirm the Feihe connection: “As part of implementation planning, CSC is currently reviewing options for the sale of goods produced in the penitentiary farms offender training program and will provide information as appropriate to the public as we move forward” (Emails between Communications Advisors Esther Mailhot and Avely Serin, CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle, and others, 2019, March 28. *Subject: Article on prison farms*. CSC A-2019-00030).

²⁸⁰ “Given Prison farms and articles in the media today <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/laforge-cdc-feihe-board-appointment-1.5375209> could you please look into who we are selling milk to?” ... “I spoke with Kelly Hartle, the CEO of Corcan, about the plans for the goat dairy last week for just this reason. She told me that they don’t have a contract in

suggested that discussions with CORCAN’s Kelly Hartle be handled discretely over the phone, “before setting digits to keyboard,” presumably to avoid leaving a written record.²⁸¹

In addition to the paper trails, there is the first-hand evidence that can only be articulated by those who have been in communication with decision-makers, such as a phone call between Evolve founder Calvin Neufeld and CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle on May 23, 2019, in which Hartle urged Neufeld to “soften” his critique of the plan for the prison farms to supply Feihe, on the basis of the “unintended consequences” that could come with language that implies that goods produced by prisoners are not equivalent to regularly produced commercial goods.²⁸² According to Neufeld’s notes, Hartle said: “Prisoners are human beings like anyone else so there’s nothing wrong with them making infant formula.”²⁸³ The ever-growing body of evidence was compiled by Evolve and shared with journalists and politicians, with little effect. As Evolve worked to raise awareness and alarm, MP Gerretsen,²⁸⁴ Panel Chair Dianne Dowling,²⁸⁵ and CSC²⁸⁶ shifted their stance

place yet - it’s still a ways away” (Emails from Michael Milech, Senior Policy Advisor, PSC, and Colette Cibula, CSC, 2020, January 20. *Subject: Urgent: MP follow up required.* CSC A-2019-00320).

²⁸¹ Email from Colette Cibula, Associate Assistant Commissioner, Communications & Engagement, CSC, to Kelly Hartle, CEO, CORCAN (2020, January 20). *Subject: Urgent: MP follow up required.* CSC A-2019-00320.

²⁸² Evolve has worked to uphold and defend the human rights and dignity of incarcerated persons. Evolve’s critiques of the prison farm program are based on ethics and legality. Evolve does not wish to stigmatize prisoners in any way. The stigmatization of prisoners, rather, comes in the form of repeated condescending claims that prison farms benefit prisoners through “paying our way through agriculture,” learning “soft skills” like “teamwork” and “responsibility,” and becoming “productive members of society” by “bottle-feeding baby calves” and “getting up early.”

²⁸³ Neufeld’s written response to Hartle is captured in an ATI release: “I will continue to be careful with language but the time for nuance has passed. I’m troubled that for all the serious concerns we’ve raised, the response has been suggestions on our wording (inflammatory, forced, broad statements, etc). Unintended consequences... what about the unintended consequences of prisoners exploiting and slaughtering animals? What about the unintended consequences of using a prison work program to supply a multinational corporation? What about the unintended consequences of a government not listening to the voices of thousands of Canadians who passionately care about prisoners, animals, and the climate crisis? Goodness. The unintended consequences of your program will far outweigh the unintended consequences of the wording of a nobody like me” (Email from Calvin Neufeld to Kelly Hartle, CORCAN CEO, 2019, May 28. CSC A-2018-00441).

²⁸⁴ “Clearly, speculation” (Transcript of Evolve’s meeting with MP Gerretsen, April 13, 2018). The transcript posted to Evolve’s Facebook page was copied by CSC staff and forwarded by CSC Regional Deputy Commissioner Scott Harris to CSC Commissioner Anne Kelly with the comment: “there is a Facebook post from Evolve our Prison Farms meeting with MP worth reading... Interesting read.....” (2018, April 25. *Subject: MP Gerretsen information Bulletin.* CSC A-2018-00332).

²⁸⁵ “Talking about selling milk to Feihe is based on assumptions and speculation -- not good grounds for any campaign” (Email from Dianne Dowling to Evolve, 2019, August 9).

²⁸⁶ CSC rarely publishes articles and rarely issues public statements outside of formal announcements but was uncharacteristically outspoken in attempts to shut down “speculation” regarding the Feihe connection (and only when the connection was discussed critically). In one example, CSC published an article in *The Hill Times* denouncing a critical article that had been published by Pen Farm Herd Co-Op member Helen Forsey (Forsey, H., 2021, March 8. Scandal brewing over feds’ prison farm plan. *The Hill Times*. <https://www.hilltimes.com/story/2021/03/08/scandal-brewing-over-prison-farm-plan/268627/>). CSC wrote in its published response: “We wanted to provide clarifications regarding a piece published in the *Hill Times* [stating] that plans were already established for a large goat dairy program, whose milk would be supplied for export. In fact, CSC has not yet procured any dairy goats, nor has it entered into any negotiations or contracts with any potential buyers of goat milk. The program is not yet started and speculation as to how it will be operated is not grounded in fact” (Robitaille, I., 2021, March 17. Clarity needed on prison farm program, says CSC. *The Hill Times*. <https://www.hilltimes.com/story/2021/03/17/clarity-needed-on-prison-farm-program-says-csc/272156/>). In another example, Helen Forsey published a letter in *The Kingston Whig-Standard* condemning the prison farm plan (Forsey, H., 2021, March 11. New prison farm plan needed [Letter to the editor]. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*).

and collectively denounced the Feihe connection as “speculation,” a simple and uniform counter tactic that proved highly effective. Even before definitive proof was obtained in 2024 (Appendix 1: “Smoking Gun”), the evidence was overwhelming and obvious. In addition to the initial open acknowledgement of the plan by MP Gerretsen and Dianne Dowling, ATI requests submitted by Evolve for records mentioning Feihe in relation to prison farm plans resulted in the release of multiple heavily redacted briefing notes from 2016 and 2017 outlining CSC’s (redacted) new prison farm model.²⁸⁷ With the documentary records now in the public domain, it can no longer be denied or disputed that the restoration of the prison farms in Kingston was grounded on commercial goat milk production to help fill the market gap created by the Feihe processing facility.²⁸⁸ It is as much as spelled out in a 2022 briefing note: “Dairy goats were selected as part of this [prison farm program] due to the market needs at the time demonstrating a forecasted shortage in the supply chain.”²⁸⁹

For reasons documented in the next sections, the prison farm plan has struggled, and so far failed, to manifest. This includes the 2021 “pause” of the goat program after successive goat procurement failures, and CSC has not yet succeeded in establishing an operational cow dairy, although CSC claims that a 30-

<https://www.thewhig.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor-new-prison-farm-plan-needed-open-vaccine-clinics-to-general-public>). CSC published a response: “The piece in question makes various assertions that are not supported by facts. Contrary to the statements that prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay institutions are being turned into intensive livestock operations for the mass production of goat milk for export, CSC has in fact not yet procured any dairy goats, nor has it entered into any negotiations or contracts with any potential buyers of goat milk. Speculation as to the direction of the program in the future is just that: speculation” (Robitaille, I., 2021, March 24. Prison farm has many positives [Letter to the editor]. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor-prison-farm-has-many-positives-clinic-a-success>). The pressure exerted by CSC on writers, reporters, and editors not to publish any “speculation” of a critical nature was forceful and, for the most part, effective, but not with Forsey. Each time, Forsey punched back at CSC. In *The Hill Times*, Forsey wrote: “CSC itself is stirring the pot with its March 17 letter to *The Hill Times*... In case anyone had doubts about the claim in my column that the authorities respond to every criticism with bland and irrelevant assurances, CSC has obligingly provided their letter as an example” (Forsey, H., 2024, April 30. CSC should abandon its industrial goat farm fiasco. *The Hill Times*. <https://www.hilltimes.com/story/2021/04/05/cscs-prison-farms-clarification-by-conflation/268730/>). *The Kingston Whig-Standard* did not publish Forsey’s response to CSC’s letter, but Forsey shared it with Evolve: “In her March 24th letter, the Correctional Services’ communications adviser, Isabelle Robitaille, states her desire to ‘provide clarifications’ regarding my letter... What she provides instead is the CSC’s standard response to all criticism: irrelevant half-facts and bland assurances that all is well in Prison Farm Land. What she does not provide is any information that would contradict my facts... As for the eventual sale of the milk to a private baby formula corporation for export, Robitaille suggests that since CSC has not yet purchased any goats or signed sales contracts for the goat milk, I am indulging in ‘pure speculation.’ Was MP Mark Gerretsen also merely ‘speculating’ when he assured the media and the Pen Farm Herd Co-op that the expected buyer was Canada Royal Milk, aka Feihe Corporation?”

²⁸⁷ The same ATI requests were submitted to both CSC (CSC A-2018-00328) and Public Safety (PSC A-2018-00450), and the same redacted briefing notes were released by both agencies.

²⁸⁸ In meetings with Evolve Our Prison Farms in 2018 and 2019, the CEO of CORCAN Kelly Hartle defended the use of prison labour for infant formula production, the need to pursue an economy of scale through industrial agriculture, and the need for CORCAN’s agribusiness to supply a market gap to avoid perceptions of unfair market competition. Asked whether the developing Canada-China tensions would affect CORCAN’s plans for their goat operation, Hartle’s response was “We’re watching that very closely.”

²⁸⁹ CSC (2022, June 21). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety: Penitentiary Agriculture Program Implementation Update*. CSC A-2022-00099.

cow dairy research program is expected to launch in September 2024.²⁹⁰ The rollout of the prison farm program fell under the responsibility of CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle, who inherited the file in 2017 from former CORCAN CEO Christian D’Auray. After a six-year effort to fulfil the “incompatible goals” of the government’s “utopian request,”²⁹¹ Kelly Hartle quietly retired in July 2023 after having worked for CSC in various roles since 1998.²⁹² Also directly involved in the prison farm implementation was Hartle’s superior, Senior Deputy Commissioner Alain Tousignant, who retired at the same time.²⁹³

CSC has confirmed that “as of July 2023, the new CEO of CORCAN is Christopher Hill.”²⁹⁴ Originally a parole officer, Hill went on to hold numerous senior roles within CSC,²⁹⁵ handling media relations in some of CSC’s most controversial, politically sensitive, and high-profile situations. In 2013, Hill and Hartle were involved in Supreme Court challenges in the Omar Khadr case.²⁹⁶ In 2014, Hill briefly replaced Hartle as

²⁹⁰ Email from Esther Mailhot, Senior Advisor, Issues Management and Media Relations, CSC (2024, June 11).

²⁹¹ “What’s happened here is that the people at Corrections Canada have responded to a utopian request - create a prison farm that features a series of incompatible goals: 1. Teaches skills that will have application in the job market; 2. Provides therapy and training in empathy, via interaction with animals; 3. Produces milk---but it can’t be cows’ milk, due to dairy quota issues and the loss of the ability to internally supply the prison system; 4. Turns a profit. In my view, there simply does not exist a single system that can accomplish all of these goals. The solution that Corrections Canada has hit upon (a goat-milk facility run in cooperation with a Chinese company, for the export market) appears at first glance to fulfil these goals. But only at first glance... the old program was already a failure at the first goal, as almost no post-release hires were taking place in the agricultural sector. The new proposed goat farm does not appear to address this problem in any way. And as for goal #2, I don’t believe that a mass facility on this scale will produce the kind of humane interaction between prisoners and animals that is desired... As for goals #3 and #4, I have practical doubts that it will be possible for a federal government agency to produce goat’s milk at a profit [and] it will almost certainly involve prison labour competing with private farmers, which is wrong. Additionally, it will almost certainly involve prisoners being paid virtually nothing to do work that bears very little resemblance to on-the-job training, and which bears a very strong resemblance to the kind of work that took place in Dickensian work-houses” (Statement from MP Scott Reid, shared with permission. Evolve Our Prison Farms, 2021, July 21. *Wise words from Conservative Scott Reid, MP...* [Status update]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/EvolveOurPrisonFarms/photos/pb.100064814345725.-2207520000/4250786728348055/?type=3>).

²⁹² Kelly Hartle (n.d.). *Home* [LinkedIn page]. LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kelly-hartle-0588b5108/>.

²⁹³ The CEO of CORCAN reports to the Assistant Commissioner, Correctional Operations and Programs (ACCOP), a role held by Tousignant in the early years of prison farm implementation. In 2019, Tousignant was promoted to Senior Deputy Commissioner, the second highest-ranking position in CSC. Like Hartle, Tousignant retired in July 2023: “It was with mixed emotions that I announced that Alain Tousignant, Senior Deputy Commissioner, retired from the Correctional Service Canada” (CSC Commissioner Anne Kelly’s “update for correctional stakeholders,” 2023, July 21. <https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/corporate/commissioner/stakeholders/stakeholders/2023-07-21.html>).

²⁹⁴ Email statement from Kevin Antonucci, Senior Communications Advisor, Issues Management and Media Relations, CSC (2023, September 29).

²⁹⁵ Public records show Hill’s CSC roles include Parole Officer (dates unknown); Director, Institutional Reintegration Operations (2013); Director, Offender Programs and Reintegration (dates unknown); Warden, Edmonton Institution (2014); Director of Security Operations (2014-2016); Director General, Labour Relations and Workplace Wellbeing (2016-2017); and CEO, CORCAN (2023-present).

²⁹⁶ See “Affidavit of Chris Hill” in Court File No. 36081 in the Supreme Court of Canada between Kelly Hartle, Warden of Edmonton Institution et al., and Omar Ahmed Khadr. https://www.scc-csc.ca/WebDocuments-DocumentsWeb/36081/FM010_Appellants_Kelly-Hartle-et-al.pdf. Khadr’s case was summed up by Amnesty International: “Omar Khadr is a Canadian citizen who in 2002 was captured by American forces in Afghanistan. He had found himself in a fire fight and allegedly threw a grenade which resulted in the death of a US soldier. Mr. Khadr was 15 years old at the time. He was detained, interrogated, and sent to Guantanamo Bay, where he spent the next decade... Mr. Khadr was transferred to Canada on 29 September 2012 under the International Transfer of Offenders Act (ITOA). At the

Warden of Edmonton Institution and dealt with media scrutiny over CSC's refusal to transfer Khadr out of the federal penitentiary system into a provincial jail.²⁹⁷ In 2015, when CSC faced "an onslaught of criticism" over solitary confinement practices after the tragic suicide of Ashley Smith, "who died in a solitary cell while staff watched," Hill handled media relations again, this time as Director of Security Operations.²⁹⁸ Then, from 2017 to 2023, he left CSC to work in the private sector as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for Modern Niagara Construction.²⁹⁹ In that role, Hill was involved in the construction of Feihe's Kingston facility, which took place from 2017 to 2019 with a reported contract value of \$310 million, according to the project management company Graham.³⁰⁰ Records obtained from the City of Kingston through municipal Freedom of Information requests list Modern Niagara as one of the subcontractors,³⁰¹ and a former Modern Niagara colleague confirmed to Evolve that Christopher Hill was involved in the Feihe project.³⁰² After his stint in the private sector, Hill returned to work for CSC in July 2023, this time in a new role as CORCAN CEO, once again replacing Hartle, and once again taking over a controversial and politically sensitive portfolio.

In December 2023, Hill requested a meeting with Calvin Neufeld, founder of Evolve. At the meeting, which took place on January 17, 2024, Hill asked whether Evolve would be willing to support "green" innovations within the land-based aspects of the farm program, despite CORCAN's continued investment into dairy and beef operations for commercial markets. Neufeld declined, then asked if the goat operation was still expected to proceed. Hill answered that he did not know much about the goat program, as he was still "getting up to speed" after seven months as CEO. At the end of the meeting, Neufeld asked whether Feihe was the intended market for CSC's goat milk. Despite his earlier claim that he was not informed about the details of the goat program, Hill immediately responded, "No." Given the considerable amount of evidence to the contrary, and the fact that CSC has never *denied* the Feihe connection, but simply maintained that the

time of his transfer, Mr. Khadr was 26 years old and had been imprisoned for 10 years. Upon repatriation to Canada, he was deemed by Correctional Services Canada to be serving an adult sentence and placed in a maximum security federal penitentiary. Mr. Khadr challenged this decision and requested that he be recognized as a youth offender and transferred into a provincial institution. The case made it up to the Supreme Court of Canada" (Amnesty International, 2017, March 8. *CANADA V. KHADR*. <https://www.amnesty.ca/legal-brief/canada-v-khadr/>).

²⁹⁷ Hume, J. (2014, July 10). Transfer to provincial jail would hinder Khadr's rehabilitation: Warden. *Toronto Sun*. <https://torontosun.com/2014/07/10/transfer-to-provincial-jail-would-hinder-khadrs-rehabilitation-warden>.

²⁹⁸ White, P. (2015, December 22). Solitary confinement at federal prisons in decline. *The Globe and Mail*. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/sharp-decline-in-inmate-segregation/article27918175/>.

²⁹⁹ Chris Hill – Correctional Service of Canada. (n.d.). *Home* [LinkedIn page]. LinkedIn. <https://ca.linkedin.com/in/chris-hill-07b908a6>.

³⁰⁰ Graham (n.d.). *Canada Royal Milk*. <https://grahambuilds.com/canada-royal-milk/>.

³⁰¹ Email from Bill Pearce to Carey Bidtnes and Kingston Mayor Bryan Paterson (2017, May 30). *Subject: real gold feihe*. City of Kingston MFIPPA request.

³⁰² Evolve contacted the name listed for Modern Niagara in the City of Kingston MFIPPA email. For privacy reasons, the name will not be disclosed in this report, but in a phone call on December 6, 2023, this person confirmed Hill's involvement in the Feihe construction project, "high up" in finance, recalling that Hill was called "the money man."

market would be determined *after* investing millions into building one of the largest goat farms in Canada, Neufeld asked Hill again, and he repeated, “No.”³⁰³

Weeks later, Neufeld obtained the “smoking gun” document, which made the CSC-Feihe connection explicit. Neufeld sent it immediately to CORCAN CEO Christopher Hill, requesting that he clarify his recent denial of the connection.³⁰⁴ In response, Hill denied his denial, writing: “I believe what I told you was that I did not know at the end of the day given that I have had no focus on the goat operation as I am getting up to speed. I have no interest in deceit for what it’s worth. It’s simply not how I operate.”³⁰⁵ Evolve requested a follow-up meeting with Hill to share the information revealed in ATI records. Hill agreed and scheduled the meeting for February 29, 2024, but on the morning of the meeting, he cancelled.³⁰⁶

Since then, other incontrovertible evidence has emerged that shows other government agencies were aware of the plan for the prison farms to supply Feihe with goat milk. This includes an ATI release from Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), after more than two years – 786 days – of delay. The records reveal that, in December 2021, after CSC’s goat procurement attempts had failed and CSC had temporarily paused the goat program, PSPC staff were discussing “the context behind what happened to [CSC’s] milk program and trade issue with China.”³⁰⁷ PSPC noted that the “official reason” given by CSC for pausing the goat program was “the unplanned financial requirements to address the global COVID-19 pandemic across the organization,”³⁰⁸ but officials at PSPC “knew there was a link to baby formula.”³⁰⁹ PSPC’s explanation was that “CSC had found a buyer for their goat’s milk and it was a Chinese company that was going to turn into formula for export to China,” but “I guess it fell through.”³¹⁰

Of the tens of thousands of ATI records obtained by Evolve, there was one piece of the puzzle that remained stubbornly elusive, and that was any official documentary record revealing the origin of the idea for CSC’s

³⁰³ Notes from the meeting with CORCAN CEO Christopher Hill (2024, January 17).

³⁰⁴ “I asked you if the goat milk plan was to supply Feihe. You told me flatly no. It took me nearly six years and 35,000 pages from Access to Information to get proof. I already had a pile of evidence but now I have a smoking gun... In our meeting you seemed authentic so I don’t want to think you were misleading me, in which case, you’ve been given inaccurate or incomplete information” (Email from Calvin Neufeld to Christopher Hill, CORCAN CEO, 2024, February 14).

³⁰⁵ Email from Christopher Hill, CORCAN CEO (2024, February 14). *Subject: Feihe.*

³⁰⁶ Email from Christopher Hill, CORCAN CEO (2024, February 29). *Subject: today.*

³⁰⁷ Email from Melissa Aminirad, Senior Advisor to the Regional Director General, PSPC (2021, November 30). PSPC A-2021-00436.

³⁰⁸ Email from Dominique Labrecque, PSPC, to Melissa Aminirad, Senior Advisor to the Regional Director General, PSPC (2021, November 30). *Subject: RE: CSC Barns - formerly goats.* PSPC A-2021-00436.

³⁰⁹ Email from Melissa Aminirad to Dominique Labrecque, PSPC (2021, December 1). *Subject: RE: CSC Barns - formerly goats.* PSPC A-2021-00436.

³¹⁰ Emails from Dominique Labrecque to Melissa Aminirad, PSPC (2021, December 1). *Subject: RE: CSC Barns - formerly goats.* PSPC A-2021-00436.

prison farms to contribute to Feihe’s supply of goat milk. For years, Evolve filed ATI requests with AAFC and the CDC to discover if their records contained any mention of CSC or the prison farms, while scouring CSC records for any planning or collaboration with the CDC and AAFC, since those were the agencies and actors responsible for the Feihe deal. Evolve knew that the prison farm plan was hatched under the direct involvement and keen interest of Minister of Public Safety Ralph Goodale, and that the Feihe deal was developed under the direct involvement and keen interest of Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Lawrence MacAulay. There are many connections between these two long-standing and high-ranking public servants. Both have roots in agriculture, and each has served in the other’s role.³¹¹ It stood to reason that the two ministers were the link that explained the origin of the idea for the prison farms to supply Feihe, but for years Evolve was unsuccessful in uncovering evidence to support the theory. Finally, through an ATI release obtained by Dr. Amy Fitzgerald and shared with Evolve in early 2024, a trail of evidence emerged.³¹² On May 16, 2016, early in the public consultation process, CSC’s David Molzahn mentioned that “Mr. Goodale was a former, much loved, minister of Agriculture,” and someone (name redacted) “was on a conference call with the Minister of Agriculture this morning.”³¹³ This unnamed individual provided Molzahn with information “from AAFC in regards to the priorities they see for agriculture in the near future.”³¹⁴ In another email that same day, Molzahn wrote (quoted as written):

“By the way, AG Canada has requested background information on the farm closures. They are preparing a briefing package for their minister, (who used to be our Minister in the past.) We will see what the two ministers will agree too in the coming weeks.”³¹⁵

Armed with this information, Evolve filed an ATI request with AAFC for briefing materials regarding the prison farms. AAFC’s ATI analyst responded saying that no records had been found.³¹⁶ Evolve requested that another search be conducted and provided the analyst with the ATI records referencing AAFC’s request for briefing materials. With this information, the ATI analyst was able to identify that the responsive records would have been with the AAFC Deputy Minister’s Office, which had not been tasked with the original search for records. A new search was conducted and it resulted in the release of an email, dated May 17,

³¹¹ Ralph Goodale was first elected as a Member of Parliament in 1974, under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's government, and served as Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food from 1993-1997. Lawrence MacAulay was first elected as a Member of Parliament in 1988 and served as Solicitor General (the title preceding Minister of Public Safety), responsible for federal prisons, from 1998-2002. Lawrence MacAulay also intervened as an advocate for preserving the Joyceville Institution abattoir in 2009 when it was scheduled for closure along with the prison farms. So Goodale had familiarity with AAFC affairs, and MacAulay had familiarity with CSC and with Kingston’s prison farms specifically.

³¹² CSC A-2018-00310.

³¹³ Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, May 12). *Subject: FW: Deck from AAFC.* CSC A-2018-00310.

³¹⁴ Email from [redacted] to David Molzahn, CSC, Cc: Trade (2016, May 12). *Subject: Deck from AAFC.* CSC A-2018-00310.

³¹⁵ Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, May 16). *Subject: RE: Farm Consultation...* CSC A-2018-00310.

³¹⁶ AAFC ATIP Services (2024, March 11). *Response letter A-2023-00128.*

2016, in which AAFC staff were discussing a briefing note that was being compiled by the AAFC Director General and Associate Deputy Minister “on prison farms, for the Minister's meeting today with Minister Goodale.”³¹⁷ This record provides critical evidence in support of the theory that the origin of the idea for CSC’s prison farms to contribute to the supply chain of goat milk for Feihe emerged through a collaboration between Ministers Lawrence MacAulay and Ralph Goodale.

Previously, CSC had been under the impression, under Public Safety’s direction, that the public consultation process would assess the feasibility of reopening prison farms nationwide. It was in April and May 2016 that changes began occurring swiftly. In April 2016, CSC was advised by the Public Safety Minister’s Office that they were to focus on Kingston’s prison farms only:

"I have just been advised that the Minister's Office would like to 'pull back' the Minister's response to the note [signed in February 2016]. The Minister's Office has requested that CSC rewrite the BN [briefing note] to narrow the scope of the consultation process to a Kingston only option... The Minister's Office has requested that the previous BN be ‘pulled’ essentially meaning destroyed.”³¹⁸

Ever the skeptic, Molzahn revised the briefing note as instructed, but wrote: “Here is the first draft of the Kingston consultation experience. What I do not have is any idea of what the ‘pilot’ is that they are thinking about.”³¹⁹ Following the May 2016 meeting between “the two ministers,” Public Safety was pressuring CSC to accelerate the public consultation timeline, and intervening to manipulate and control the public consultation process to support the politically desired result. The ATI records obtained and shared by Dr. Amy Fitzgerald have been instrumental in filling in crucial gaps of information that should have, but did not, emerge through Evolve’s ATI requests.³²⁰

As of the July 2024 publication of this report, CSC is approaching completion of the first phase of prison farm implementation, after six years and as much as \$56 million invested, of which \$10.5 million was for the 27-month construction of a barn for a 30-cow research program, and a manure lagoon sized for a 2,200-goat operation. Engineering designs and email records indicate that plans are in place and “tender ready”³²¹

³¹⁷ Email from Sophie Bédard, AAFC (2017, May 17). *Subject: Prison farms*. AAFC A-2023-00128.

³¹⁸ Emails from Leanne McCarthy, Manager, Correspondence and Briefing Unit, CSC (2016, April 13). *Subject: Urgent - Minister's Office requesting revised BN to Minister on Penitentiary Farm Consultation Process*. CSC A-2018-00310.

³¹⁹ Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, April 13). CSC A-2018-00310.

³²⁰ Dr. Fitzgerald’s ATI request was submitted in 2018. After years of waiting, she filed a delay complaint with the OIC. CSC said that due to the volume of records, the records would not be released until 2032. As a result of OIC negotiations, the records were released in 2024.

³²¹ Email from Lawrence Yarema, Project Manager, PSPC (2021, March 17). PSPC A-2021-00436.

to proceed with construction of the “future goat barn,”³²² although the future is unknown.³²³ What is known is that the “return” of Kingston’s prison farms has been a plan to supply goat milk for export to the Chinese market, carefully coordinated, covered up, sold to the public as a “good news story”³²⁴ and branded as a “promise made, promise kept.”³²⁵

3.3. “Promise made, promise kept” || The Cow Bait & Goat Switch

Following the February 2018 federal budget allocation of \$4.3 million over five years to restore Kingston’s prison farms,³²⁶ MP Mark Gerretsen declared that the funding was an “absolutely amazing” response to “passionate” Save Our Prison Farms advocacy.³²⁷ MP Mark Holland, as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, hailed the funding as “Promise made, promise kept.”³²⁸ Shortly after, however, in March 2018, the Prison Farm Advisory Panel was informed that the prison farms would be a goat dairy operation, and cows would not be included. While this information was given to Panel members (who

³²² “Scope of work includes the new cattle barn facility plus site services, access roadways and a liquid manure tank to serve the cattle barn and future goat barn” (CSC, n.d. *Media Lines: Request for Proposal - Cattle Barn - Penitentiary Farm Program* [Draft]. CSC A-2021-00381).

³²³ One day prior to the publication of this report, CSC posted an amendment to a tender, committing a further \$281,345 for geotechnical professional engineering services for CSC Farms at Joyceville Institution (CanadaBuys, 2024, July 30. *Amend 005 - CSC Farms Joyceville Geotechnical - WSP Canada Inc.* <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/contract-history/eq754-200523/001/pwl-006>). Given that July 2024 is the month that CSC said its cow barn would be complete, the only conceivable use for geotechnical engineering services at this stage in prison farm implementation is as a first step to proceeding with the goat barn.

³²⁴ “The re-opening of the farms and the creation of a new business are both good news stories. Calvin Neufeld has been outspoken in his opposition, but he appears to be in the minority” (Email from MP Karen McCrimmon, Parliamentary Secretary to Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale, to a member of the Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston Federal Liberal Association, 2019, April 4). On May 22, 2019, Evolve made a presentation to the LFK Federal Liberal Association. Some members were concerned to learn about the new prison farm model, others became openly confrontational. One left mid-meeting in anger, slamming the door, and he resigned from the Liberal Association the next day.

³²⁵ “When member of Parliament Mark Holland said ‘promise made, promise kept, the cows are coming home’ at the announcement of the reopening of the prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions on Thursday, his words were met with clapping and cheering from about 50 people, including staff from Correctional Service Canada, the federal government and prison farm advocates” (MacAlpine, I., 2018, June 22. Prison farm program ‘changed my life’. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/2018/06/22/prison-farm-program-changed-my-life>).

³²⁶ While \$4.3 million over five years may seem a relatively small investment by federal standards, this can be compared to the Budget 2018 allocation of just \$3.4 million over five years to the Office of the Correctional Investigator. There was a million more in new funding for a prison farm than for the entire government agency responsible for independent oversight of the federal penitentiary service in Canada (Budget 2018. *Equality and Growth: A Strong Middle Class*. Department of Finance Canada. <https://www.budget.canada.ca/2018/docs/plan/budget-2018-en.pdf>).

³²⁷ “Kingston prison farms to reopen” (2018, February 27). *Global News*. <https://globalnews.ca/news/4051863/kingston-prison-farms-to-reopen/>.

³²⁸ “‘Promise made, promise kept. The cows are coming home,’ Liberal parliamentary secretary for public safety, Mark Holland, a longtime defender of Canada’s prison farms, said to a crowd of about 50 Correctional Service Canada staff, former inmates, Kingston residents, farmers, members of the Save Our Farms organization and reporters Thursday morning” (Johnson, K., 2018, June 21. ‘The cows are coming home’: two prison farms to reopen in Kingston. *iPolitics*. <https://www.ipolitics.ca/news/the-cows-are-coming-home-two-prison-farms-to-reopen-in-kingston>).

relayed the headlines to the press), no details have been voluntarily shared by CSC with the public, despite CSC's repeated "commitment to keep the public informed about this initiative."³²⁹

Under questioning, CSC has maintained that "the exact size of the goat herd will be determined by operational and market capacities as the plan progresses."³³⁰ Numerous records obtained by Evolve, however, show that the size of the goat herd was determined at 2,200-head.³³¹ When asked what led to the decision to farm goats, CSC cited a minor report published in December 2017 by a junior analyst at Statistics Canada.³³² The report suggested that goat dairy was a growing industry, but after the report's release, the goat dairy industry experienced a decline and an oversupply of stockpiled surplus milk.³³³ It is also shown in ATI records that the decision for CSC to farm goats was established before the publication of the Statistics Canada report.³³⁴

The decision to focus the prison farms on goat dairy operations generated push-back from both Save Our Prison Farms and Evolve Our Prison Farms, but for different reasons. Save Our Prison Farms advocates, comprising most of CSC's Prison Farm Advisory Panel, did not oppose the goat operation but objected to cows not being included.³³⁵ Evolve Our Prison Farms, excluded from CSC's Prison Farm Advisory Panel,³³⁶ opposed the commercialization of the farm program and the use of carceral labour in the animal agriculture industry. Of added concern to Evolve were the physical risks and psychological impacts of dairy industry practices (dehorning, insemination, culling, euthanasia, slaughter) for the animals and prisoners involved.

³²⁹ CSC (2018, February 28). *Media Lines: Reopening of CORCAN Farm Operations*. CSC A-2018-00333.

³³⁰ CSC (2019, July 30). *Media Lines: Reopening of CORCAN Farm Operations*. CSC A-2019-00325.

³³¹ Improper redactions of this information, and OIC investigations into the exemptions, delayed the release of this information by two years. The size of the goat herd would have been known as early as August 2019, but instead was revealed only in the first unredacted supplementary release issued in August 2021.

³³² McGonegal, M. (2017, December). *Dairy goats in Ontario: a growing industry*. Statistics Canada.

³³³ Interview with Ontario Goat (2019, June 25).

³³⁴ The Statistics Canada report was published in December 2017, but Public Safety and CORCAN had established the plan to sell goat milk to Feihe at least as early as March 2017, and possibly as early as the May 2016 meeting between PSC Minister Goodale and AAFC Minister MacAulay to discuss Kingston's prison farms.

³³⁵ The leadership of SOPF consisted primarily of farmers representing industry associations including National Farmers Union, the Frontenac Cattlemen's Association, Beef Farmers of Ontario, and Dairy Farmers of Ontario. These same advocates lobbied successfully for the preservation of the Joyceville abattoir in 2009 during the prison farm closures.

³³⁶ Following a 2018 meeting with Evolve, CSC Commissioner Anne Kelly asked CORCAN CEO Hartle "if there is any reason not to put them on the Farm Advisory Panel" (Email from Anne Kelly, 2018, April 11. *Subject: Evolve*. CSC A-2018-00332). No response to the Commissioner's question is included in ATI records, but CORCAN CEO Hartle verbally explained to Neufeld that including Evolve on the panel would have resulted in "a lot of unproductive back-and-forth" (telephone conversation, July 25, 2019). Minister Goodale's policy advisor Justine Villeneuve said that Evolve was not included because "the more voices at the table, the more challenge there is to come up with a consensus" (Meeting notes, June 27, 2017). Evolve questioned the logic: "Since the panel has no decision-making authority and exists only to provide 'non-binding advice' there is no need to establish a single-minded consensus panel. In fact, all the more reason to establish a panel with a diverse range of perspectives to offer balanced recommendations. When the accusation is a biased panel, the defence should not be that the biased composition facilitates consensus" (Email from Calvin Neufeld to Mario Dion, Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, 2019, September 13).

As noted elsewhere in this report, research and statistical data show that the animal agriculture sector is one of the most stressful and physically dangerous industries,³³⁷ and there are concerns regarding animal welfare when CSC’s own guidelines recognize “potential for abuse” of animals in prison programs.”³³⁸

Only members of Save Our Prison Farms and the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op were given advance knowledge of Public Safety’s plan to farm goats and to “remov[e] the operation of the farms from CSC” and manage them under a public-private partnership, a prospect to which Save Our Prison Farms leaders were “completely opposed” at first.³³⁹ By the time they were appointed to CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel, however, they were on board and defensive of it. In a 2019 meeting with Evolve at Kingston City Hall, CSC Panel members Dianne Dowling and Bridget Doherty insisted that they would not oppose the goat plan because that would derail the sale of their cows.³⁴⁰

Minutes from a 2017 Pen Farm Herd Co-Op meeting show that some members of the group had reservations regarding the (not yet publicly announced) new prison farm model. Unidentified individuals at the meeting expressed concerns over “the humane treatment of the animals,” the impact of the new model on market competitiveness, and “worry [that] the focus will be on agribusiness not rehabilitation.”³⁴¹ Questions were

³³⁷ Fitzgerald, A. J., Wilson, A., Bruce, J., Wurdemann-Stam, A., & Neufeld, C. (2021, January 31). *Canada’s proposed prison farm program: Why it won’t work and what would work better*. Evolve Our Prison Farms. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/prison-farm-report/>.

³³⁸ CSC (1998, April). *Pet Facilitated Therapy in Correctional Institutions*. The document, previously online at <https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/publications/fsw/pet/pet-eng.shtml>, was taken down sometime after April 2023, according to internet archives. CSC’s report was cited in: Neufeld, C. (2020, January 6). What’s wrong with “Milking prison labour”? *Briarpatch Magazine*. <https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/whats-wrong-with-milking-prison-labour>. Excerpts of CSC’s policies on animal-assisted therapy cited by Neufeld were highlighted and shared internally by CSC staff: “[CSC’s] own guidelines for AAT [Animal-Assisted Therapy] in prisons require adherence to strict standards safeguarding the welfare of the animals. CSC identifies the potential for abuse of animals in prison programs, emphasizing that the safety and wellbeing of the animal is paramount and ‘precedes any therapeutic goals.’ CSC affirms that all animals used in AAT - including farm animals - are ‘in every sense an individual’ and that the benefits of AAT extend beyond inmates to the animals themselves who are ‘often saved from certain death.’ It presents a curious double standard for CSC to introduce animals to the prison farms for the very purpose of capitalizing on their certain death” (Email from Véronique Rioux to other CSC Communications staff, 2020, January 17. CSC A-2019-00320).

³³⁹ Email from Dianne Dowling to Public Safety Minister Goodale (2016, September 1). PSC A-2018-00440.

³⁴⁰ Meeting between Dianne Dowling, Bridget Doherty, and Calvin Neufeld (2019, May 15). Doherty was a Kingston City Councillor at the time, and stated that if Neufeld ever repeated her statement, it would be “the last time” they ever spoke. Dowling and Doherty have openly defended the government’s intention to operate the goat agribusiness under a public-private partnership, as long as cows are included: “As Dianne explains, it was to the panel’s shock that their plan did not include cows. ‘A week after we found out about the budget money, we found out the plan was for crops, land stewardship and goats – no mention of [cow dairy] farms. We were given a certain amount of time to submit a proposal detailing how cows could pay for themselves basically.’ In June of 2018, [CSC] made the announcement that cows would be coming back, as well as goats... Bridget says that the new model is valuable because ‘if [there’s] a model that doesn’t cost the government extra money, then it’s harder for any new government to come up and close the farms – if we want to protect the farms, working with industry and having a public-private partnership in this case is a positive thing’” (Samira L., 2019, August. “*Save Our Prison Farms*”: *Carceral Labour and Civil Disobedience in Kingston*. The Ontario Public Interest Research Group [OPIRG] Kingston. <https://opirgkingston.org/save-our-prison-farms/>).

³⁴¹ Minutes. *Pen Farm Herd Co-Op 8th Annual Meeting* (2017, November 10).

fielded by CSC Panel members Dianne Dowling and Jeff Peters,³⁴² CSC agribusiness and abattoir instructor Dave Perry,³⁴³ and MP Mark Gerretsen, who reassured members that the goat milk produced on the prison farms would not compete with local farmers as it would be exported to China; the goats would receive adequate care because cows on the former prison farms were “well treated”; and in terms of keeping a focus on rehabilitation, MP Gerretsen said he would “ask the people on the Advisory Panel to make sure of that responsibility.”³⁴⁴ These explanations seem to have appeased the group, who applauded the February 2018 announcement of \$4.3 million in federal funding to reopen Kingston’s prison farms. Their celebratory spirit swiftly changed, however, when the Prison Farm Advisory Panel was informed that cows would not be included along with the goats.

Members of Save Our Prison Farms vehemently protested the exclusion of cows from the prison farm program.³⁴⁵ Media followed suit, only critiquing the omission of cows, and not CSC’s decision to enter into commercial goat milk production.³⁴⁶ CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel informed the Public Safety Minister of their objection to the omission of cows in a teleconference on March 15, 2018. The result was summarized by Panel Chair Dianne Dowling in an email to Save Our Prison Farms supporters:

“Minister Goodale said that re-opening the prison farms at Kingston is a pilot project, and if successful, could lead to re-opening prison farms elsewhere. He told us the program has to fulfill three needs -- staying within the budget of \$4.3 million over five years, being implemented in a timely fashion, and demonstrating clear evidence of its value as a rehabilitation and training program.

He said the prison farm plan is ‘open to modification’, within the limits of the money budgeted, and with the expectation that the program would be implemented as soon as possible so that it can demonstrate its value.

He asked the panel for a side-by-side comparison of a dairy cow operation vs. a dairy goat operation, including costs and timelines, to be presented to him by mid-April.”³⁴⁷

³⁴² In addition to being CSC Panel members, Dowling and Peters are leaders of SOPF and directors of PFHC.

³⁴³ In addition to being a CSC employee, Dave Perry is also a director of PFHC and president of Beef Farmers of Frontenac, who in 2023 arranged for Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) pass a resolution at their AGM accusing Evolve of spreading “disparaging mistruths” about the “value” of prisoners providing slaughter services (BFO, 2023, November 28. Letter from BFO President Jack Chaffe to Dave Perry. <https://www.ontariobeef.com/media/qbfhnlfo/23-15-joyceville-abattoir.pdf>).

³⁴⁴ Minutes. *Pen Farm Herd Co-Op 8th Annual Meeting* (2017, November 10).

³⁴⁵ MacAlpine, I. (2018, March 8). Cows not in initial prison farm plan. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/2018/03/08/cows-not-in-initial-prison-farm-plan>.

³⁴⁶ Vetter, C. (2018, April 6). Dairy cows not part of prison farm re-opening. *AgriNews*. <https://agrinews.ca/dairy-cows-not-part-of-prison-farm-re-opening/>. Also: “Kingston community group disappointed cows not ‘coming home’ to Kingston’s prison farms” (2018, March 8). *Global News*. <https://globalnews.ca/news/4070445/kingston-community-group-disappointed-cows-not-coming-home-to-kingstons-prison-farms/>.

³⁴⁷ Email from Dianne Dowling (2018, March 19). Subject: “Prison Farm Update, March 19, 2018.”

On April 23, 2018, the Prison Farm Advisory Panel presented the Public Safety Minister with a four-page proposal containing a brief chart comparing “advantages” and “challenges” of three types of operations: 1) goats only, 2) cows only, and 3) goats and cows combined.³⁴⁸ In the proposal, the Panel claimed that the combined operation would not only have financial advantages but would also reduce risks, and therefore “a model including both cows and goats is feasible and could fulfill the criteria we were asked to meet.” The Panel’s proposal argued that the combined cow-and-goat model “works within the budget allocation” and would be “sustainable after year 3,” generating revenue from “early financial results (cows) with long term growth in revenue (goats).” The document assured the Minister that milk from the cows could generate revenue by early 2019, within the limit of 32 kg of milk quota from Dairy Farmers of Ontario. The combined model was also framed as having more social benefits than a single-species model, on the basis that a variety of species creates “more diverse rehabilitation” and “reduces risk” because “cows and goats are mutually supportive in that cows’ milk can be fed to goat kids, and dry cows can eat feed that the goats do not eat.” On the basis of this, Minister Goodale approved the addition of cows, thanking Dianne Dowling “for creating a comprehensive prison farms proposal.”³⁴⁹

At a press event on June 21, 2018, Minister Goodale’s Parliamentary Secretary Mark Holland announced that cows would be added to the farm program.³⁵⁰ Former prison farm worker Shaun Shannon was invited to the event. In interviews with *Evolve*, Shannon said that he could not understand why a goat was at the event. MP Mark Gerretsen and MP Mark Holland were on hand to promote the program and encouraged Shannon to talk to media about his experiences working with cows on the former prison farms, but when he began questioning why the goat was there, Shannon says he was pulled away from the cameras.

“They led everybody along to believe that they were bringing the original program back. At the first announcement that Mark Holland made at Joyceville, I was there for it, that first announcement at Joyceville Institution, they had a goat, and nobody questioned what a goat was doing there, nobody questioned that. So CSC already knew what they were doing at that point. And they never mentioned nothing to anybody, because they were ‘the cows are here. Promise kept. Promise made, promise kept. The cows are coming home.’ That

³⁴⁸ Dowling, D. (2018, April 23). *Prison Farm Proposal, April, 2018, from the citizen members of the Prison Farm Advisory Panel*. PSC A-2018-00287.

³⁴⁹ Letter from Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale (2018, August 2). PSC A-2018-00440.

³⁵⁰ Snowden, F. (2018, June 21). More than 30 dairy cows now part of the prison farm program in Kingston. *Global News*. <https://globalnews.ca/news/4289722/more-than-30-dairy-cows-now-part-of-the-prison-farm-program-in-kingston/>. Also: CSC (2018, June 21). *News release: Reopening of CSC penitentiary farm operations to include dairy cows and goats*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/news/2018/06/reopening-of-csc-penitentiary-farm-operations-to-include-dairy-cows-and-goats.html>. Also: “Prison farms reopening with goats and cows” (2018, June 21). CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/kingston-prison-farm-cows-goats-1.4716232>.

was Mark Holland... Even Mark Holland said at that thing that the program works, 'there's an example' and he used me as an example."³⁵¹

Following the 2018 press event, Shannon was also invited to the ministerial event for the official prison farm launch on August 15, 2019. However, after his first interview with Evolve aired on August 2, 2019, he claims that the train ticket he was promised to attend the event never arrived. In that interview with Evolve, he expressed his feelings of frustration and disillusionment:

"I don't even want anything to do with this anymore. All it is is a money-making operation. We're looking at goats. After all the consultations and the promises and statements made and all the back-slapping and the hand-shakes and the kissy-kissy mushy-mushy stuff there's no farm coming back to Frontenac, it's going to be a shit show. Pardon my language but it's going to be a huge shit show. That's all it's going to be.

When I was first brought into the fold on this in one of my consultation meetings [with CORCAN], I told them, I said right off the hop you can't be bringing goats into an operation. You've got people coming from the city of Toronto who have never been around a farm animal in their life. Goats stink to high heaven, their milk stinks, and you've got these guys coming who have never worked around a farm animal in their life, and you're going to expect them to work with a goat and not have any problems or any issues.

[You've told this to CSC?] I've told this to CSC on more than one occasion. [What was their response?] Well they're still bringing the goats are they not? They didn't take anything that I offered them. I might as well have been speaking to the wall.

So you're going to have these people who have never been around an animal before in their life and you're telling them 'OK, be nice now, get along with Mr. Goat, don't worry about the stink, get along with him – don't do that now – get along with Mr. Goat.' You're going to have nothing but problems.

Good idea though, good idea, the farms are coming back, promise made, promise kept!

[Is this a victory?] No no no no no no no man no no no. There's no victory here, there's no victory here, none."³⁵²

³⁵¹ Julia Miller's Healthy Living Revolution (2020, February 6). *Save and Evolve Prison Farm Revolution*. [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDo-mooYaxM>.

³⁵² Evolve Our Prison Farms (2019, August 2). *Ex-Prison Farm Worker Interview* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fd6gGw8cpAQ&t=962s>.

Reporters attending the official launch event on August 15, 2019 had apparent reservations about the new prison farm program, but the resulting articles did not question the goat logic, only celebrated the return of the farms and the inclusion of cows. Still, evidence of reporters' skepticism is revealed in ATI records. Questions raised at the media event are not included in the official transcript,³⁵³ but CSC's responses suggest that reporters were primarily interested in the altered commercial prison farm model and the market for the goat milk:

Question: (Off microphone)

Kelly Hartle: It's a good question. I think we could probably talk for two hours about the differences between but... I wouldn't say we are restoring or returning to the former model. What I would say is we took a look at what's the reality of farming today.

Question: (Off microphone)

Kelly Hartle: There isn't a link necessarily to what we will do and how we will establish contracts for the sale of our goods... Goat milk was an area that was identified in the government research around an area of growth and opportunity as a whole, not necessarily specific to this plant in Kingston.

Question: (Off microphone)

Kelly Hartle: We don't have any current contracts in place... Obviously when it comes down to any contract negotiation discussions we're having on the business side for Corcan those are things that we need to make sure we're really following the rules and privacy around.

Question: (Off microphone)

Kelly Hartle: It's really important for procurement and acquisition that I don't get into the details for privacy reasons.

Despite the Liberal government's promise to "restore" the prison farms, no such restoration was possible due to CSC's Food Service Modernization. Awareness of this is revealed in numerous ATI records, including CSC's original version of the public consultation questionnaire prior to Public Safety's "radical changes," and CSC's draft response to a reporter in which the words "restore the farming program" were

³⁵³ PSC (2019, August 15). *Transcript - Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Karen McCrimmon News Conference - August 15, 2019*. PSC A-2019-00317.

crossed out and replaced with “implementation of the farming program.”³⁵⁴ Conspicuously, CSC’s official press release fostered the false impression that the old model was being restored, which was inconsistent with CSC’s otherwise careful efforts to adhere to technically accurate statements (suggesting that the news release may have been drafted, or altered, by Public Safety): “The farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions renew the penitentiary farms model that was closed in 2010.”³⁵⁵

Throughout, Evolve has worked to counteract this mainstream narrative by challenging the notion of prison farm “restoration,” and detailing the potentially harmful impacts of the prison farms and dairy operations on the people, places, and animals involved.

3.4. “Relentless crusade” || Counteracting the Mainstream Narrative

On January 31, 2021, Evolve Our Prison Farms published a report authored by academics at University of Windsor (Dr. Amy Fitzgerald) and St. Paul University (Dr. Amanda Wilson), exposing the scale of the planned goat operation and detailing the potential harmful impacts that CSC’s industrial farm could have on prisoners, correctional staff, and surrounding communities.³⁵⁶ A companion piece published in *The Conversation* summarized the issues:

- the goals of rehabilitation and employability training are unlikely to be accomplished via animal agriculture and an intensive livestock operation;
- jobs in the dairy industry are scarce and declining, and animal agriculture is a high-risk occupation with elevated rates of injury and illness;
- large concentrations of animals can contribute to viral spread, diminished air quality, pollution and decreased property values; and
- the volume of manure will be hazardous to human, animal, and environmental health, and can contaminate groundwater and surrounding waterways.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁴ Email from Marie-Pier Lécuyer, Communications Advisor, CSC (2019, October 9). *Subject: FW: FOR CONSULTATION: PSPC Media Inquiry - Procurement of Livestock for Prison Farm*. CSC A-2019-00319.

³⁵⁵ CSC (2019, August 15). *News Release: Penitentiary farms officially relaunched*. Government of Canada.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/news/2019/08/penitentiary-farms-officially-relaunched.html>.

³⁵⁶ Fitzgerald, A. J., Wilson, A., Bruce, J., Wurdemann-Stam, A., & Neufeld, C. (2021, January 31). *Canada’s proposed prison farm program: Why it won’t work and what would work better*. Evolve Our Prison Farms.

<https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/prison-farm-report/>.

³⁵⁷ Fitzgerald, A. & Wilson, A. (2021, February 1). The Correctional Service of Canada’s goat plans won’t help inmates. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/the-correctional-service-of-canadas-goat-plans-wont-help-inmates-153183>.

CSC declined to respond: “This report is not affiliated with CSC or its views, and [we] will not be commenting on its contents.”³⁵⁸ Public Safety did not respond to Evolve’s report either, but ATI records reveal that, internally, the agency produced a summary prefaced with the following comment: “CSC’s goal was to have 90 dairy milk cows and 2,200 milking goats on site by August 202m [sic] but to date this has not yet occurred due to COVID-19 related delays. The goat milk will be produced with the intention to sell it to a private corporation that makes baby formula for export out of Kingston, ON.”³⁵⁹

The Fitzgerald-Wilson report was accompanied by a petition calling on CSC and the Government of Canada to cancel plans for the prison industrial goat farm.³⁶⁰ The petition garnered over 50,000 signatures by the time it was submitted to CSC Commissioner Anne Kelly and the new Public Safety Minister Bill Blair on July 30, 2021. A CSC spokesperson responded with the statement:

“The Commissioner has asked that I respond to you on her behalf. We acknowledge your advisement that your petition to cancel the planned industrial goat farm at Joyceville Institution has surpassed 50,000 signatures... The implementation of the dairy goat program will resume once the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic can be fully assessed.”³⁶¹

Public Safety did not respond to the 50,000-signature petition, just as it did not respond to Evolve’s earlier 12,000-signature petition submitted in December 2017. In total, from 2016-2021, Evolve submitted nine petitions, each presenting different arguments, with a combined total of 68,459 signatures.³⁶² Six of these were sponsored by MPs Mark Gerretsen (Liberal), Elizabeth May (Green), Scott Reid (Conservative), and Paul Manly (Green). Each MP-sponsored petition received responses from CSC indicating that the farm implementation would proceed as planned. Although MP Mark Gerretsen sponsored one of Evolve’s petitions, he broke parliamentary rules by expressing his disagreement with it when presenting it in the House of Commons on May 9, 2018.³⁶³ When MP Elizabeth May, leader of the Green Party of Canada,

³⁵⁸ Email from Esme Bailey, Senior Media Relations Advisor, CSC (2022, September 22, 2022). ATI records show that, when asked for comment on the report, CSC was originally going to state that “we don’t provide comments on third party reports,” but this was altered after Communications staff indicated that “There are times when we do have positions on 3rd party items” (Email from Kirstan Gagnon to Pierre Deveau, CSC, 2022, September 21. CSC A-2022-00212).

³⁵⁹ PSC (n.d.). *Canada’s Proposed Prison Farm Program: Why it Won’t Work and What Would Work Better - Summary*. PSC A-2021-00062.

³⁶⁰ Evolve Our Prison Farms (2021). *Stop the prison industrial goat farm*. Change.org.

<https://www.change.org/p/government-of-canada-stop-the-prison-industrial-goat-farm>.

³⁶¹ Email from Natasha Levesque-Hill, A/Director General, Executive Secretariat, CSC (2021, August 10).

³⁶² By contrast, Save Our Prison Farms positioned the prison farm return as a government response to “Six thousand people [who] said they want the prison farms returned and you can’t ignore that type of response” (Postovit, M., 2018, March 1. Save Our Prison Farms reacts to federal budget funding promise. *Global News*.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/4054547/save-our-prison-farms-federal-budget/>).

³⁶³ “I rise today to present a petition... to discard plans for a goat dairy prison farm at Joyceville Institution... Unfortunately, with this petition, I would not particularly agree with the content of it” (Gerretsen, M., 2018, May 9. “Animal Welfare.”

agreed to sponsor an Evolve petition,³⁶⁴ her office received an “angry letter” from a member of CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel urging her against it,³⁶⁵ and other members of Save Our Prison Farms posted angry comments online about May’s sponsorship of Evolve’s petition for prison farms to “uphold justice in relation to prisoners, animals, and the environment.”³⁶⁶ It is unknown whether the other MPs sponsoring Evolve’s petitions experienced similar pressure not to critique CSC’s prison farm plan or support Evolve. MP Mark Gerretsen, however, openly fostered opposition to Evolve and publicly urged his constituents to call and write to MP Scott Reid to express their opposition to his “relentless crusade” of questioning CSC’s new prison farm model in the House of Commons.³⁶⁷

The persistent suppression of criticism was compounded by confused and mixed messaging from media outlets. For instance, on February 28, 2018, CBC News misreported that the prison farms would see the Pen Herd cows producing artisan cheese for prisoners.³⁶⁸ This was before CSC’s announcement that cows would not be included, but it was what Save Our Prison Farms members expected and spoke about as established fact. While such unfounded speculations from Save Our Prison Farms were treated by

Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard* 295. 42nd Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/documentviewer/en/42-1/house/sitting-295/hansard>). House of Commons procedure states: “Any comment on the merits of a petition—even a Member’s personal agreement or disagreement with the petitioners—has been deemed to constitute a form of debate and is therefore out of order” (Parliament of Canada, 2017. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*. Chapter 22: Public Petitions. https://www.ourcommons.ca/procedure/procedure-and-practice-3/ch_22_5-e.html). Since the procedural violation was not corrected by the Speaker, Evolve filed a complaint with Speaker Geoff Regan on May 11, 2018. On June 20, 2018, MP Gerretsen rose to correct himself, without mentioning the subject of the petition: “I would like to draw reference back to petition No. 421-02359 that I presented on May 9 and at which time I provided my own personal opinion on the petition. I later found out that it was outside of the procedure of the House. Therefore, I apologize for doing that and will chalk it up as a learning experience” (Gerretsen, M., 2018, June 20. “Environment.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard* 318. 42nd Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/documentviewer/en/42-1/house/sitting-318/hansard>).

³⁶⁴ House of Commons (2019, February 1). *Petition: E-1774 (Correctional facilities)*. Government of Canada. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/petitions/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-1774>.

³⁶⁵ In a January 2019 phone conversation with Evolve, Elizabeth May’s Legislative Assistant expressed the irony that the “angry letter” had come from Bridget Doherty, representing the “Peace, Justice, and Integrity of Creation” of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul.

³⁶⁶ For example, SOPF activist Johanna Sommer posted the following comments to Evolve’s Facebook post about May’s sponsorship of Evolve’s petition [text and grammar as written]: “why would she weigh in now. ..getting on the bandwagon. ...where was she whole time the people of Kingston. campaigned tirelessly to bring the cows home!!!! Evolve Our Prison Farms maybe you want to do away with farming completely. ...What is your agenda....oh please don’t answer me.... Tell Ms.May to find another project.....obviously this is about political gain for her.... Evolve Our Prison Farms Heard you people before. ..go tell Ms.May....you were all taking up time at a meeting in Kingston....did not convince me then and not now either.enjoy your quest for I don’t know what! !!!” (Evolve Our Prison Farms, 2018, July 9. *Sign the petition to the Government of Canada calling for prison farms that do not harm prisoners, animals or the environment*. [Status update]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/EvolveOurPrisonFarms/photos/pb.100064814345725.-2207520000/1779273565499396/?type=3>).

³⁶⁷ Mark Gerretsen (2022, May 31). *Scott Reid is the Conservative MP for Kingston north of the 401. In recent months he has been on a relentless crusade...* [Video] [Status Update]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/markgerretsen/videos/389200449801834/>.

³⁶⁸ “Kingston prison farms returning with new federal funding” (2018, February 28). CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/kingston-canada-prison-farm-budget-1.4555180>.

experienced journalists as fact, the facts contained in Evolve’s ATI records shared with the same journalists were ignored. Years of false and unfounded statements from Save Our Prison Farms (and CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel) have not only heavily influenced media misreporting, but also the political directions of the prison farm reopening.

During the 2016 public consultation process, CBC News misreported that the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op was deciding the model that the prison farms would adopt: “The co-op said it has developed a business plan that has already received preliminary approval from the Liberals.”³⁶⁹ ATI records show that CSC distributed this article internally, with apparent alarm and confusion,³⁷⁰ along with excerpts from *The Kingston Whig-Standard* quoting Jeff Peters saying that Save Our Prison Farms was asked to determine the prison farm model:

“Prison farm advocates are satisfied with Friday night’s meeting with MP Mark Gerretsen... Peters said CSC has asked Save Our Prison Farms to submit a model of how they would like to see the farms operate. At first they considered a milk operation, but CSC now used powdered milk. ‘Now we want to make artisan cheese,’ Peters said. ‘We put together a model that we think is sustainable... so right now, in the next month, we’re waiting to [see] what Corrections thinks of the model that we presented to them’³⁷¹ [and] Gerretsen said the challenge will be to combine the prison farm co-op plans along with plans from CSC and the minister’s office.”³⁷²

In their email exchanges, CSC staff questioned where this news was coming from, saying “This is the first time I’m seeing anything about this... we did not solicit [submissions] from a particular individual or group,” nor had CSC committed to respond to any particular individual or group.³⁷³

Save Our Prison Farms’ strategic positioning of themselves at the helm of prison farm decision-making created pressure on the federal government, on CSC, and on the media to conform to perceived public expectations, while at the same time creating barriers to entry for any other public proposals or discourse

³⁶⁹ Brosnahan, M., (2015, December 29). *Kingston’s cows are closer to coming home to prison*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/cows-prison-farm-kingston-1.3382238>.

³⁷⁰ Email from David Molzahn, CSC (2016, November 28). *Subject: key link for farm story*. CSC A-2018-00310.

³⁷¹ Crosier, S. (2016, December 11). Prison farm supporters encouraged after meeting with Kingston MP. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/2016/12/11/prison-farm-supporters-encouraged-after-meeting-with-kingston-mp>.

³⁷² MacAlpine, I. (2016, December 9). No concrete timeline for prison farm decision. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/2016/12/09/no-concrete-timeline-for-prison-farm-decision>.

³⁷³ Emails between David Molzahn and Sara Parkes, Communications Advisor, CSC (2016, December 12 & 13). *Subject: RE: Farm consultation articles in Kingston Whig Standard*. CSC A-2018-00310.

on what direction a reopened prison farm program could take.³⁷⁴ While public discourse and media fanfare remained focused on the exclusion and inclusion of cows in the prison farm program, CSC was advancing preparations on its major livestock enterprise, the intensive goat dairy operation.

3.5. “Pretty much impossible” || Goat Program’s Failure to Launch

Among CSC’s major miscalculations was the speed at which it expected to pull off the feat of establishing an industrial goat farm from scratch. Construction of CSC’s goat dairy facility was originally planned for 2018-2019 and the goat operation was projected to achieve “full sustainability in 2020-2021.”³⁷⁵ Despite CSC’s statements that the size of the planned goat herd was undetermined, and MP Gerretsen’s 2018 statement that the program “would involve about 300 to 400 goats,”³⁷⁶ ATI records reveal the significantly larger (and determined) scale of the goat herd. According to multiple briefing notes and financial projections that took years for Evolve to obtain, the herd is expected to be maintained at 2,200 milking goats.³⁷⁷ This was to be accomplished by initially acquiring 800 goat kids through a public procurement tender and growing the population to 2,200 over a three-year period.³⁷⁸ As will be discussed below, CSC has struggled to procure the goats it needs and has consistently missed all targeted deadlines.

Before these records began to emerge in 2021, Evolve was gathering evidence that the goat herd would be much larger than MP Gerretsen claimed. A tender issued by CSC in 2018 for a bulk dairy cooler contained an attachment stating that the goat milk tank must have a 20,000-litre capacity, and “At max production, an estimated 2,250 litres per hour of goat milk will be going into the larger tank... based on a 2-hour milking schedule for goats.”³⁷⁹ Through consultations with Ontario Goat, Evolve was able to formulate an

³⁷⁴ The attitude of many journalists was summed up in the words of one *Kingston Whig-Standard* journalist who questioned why Evolve should be included in media reporting about the prison farms: “What official position do you hold?” (Phone conversation with reporter Ian MacAlpine, 2018, July 30).

³⁷⁵ CSC (2018, May 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada’s penitentiary farm operations*. CSC A-2019-00124.

³⁷⁶ MacAlpine, I. (2018, March 8). Cows not in initial prison farm plan. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/2018/03/08/cows-not-in-initial-prison-farm-plan>.

³⁷⁷ Briefing notes, financial projections, engineering designs, and Nutrient Management Plans, all state that the size of the goat milking herd will be 2,200. This information was initially redacted from ATI releases filed by Evolve in 2018 and 2019. In 2021, the Information Commissioner of Canada, Caroline Maynard, ruled that CSC had misapplied legislation to withhold the information, and ordered CSC to release it. These unredacted documents, the first to reveal the goat herd size, finally began to emerge in August 2021.

³⁷⁸ CSC (2018, May 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada’s penitentiary farm operations*. CSC A-2019-00124.

³⁷⁹ CanadaBuys (2018, December 12). *Dairy Bulk Coolers - Kingston, Ontario*. <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/tender-notice/pw-kin-630-7646>. The actual tank purchased by CSC had a 25,000-litre capacity (Mueller Model OHF 25,326 litres) (PSPC, 2019, January 25. *Contract: Dairy Bulk Coolers*. CSC A-2020-00132).

estimation of 3,000 goats based on this fragment of information.³⁸⁰ When the documents finally emerged, this number proved not far off the target, and it may be even closer to the eventual herd size than the 2,200 goats listed in most CSC records. A 2020 engineering report obtained by Evolve in August 2023 states that the goat barn is designed for up to 2,800 milking goats:

“The Concept Design Report includes the construction of two buildings, a Cattle Barn and Goat Barn, each with their own dairy facilities. The Cattle Facility is designed to house an initial herd of 30 cows along with room for expansion to 90. The facility will include equipment to automate the milking process. The Goat Facility is designed to [allow] for expansion of up to 2,800 animals. The facility will also include automated milking equipment on a rotary system.”³⁸¹

Water requirements for the dairy operations also reveal the substantial scale of the goat operation. A 2019 Project Brief, obtained in June 2023, calculates 195,843 litres in weekly water use for “Goat Drinking.”³⁸² Evolve’s consultations with industry experts indicates that this breaks down to a range of 2,152 to 3,108 goats.³⁸³ For the combined dairy operations, including the relatively small cow herd (which nonetheless consumes a significant volume of water), CSC’s Project Brief lists the weekly water use at 248,368 litres. The quarter-million litres will be drawn weekly from wells tapping into groundwater shared by neighbouring residents and farms, a significant drain on local water supply.³⁸⁴

It remains unclear whether CSC intends (or intended) to expand beyond 2,200 goats to reach maximum production targets. However, CSC’s 10-year projection for the 2,200-goat operation (labelled “Option 1”) shows a cumulative 10-year net loss of \$5,802,392.³⁸⁵ There are no ATI records to date indicating if CSC

³⁸⁰ Consultations with Dirk Boogerd, president of Ontario Goat (2019). According to Boogerd, goats produce an average of 2.7 to 3 litres of milk per day, so to produce 2,250 litres per hour for two hours in the morning (4,500) and two hours in the evening (4,500) would require 3,000 to 3,200 milking goats to reach a maximum production of 9,000 litres per day.

³⁸¹ CSC (2020, January 15). *Design Consideration for the Joyceville Institution Farm Project*. CSC A-2020-00131.

³⁸² CSC (2019, January 2). *Project Brief [VO.2]: Joyceville Minimum Institution, Cattle and Goat Barns, Project Number 450-4530*. CSC A-2023-00024.

³⁸³ OMAFRA stated that “Average daily water consumption will range from 9 to 12 litres. Water consumption will increase with increased milk production. So, in a week one goat will drink an average of 63 to 84 litres” (Email from Phillip Wilman, Raw Milk Quality Program Coordinator, OMAFRA, 2023, June 26). Ontario Goat stated that lactating goats can drink up to 13 litres daily, or 91 litres weekly (*Goats and Water – Goat Gazette December 2015*. Ontario Goat.

<https://ontariogoat.ca/goat-gazette/goats-and-water-goat-gazette-december-2015/>. Also: Email from Dirk Boogerd, president of Ontario Goat, 2023, June 22). Hence, a weekly per-goat drinking range of 63 to 91 litres equates to a calculated range of 2,152 to 3,108 goats, based on CSC’s estimated weekly water usage.

³⁸⁴ To put the quantity into perspective, an Olympic swimming pool holds 2.5 million litres. This means that every 10 weeks, CSC’s dairy operations will draw an Olympic swimming pool’s worth of groundwater from a source shared by neighbouring residents and farms (as previously noted, when the old manure lagoon at Joyceville contaminated the groundwater, consultants advised CSC to test neighbouring residents’ wells).

³⁸⁵ CSC (2018, May 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada’s penitentiary farm operations*. CSC A-2019-00124.

has an “Option 2” to expand to a more financially sustainable economy of scale, but whether the range is 2,200 or 2,800 milking goats or more, the overall size of CSC’s goat herd will be significantly larger when accounting for kids, breeding males, and “dry” females outside of milking cycles.³⁸⁶ Dr. Paula Menzies, a ruminant health specialist at University of Guelph, states that “Most producers talk about how many goats they milk, but the other stock on the farm and in particular kids, will almost double the size of most herds.”³⁸⁷ This general principle is echoed in an early CSC briefing note: “In order to maintain 75 dairy cows in production, there is a requirement to have a herd of approximately 150 head.”³⁸⁸ By extension, to maintain 2,200 to 2,800 goats in dairy production, CSC will conceivably require a herd of 4,400 to 5,600 goats. By any measures, CSC will have one of the largest goat farms in Ontario and Canada, if not the largest. One undated fact sheet indicated that Ontario goat farms typically range in size from 150-500 goats, and the largest was 1,200 goats.³⁸⁹ Some Canadian goat farms claim on their websites to have herds larger than this, or intentions to expand, but Evolve’s efforts to confirm the actual (and current) size of goat herds claiming to be larger than this have not been fruitful.³⁹⁰ Three goat farmers who did respond to Evolve’s inquiries indicated that they had to cancel expansion plans, or were otherwise negatively affected when the “big promises” from CSC and Feihe fell through.³⁹¹ One said he had to close his farm altogether as a result of CSC’s failed goat procurement (quoted as written):

“There is a lot of misconceptions and false claims by Feihe and a prison deal and more. I was involved at early stages with both projects and will be honest. Neither has done anything close to their claims on goat stuff. It’s why I sold out.”³⁹²

³⁸⁶ Non-milking livestock will be housed in pre-existing barns at Collins Bay Institution that were deemed unsuitable for dairy operations: “CSC identified an option to incorporate the non-milking livestock at CBI by renovating two existing barns. This plan includes housing the non-milking and young dairy heifer and dairy goat herds at that site. The animals will be moved to JI when they are ready for kidding, calving and milking” (CSC, 2019, April 18. *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Penitentiary Farm Program Implementation*. CSC A-2019-00085).

³⁸⁷ Email from Dr. Paula Menzies, University of Guelph (2022, August 23).

³⁸⁸ CSC (2016, December 16). *Briefing Note to the Commissioner: Reopening of CORCAN Farm at Collins Bay Institution*. CSC A-2019-00085.

³⁸⁹ Food & Farm Care Ontario (n.d.). *Facts and Figures about Canadian Goat Farming*. <https://ontariogoat.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Facts-and-Figures-About-Canadian-Goat-Farming.pdf>.

³⁹⁰ The most helpful information came from Dirk Boogerd, president of Ontario Goat, who provided the following response to Evolve in an email dated July 30, 2020: “There are a few herds in Ontario over 1000 milking goats, there are 2 currently to my knowledge over 2000. Nationally there is a large operation with 1-2000 goats in Alberta and I believe there are a few in British Columbia. Quebec, I’m sure, has several as well.”

³⁹¹ Evolve will not be identifying these farmers by name, but one spoke of the “big promises” from CSC and Feihe that never manifested.

³⁹² Email from a former goat farmer, 2020, July 30.

The president of Ontario Goat, Dirk Boogerd, who was consulted and visited by CSC personnel as part of their planning process, has been openly critical of CSC's goat dairy ambitions, and he has given Evolve permission to quote him:

“The concept of the prison farm being one of, or possibly, the largest dairy goat farm in Canada, is not right. The magnitude of work and proper care needed to make such an operation work, is immense. In my personal opinion, there are better ways for a rehabilitation/reintroduction to society with a farm set up. To include animal care and everything else to this scale with any livestock sector, is not responsible in any way. In my opinion, a prison farm, operated with inexperienced staff (prisoners) would most certainly fail. Corrections should do just that, corrections. Not becoming or wanting to be a farmer.”³⁹³

CSC's “big promises” included its aggressive timeline for implementing one of the largest dairy goat farms in Canada, from a February 2018 funding announcement to the planned 2018-2019 goat barn construction and the planned 2019 arrival of goats,³⁹⁴ to “full sustainability in 2020-2021.”³⁹⁵ As unrealistic as that original timeline seems, the decision to add cows added complication. By 2019, it was estimated that the goat barn would be complete “by June 2020.”³⁹⁶ Soon after, the completion date was moved to “September 2020 for the dairy goat barn” and “dairy goat milking is scheduled for late 2020.”³⁹⁷ Later, “2021.”³⁹⁸ In a parallel succession of delays, the promised arrival of the goats also shifted from 2019 to “the spring of 2020,”³⁹⁹ then “the summer of 2020.”⁴⁰⁰ By the summer of 2020, CSC stated that the goat herd would arrive “over the next year,”⁴⁰¹ and in November 2020, CSC stated that goat barn construction would begin “this fiscal year.”⁴⁰² CSC remained optimistic throughout 2020 that implementation of the goat farm would proceed rapidly, insisting that the pandemic would have “no impact on construction timelines,”⁴⁰³ and

³⁹³ Emails from Dirk Boogerd, Ontario Goat, to Evolve (2020-2022).

³⁹⁴ CSC's first tender for 800 goat kids in 2018 stated that “the desirable delivery date is between the spring and fall of 2019” (CanadaBuys, 2018, November 6. *Dairy Goats (Kids) - Kingston, Ontario*. <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/tender-notice/pw-kin-630-7618/>).

³⁹⁵ CSC (2018, May 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada's penitentiary farm operations*. CSC A-2019-00124.

³⁹⁶ “We are estimating cattle barn structure to be complete by 31st March, 2020 and Goat barn by July 2020” (Email from Suryanarayan Kasinathan, PSPC, 2019, September 4. PSPC A-2019-00503).

³⁹⁷ CSC (2019, April 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Penitentiary farm program implementation*. CSC A-2019-00124.

³⁹⁸ “We anticipate completion of the dairy cow barn early 2020 and the dairy goat barn in 2021” (CSC, 2019, July 30. *Media Lines: Reopening of CORCAN Farm Operations*. CSC A-2019-00325).

³⁹⁹ CSC (2019, July 2). *Media Lines: Reopening of CORCAN Farm Operations*. CSC A-2018-00441.

⁴⁰⁰ CSC (2020, April). *Media Lines: Reopening of CORCAN Farm Operations*. CSC A-2020-00407.

⁴⁰¹ Email statement from Ashley Cain, Communications Advisor, CSC (2020, July 14).

⁴⁰² MacAlpine, I. (2021, March 5). CSC suspends plans for goat farm at Joyceville Institution. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/news/csc-temporarily-suspends-plans-for-goat-farm-at-joyceville-institution>.

⁴⁰³ Wright Allen, S. (2020, April 22). Prison farm program should be broadened to increase prisoner distancing amid COVID-19, advocate argues. *The Hill Times*. <https://www.hilltimes.com/story/2020/04/22/prison-farm-program-should-be-broadened-to-increase-prisoner-distancing-amid-covid-19-advocate-argues/228358/>.

CSC's goat procurement efforts continued into 2021. However, as the timeline was repeatedly pushed back by a seemingly endless string of problems, CSC announced a temporary "pause" of the goat program in March 2021.⁴⁰⁴ Specifics regarding these problems and delays will be discussed in turn.

In August 2019, CBC News misreported that goats "began arriving at the institutions this spring,"⁴⁰⁵ but as of July 2024, CSC has not successfully obtained any goats or started any dairy operations. CSC's attempt to procure its initial herd of 800 goats in 2018 failed,⁴⁰⁶ and a second failed attempt was made in 2019.⁴⁰⁷ There are many reasons for the procurement failures. During the first procurement attempt, there were no bids that complied with procurement criteria;⁴⁰⁸ many farmers didn't have internet access to submit bids;⁴⁰⁹ bidders said that the mandatory delivery date was "pretty much impossible" (to which CORCAN replied "Can be met");⁴¹⁰ CORCAN did not have the temporary housing barn ready in time to receive delivery;⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁴ CSC (2021, March 5). *Correctional Service Canada provides update on the Penitentiary Farm Program*.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/news/2021/03/correctional-service-canada-provides-update-on-the-penitentiary-farm-program.html>.

⁴⁰⁵ "Prison farm program readying for relaunch in Ontario" (2019, August 15). CBC News. Article is no longer online but it was captured in a Daily Media Summary from Public Safety (PSC A-2019-00317). In another example, CBC News misreported that "beef cows and goats returned to Joyceville Institution in May [2019]" (Pfeffer, A., 2019, August 15). *Ontario prison farms making a comeback*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/prison-farms-comeback-ontario-1.5247129>.

⁴⁰⁶ CanadaBuys (2018, November 6). *Dairy Goats (Kids) - Kingston, Ontario*. <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/tender-notice/pw-kin-630-7618>. This solicitation was cancelled by CORCAN "as the barn was not ready in order to house the dairy goats" (PSPC, 2021, March 8. *Prison Farm Program*. PSC A-2021-00436).

⁴⁰⁷ CanadaBuys (2019, December 19). *Dairy Goats (Kids) - Kingston, Ontario*. <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/tender-notice/pw-kin-630-8000>. This second solicitation was fraught with similar problems as the first, in addition to pandemic-related challenges. Goat suppliers "were asked on three occasions to extend the validity of their bids," and the third extension was "scheduled to expire on March 5, 2021," at which time the solicitation was cancelled by CSC and the goat program was "put on hold" (PSPC, 2021, March 8. *Prison Farm Program*. PSC A-2021-00436).

⁴⁰⁸ "Given the fact that we have no responsive bids, we have had discussions very recently about the funding discrepancy [redacted]... this requirement has to be retendered" (Email from Judy Holt, Supply Specialist, PSPC, 2019, January 16. *Subject: 21C41-189474 Goats*. PSC A-2019-00146). "Sadly we had no compliant bids to our requirement for Goats for CORCAN... This file has been unique in some regards. The industry that bid it (goat farmers) [needed] a considerable amount of hand holding to assist them with our process" (Email from Rick Calich, PSPC, 2019, January 16. *Subject: FW: 21C41-189474 Goats*. PSC A-2019-00259).

⁴⁰⁹ "A number of the suppliers I have talked to do not have access to the internet, so the posing of questions (via email) and the receipt/review of any solicitation amendments might cause issues/delays" (Email from Judy Holt, Supply Specialist, PSPC, 2018, November 15. PSC A-2018-01048).

⁴¹⁰ PSPC: "In order to meet the delivery timelines as requested, it would be pretty much impossible." CORCAN: "Can be met" (Emails between Judy Holt, Supply Specialist, PSPC, and Allison Rose, National Senior Project Manager, Farm Operations, CORCAN, 2018, November 15. PSC A-2019-00259). PSPC's warnings after the first failed goat procurement attempt proved prophetic: "We think that it would be valuable to have a discussion about the concerns brought forth by industry in order to ensure that this solicitation does not confuse nor disenchant the few tiny industry interest [sic] that we appear to have here. I would suggest that it is a pretty significant risk to this success of this procurement to underestimate the concerns of industry here" (Email from Rick Calich, PSPC, 2019, May 16).

⁴¹¹ "With the reinstatement of this program came the need to acquire a new herd of dairy goats, which resulted in a Request For Proposals (RFP) posted by PSPC in 2018. After the solicitation closing date, CSC requested that PSPC extend the delivery dates, as the barn was not ready in order to house the dairy goats. As the RFP specified mandatory delivery dates, PSPC was unable make the change, and the solicitation was cancelled" (PSPC, 2021, March 8. *Prison Farm Program*. PSC A-2021-00436).

and PSPC expressed hesitancy to proceed with the procurement due to Evolve's ATI requests⁴¹² and conflict of interest complaint.⁴¹³ Following the failure of the first goat procurement, PSPC and CSC conducted a review of what went wrong, to prevent reoccurrence. PSPC put a positive spin on the situation: "In many ways, this is an excellent opportunity for CORCAN. Retendering this requirement will allow [us] to work together... All of these changes should net CORCAN the result they are hoping for."⁴¹⁴ Still, similar and additional problems arose during the second procurement attempt.

While CORCAN's first goat procurement effort failed because CORCAN had not prepared the temporary housing in time to receive delivery of the herd⁴¹⁵ (to the frustration of PSPC staff who had specifically asked about this during their initial meeting with CORCAN⁴¹⁶), the retendered 2019 goat procurement was on the verge of success when the pandemic hit. Despite CSC's insistence that not even a pandemic would impede implementation of their goat farm,⁴¹⁷ the opposite was true. Prior to the pandemic, during the preparation of the goat procurement tenders, CSC insisted on a Farm Site Visit as the final step in approving bids, against the strong advisement of PSPC (details in footnote).⁴¹⁸ CORCAN's reasons for insisting on

⁴¹² "The ADM [Assistant Deputy Minister] is requesting a one pager regarding ATIP A-2018-01048... ADM Reza as shown interested in learn about this file [quoted as written]" (Emails from PSPC staff, 2019, March 8 & 11. *Subject: RE: ADM request - A-2018-01048*. PSC A-2019-00259). PSPC created a bullet point summary of events leading to the March 19, 2019 cancellation of CSC's first goat tender: "March 7 - ATIP was rec'd... March 11 - ADM one pager was requested... March 14 - PSPC asked CORCAN how they wanted to proceed..." (Email from Judy Holt, Supply Specialist, PSPC, 2019, March 29. *Subject: Goats summary*. PSC A-2019-00259).

⁴¹³ PSPC staff shared "info regarding the complaint from the website: <https://www.thewhig.com/news/local-news/evolve-our-prison-farms-launches-conflict-of-interest-complaint>" along with a summary of concerns: "Save our Prison Farms are in agreement with the re-establishment of the prison farms. Evolve our Prison Farms wants to see the return of the prison farms but not the model that has been announced by the federal government. In addition, Evolve Our Prison Farms has filed a complaint with the federal Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner requesting an investigation into the return of the prison farms where both dairy cattle and goat milk production will take place [and] alleging members of the Save our Prison Farms Advisory Panel were members of the Save our Prison Farms group who are also shareholders in the Pen Herd Co-Operative... PSPC's recommendation is to cancel this tender and resolicit..." (Email from Patricia Wallace, Supply Team Leader, PSPC, 2019, March 14. *Subject: RE: Final copy of One Pager - Goats*. Also: One Pager (n.d.). *Dairy Goats (Kids) - Kingston, Ontario*. PSC A-2019-00259).

⁴¹⁴ Email from Judy Holt, Supply Specialist, PSPC (2019, January 16). PSC A-2019-00259.

⁴¹⁵ "CORCAN is now requesting that the mandatory delivery date be changed... they aren't ready to house the goats" (PSPC brief, n.d. *Dairy Goats (Kids) - Kingston, Ontario*. PSC A-2019-00259).

⁴¹⁶ "CORCAN did not provide any information when asked about whether they would have the barns/equipment/trained personnel available when the goats would be delivered (asked at initial meeting with PSPC/CORCAN)" (Email from Judy Holt, Supply Specialist, PSPC, 2019, March 12. *Subject: Goats summary*. PSC A-2019-00259).

⁴¹⁷ "At this point, there has been no impact with regard to construction timelines. CSC and Public Services and Procurement Canada continue to work together to design the new barns for Joyceville Institution that will house the dairy goat and dairy cow operations. We anticipate construction on the new barns to commence in 2020" (Email statement from Marie-Pier Léculyer, Communications Advisor, CSC, 2020, May 15).

⁴¹⁸ In May 2019, PSPC argued that farm site visits are "Time consuming for both government and bidders... If bidders are legitimate breeders and can prove it by providing things like CAE protocols, vaccination programs, parasite control programs and certification from vet - why are farm visits needed?" CORCAN insisted it was "mandatory." PSPC warned, "Note that the more complication [sic] the methodology is, there is a likelihood that we may obtain few or no bids from this industry." CORCAN replied that "the industry is able to adapt." PSPC pointed out that in prior farm site visits, "suppliers felt that they were being judged by comments made." CORCAN responded that "There was certainly no intent to judge the farmer." PSPC reported that "Some bidders were not interested in mixing their goats with another herd..."

the farm site visits were undefined but non-negotiable, compared to PSPC’s persuasive arguments that they were expensive, time-consuming, unnecessary for government procurement purposes, and they jeopardized the likelihood of success. Knowing that the intended market for CSC’s goat milk was Feihe, it is conceivable that the farm site visit was a requirement on the part of *Feihe* as the buyer. CDC and AAFC records underscore Feihe’s “stringent”⁴¹⁹ and “strict quality control system”⁴²⁰ for ingredients sourced for its “premium” infant formula.⁴²¹ Whatever their reasoning, CORCAN’s insistence on Farm Site Visits proved to be another fatal flaw in the rollout of the prison farm program.

Pandemic travel restrictions meant that the “mandatory” (CORCAN), yet unnecessary (PSPC), final Farm Site Visits could not be completed, leading to delays that contributed to the failure of CORCAN’s second goat procurement attempt. The visits to approved bidders was scheduled by PSPC and CORCAN for the week of March 12, 2020,⁴²² with “Anticipated Award – March 23.”⁴²³ COVID-19 was declared a pandemic

concerns about the risks of mixing herds from different suppliers re health risks, stress, quarantine procedures, time for herds to become compatible.” CORCAN responded that it’s “the prerogative of individuals” to not bid if they’re not comfortable with CORCAN’s “decisions for how we would proceed for our operations” (Email exchanges between Judy Holt, Supply Specialist, PSPC, and Kelly Hartle, CEO, CORCAN, 2019, May 30. *Subject: ...Dairy Goats*. CSC A-2020-00131). By August 2019, PSPC was nervous that “we may run into delays/difficulty in obtaining the necessary approvals... given the current media attention and the ATIPs that we have had on each of the two goat files.” CORCAN responded that the urgency was becoming “critical” and asked PSPC to “escalate this to the ADM/DM [Assistant Deputy Minister/Deputy Minister] level if necessary” to advance the file “considering the purpose of this procurement and governmental commitments” (Emails between Kelly Hartle, CEO, CORCAN, and Judy Holt, Supply Specialist, PSPC, 2019, August 21). By September 2019, CORCAN was pressing harder, saying “The tender needs to be posted as quickly as possible... We are already in a significant and critical situation related to the delay in implementation of the program.” Again, PSPC pushed to eliminate the farm visit, saying that PSPC “management is still concerned with the necessity for a farm visit and the risks involved including this process in the RFP. We are strongly recommending that CORCAN remove the requirement for the farm visit.” CORCAN responded that “we do require this and will keep the farm visit as outlined” because doing so would ensure “value for money” (Emails between Judy Holt, Supply Specialist, PSPC, and Kelly Hartle, CEO, CORCAN, 2019, September 26. CSC A-2020-00131).

⁴¹⁹ Media lines marked “confidential” include a question about whether the government foresees issues arising in securing adequate milk supply. The proposed response is “PLEASE DO NOT ANSWER THIS QUESTION,” noting as an “FYI” that “The strength of our Dairy Industry, its commitment to safety and quality, is one factor that drew Feihe to Canada. Feihe produces infant formula, which requires the highest quality ingredients and most stringent production standards” (CDC, 2016, December 1. *Media Lines. CONFIDENTIAL: LIMITED DISTRIBUTION*. CDC A2-2016-00002). Also: “Feihe International is the largest domestic producer of formula for infants and young children in the Peoples [sic] Republic of China, and in 2018 the company celebrated its 56th year in business. The company is built on quality and employs the most stringent safety protocols in the industry” (Letter from Zhiwen Yang, General Manager, Canada Royal Milk, to Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2018, October 16. AAFC 2019-00055).

⁴²⁰ “Feihe will actively develop new customer shopping experience, such as cross-border e-business, when Chinese consumers visit Feihe Canada plant and purchase, the product can be shipped directly from the warehouse in China, which allow customers to have an unprecedented purchase satisfaction and experience. At the same time, with Canada’s excellent raw milk quality and Feihe’s strict quality control system [Feihe can] actively build up customer loyalty and brand reputation” (CDC, 2016, November 22. “*Confidential*” *MAG Application: Canada Royal Milk ULC (Feihe)*. CDC A-2019-00001).

⁴²¹ “In China, Feihe’s premium brand sells for \$75 (Canadian) for a 750 ml can, a one week’s supply” (Green, J., 2017, March 29. Goat dairy meeting at FC. *Frontenac News*. <https://www.frontenacnews.ca/frontenac-county-news/item/11345-goat-dairy-meeting-at-fc>).

⁴²² Email from Judy Holt, Supply Specialist, PSPC (2020, March 12). *Subject: Goat Farm Site visits*. CSC A-2021-00436.

⁴²³ Email from Jeremy Link, Senior Communications Advisor, PSPC (2020, February 20). *Subject: Procurement of Goats*. CSC A-2021-00436.

in Canada on March 11, 2020⁴²⁴ and travel bans were imposed on federal government employees. As a result, PSPC officials said that the required Farm Site Visits “cannot occur until the travel ban is lifted.”⁴²⁵ PSPC had to explore options, yet again, for how to proceed with “our favourite goat requirement” for CORCAN, wishing “good luck to everyone on this file.”⁴²⁶

Even before the pandemic, PSPC was concerned about CORCAN’s lack of readiness and adequate planning. PSPC’s cautionary advice was consistently countered by CORCAN’s chronic overconfidence, as displayed in the first goat solicitation process when CORCAN repeatedly reassured PSPC that there was no need to worry about CORCAN’s delays in getting the temporary housing⁴²⁷ ready to receive the delivery of goat kids:

CORCAN (September 14, 2019): “The barn renovation (for the goats) is not an issue. We chose to prioritize a few other things when the goat procurement was delayed, but it will be done for December [2019] which is lots of time prior to the goats from the PSPC procurement arriving.”⁴²⁸

PSPC (September 24, 2019): “CORCAN has advised us that the young goats will be going into a renovated barn at Collins Bay, which was to have renovations completed by September 1, 2019... However, as of today, we have been informed the renovated barns at Collins Bay will not be complete until December 2019.”⁴²⁹

⁴²⁴ Statistics Canada (2022, November 23). *Canada at a Glance, 2022: Impacts of COVID-19*. Government of Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/12-581-x/2022001/sec14-eng.htm>.

⁴²⁵ Email from Heather Bellmore, PSPC (2020, June 30). CSC A-2020-00055.

⁴²⁶ PSPC’s frustration and concerns started to become evident in correspondence during the first goat procurement effort: “I just had a very pleasant and productive discussion with Kelly [Hartle] in regards to our favourite goat requirement... I have advised Kelly that we can explore what options are possible and/or desirable given an analysis of all the facts and risks... good luck to everyone on this file” (Email from Rick Calich, PSPC, 2019, February 28. *Subject: CORCAN Requirement for Goats*. PSPC A-2019-00259).

⁴²⁷ The existing barn that CORCAN planned to use as temporary housing for the goat kids was deemed “structurally compromised,” so CORCAN turned to the old 10,000-chicken barn as the alternative. “The chicken barn reno is the replacement of the F27 barn reno to house the goats. F27 was found to be structurally compromised and it was proposed by CORCAN to renovate the existing chicken barn instead. F27 will now be completely demolished” (Email from Jeremy Baird, Project Manager, Colliers Project Leaders, 2019, October 9. *Subject: RE: CORCAN - chicken barn?* CSC A-2019-00317). This would have been a very temporary housing situation as CSC was aware that the 800 goat kids would rapidly outgrow the space and would need to be moved into the planned new dairy facility at Joyceville Institution within a short period of time. This meant that once goat kids were acquired, any delays in the construction of the goat dairy facility at Joyceville would have been a very serious matter. Overall, CORCAN’s practice of procuring animals first and building barns second has proved to be a flawed approach.

⁴²⁸ Email from Kelly Hartle, CEO, CORCAN, to Judy Holt, Supply Specialist, PSPC (2019, September 14). CSC A-2020-00131.

⁴²⁹ Email from Heather Bellmore, PSPC (2019, September 24). *Subject: RE: Question for you regarding Goats*. PSPC A-2019-00503.

PSPC (January 10, 2020): “Will the refurbished barn at Collins Bay Institution be ready to receive goats this May, 2020? Please confirm.”⁴³⁰

CORCAN (January 10, 2020): “We will be ready.”

PSPC (January 27, 2020): “Please note that [the] barn will not be ready to house the goats... we also discussed an option on possibility of renting a local farm since the goat barn will not be ready to house the goats.”⁴³¹

Despite PSPC’s diligence, the first goat solicitation failed “as the barn was not ready in order to house the dairy goats,”⁴³² and the second solicitation failed because of CORCAN’s insistence on Farm Site Visits, and because the temporary housing barn for the goats was still not ready.⁴³³ The cost of years of federal procurement efforts remains undisclosed,⁴³⁴ but it is unquestionably substantial.⁴³⁵

On March 5, 2021, weeks after Evolve’s first prison farm report was published exposing the scale and potential harmful impacts of CSC’s planned goat dairy operation,⁴³⁶ CSC quietly issued an “Update on the Penitentiary Farm Program” stating, in the fifth paragraph, that “due to the unplanned financial challenges” of the pandemic, CSC had decided to “temporarily pause the implementation of the dairy goat program.”⁴³⁷ Not to be interpreted as cancellation, the notice asserted that “the dairy goat program will resume” once the

⁴³⁰ Email from Heather Bellmore, PSPC (2020, January 10). *Subject: Goat Barn*. PSPC A-2019-00503.

⁴³¹ Email from Anand Shukla, Project Management, PSPC, to Chris Stein, CORCAN (2020, January 27). *Subject: CSC Farming Project -Goat Procurement Update*. PSPC A-2021-00436.

⁴³² PSPC (2021, March 8). *Prison Farm Program*. PSPC A-2021-00436.

⁴³³ Records show the delicacy with which PSPC tried, time and again, to flag this as a potential issue with CORCAN. For example: “We had simply wanted a smaller group to focus on a couple issues of particular importance to PSPC [including] Institution Readiness: Will CORCAN have the facilities, equipment, staff and Veterinary assistance aligned to accept delivery of the goats in the spring of 2020? What contingencies does CORCAN have if these facilities are not ready for the delivery of the animals? ...We don't want to make any incorrect assumptions about the fullness of your plans to address this issue. Obviously this issue was a major concern in the last tender and we cannot enter into another tender process without a wholly thought out plan here” (Email from Rick Calich, PSPC, 2019, May 16).

⁴³⁴ Evolve has obtained records showing millions in PSPC fees but the overall multi-year total is unknown. Evolve has filed an ATI request (PSPC A-2024-00002) for all invoices, contracts and service agreements for PSPC services for CSC’s prison farm program, but its release has been delayed.

⁴³⁵ The fact that two goat solicitations failed as a result of CORCAN not heeding PSPC’s advice; the fact that a goat facility was designed for CSC to produce goat milk for a foreign multinational corporation at a cost of millions (then shelved); the fact that millions in cost overruns can be attributed to an Advisory Panel’s recommendations stemming from conflicts of interest; and the fact that all of this unfolded as a result of Public Safety not heeding CSC’s advice that there is no evidence to support a decision to reopen prison farms, all merit scrutiny by the federal Procurement Ombud, the Auditor General of Canada, the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, the Correctional Investigator of Canada, and others.

⁴³⁶ Fitzgerald, A. J., Wilson, A., Bruce, J., Wurdemann-Stam, A., & Neufeld, C. (2021, January 31). *Canada’s proposed prison farm program: Why it won’t work and what would work better*. Evolve Our Prison Farms. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/prison-farm-report/>.

⁴³⁷ CSC (2021, March 5). *Correctional Service Canada provides update on the Penitentiary Farm Program*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/news/2021/03/correctional-service-canada-provides-update-on-the-penitentiary-farm-program.html>.

pandemic's financial impacts were assessed. Immediately following this announcement, Mariposa Dairy's Bruce Vandenberg resigned from CSC's Prison Farm Advisory Panel, which suggests that his interest was linked to the prospect of brokering CSC's goat milk.⁴³⁸

Since 2021, CSC has insisted that the dairy goat program is merely "paused," not cancelled, and while CSC has actively attempted to redirect attention to the implementation of the dairy cow program, the contractual "scope of work" for construction of the cow dairy facility includes the manure lagoon, roadways, and site services for the "future goat barn."⁴³⁹ One also recalls that the entire premise for adding the cows was to feed cow milk to goat kids, thereby "offsetting" goat feeding costs, and CSC had informed Public Safety that cow dairy alone would not be feasible unless "coupled with later revenue generation from the dairy goat operation."⁴⁴⁰ Simply put, there is no justification for the cows without the goats.

The three year "pause" of the goat program has aligned with the stalled start-up of Feihe's infant formula production, which, like CSC's goat milk production, was expected to begin in 2019.⁴⁴¹ As has been documented, CORCAN's original plan was to have started building the goat dairy facility in 2018,⁴⁴² with the initial herd of 800 goats expected to arrive in the spring of 2019.⁴⁴³ Under the revised plan to include cows, CSC ambitiously projected that the dual cow and goat dairy operations would begin generating revenues in 2018-2019 and "achieve increased revenues in 2020-2021" through "accelerated building of the goat herd."⁴⁴⁴ However, by 2020, no construction had begun on dairy facilities, two goat procurement

⁴³⁸ CSC (2021, April 27). *Record of Discussion: Farm Advisory Panel Teleconference*. CSC A-2021-00213.

⁴³⁹ "Scope of work includes the new cattle barn facility plus site services, access roadways and a liquid manure tank to serve the cattle barn and future goat barn" (CSC, n.d. *Media Lines: Request for Proposal - Cattle Barn - Penitentiary Farm Program* [Draft]. CSC A-2021-00381).

⁴⁴⁰ CSC (2018, May 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada's penitentiary farm operations*. CSC A-2019-00124 supplementary release.

⁴⁴¹ On March 24, 2024, Feihe announced (under its Canadian incorporated name "Canada Royal Milk") that it had received Canadian government approval to begin commercial production (Feihe, 2024, March 27. *Canada Royal Milk receives Canadian Food Inspection Agency approval to begin infant formula production*.

<http://www.canadaroyalmilk.com/archives/1357>). The announcement states that approval was received from Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency "after a lengthy process of two years" but ATI records show that the process has been much longer, as meetings between Feihe, Health Canada, and the CFIA began in 2016, and Feihe originally expected to receive the approvals in 2019.

⁴⁴² Even though CSC's plan to farm goats was first announced in February 2018, records show that the plan was in place one year prior in 2017, and potentially as far back as May 2016. The budgetary calculations for constructing the dairy goat facility were "based on preliminary 2017 estimates" (Email from Kelly Hartle, CEO, CORCAN, 2020, September 17. *Subject: RE: Correctional farms*. CSC A-2020-00407).

⁴⁴³ "Scope of the procurement... purchase of 800 dairy kid goats with delivery in spring of 2019" (Email from Dominique Labrecque, Director General, PSPC, 2019, October 11. *Subject: RE: CSC Prison Farm program*. PSPC A-2019-00503). This 2018 procurement "was cancelled because it came to light during the evaluation process that CORCAN could not accept delivery of the goats in the spring of 2019" (Email from Judy Holt, Supply Specialist, PSPC, 2019, September 30. *Subject: RE: Conversation with Calvin Neufeld 26 September 2019*. PSPC A-2019-00503).

⁴⁴⁴ CSC (2018, May 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada's penitentiary farm operations*. CSC A-2019-00124.

attempts had failed,⁴⁴⁵ and the dairy cows acquired in 2019 were still being kept in “temporary housing.”⁴⁴⁶ As of July 2024, the cows remain in temporary housing, with the cow barn still not ready after more than two years of construction.⁴⁴⁷

As a result of procurement and managerial problems, CSC’s timeline has been continually revised, a matter that made its way into the 2022 version of CSC’s Media Lines: “Although full implementation was planned over a period of five years, timelines are continuously updated as operations progress.”⁴⁴⁸ To date, CSC has failed to start any dairy operation, cow or goat, although the cows have been artificially inseminated and milked (without quota), with their milk fed to their calves and “young stockers” (calves intended for slaughter) “as part of the plan for consumption of the milk” until quota is acquired and the cow dairy barn is built.⁴⁴⁹

This chapter has unravelled how the decision to launch a prison farm program in Kingston was entangled with a federal agenda for supplying goat milk to Feihe. This goal has proved unachievable to date. Despite the involvement of federal ministers (or rather because of it), the start-up of CORCAN’s new penitentiary agribusiness has been plagued with delays. While the challenges associated with establishing an industrial goat farm have contributed to the setbacks in implementation, the program’s operational disaster can be attributed to the political desire to appease a local advocacy group by including their cows in the prison farm plans, a matter explored next.

⁴⁴⁵ CanadaBuys (2018, November 6). *Dairy Goats (Kids) - Kingston, Ontario*. <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/tender-notice/pw-kin-630-7618>. Also: CanadaBuys (2019, December 19). *Dairy Goats (Kids) - Kingston, Ontario*. <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/tender-notice/pw-kin-630-8000>.

⁴⁴⁶ Email from Jeremy Baird, Project Leader (2021, September 13). *Subject: RE: Farms impact*. CSC A-2021-00381.

⁴⁴⁷ As noted elsewhere in the report, the cow barn construction, which began in April 2022, was originally scheduled for completion in October 2023, then April 2024, then June 2024: “The completion of the [cow] barn and hand over to CSC is anticipated to be completed in June 2024 with cow operations to commence approximately one month after the construction has completed” (Email statement from Kevin Antonucci, Senior Communications Advisor, CSC, 2024, April 9). In June 2024, the timeline changed again, and the anticipated date of completion “is now July 2024 [and] the current anticipated start date for milking operations is September 2024” (Email statements from Esther Mailhot, Senior Advisor, Issues Management and Media Relations, CSC, 2024, June 11 & 12).

⁴⁴⁸ CSC (2022, May 2). *Media Lines: New cattle barn construction at Joyceville Institution*. CSC A-2022-00099.

⁴⁴⁹ CSC (2021, November 2). *Record of Discussion: Farm Advisory Panel Teleconference*. CSC A-2021-00381.

4. “TO-ING AND FRO-ING” || EXCLUDING & INCLUDING COWS

Whereas there was muted controversy over the inclusion of goats in the prison farms, the main sticking point for reporters, and for the Save Our Prison Farms organizers who formed CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel, was the exclusion of cows in the reopening of the prison farms in Kingston.⁴⁵⁰ As a result of their collective pressure, in June 2018 “an operational announcement was made by the Minister’s Office that the penitentiary farms would include a dairy cow and dairy goat operation.”⁴⁵¹ That ministerial decision was predicated on the assurance of the Advisory Panel that the addition of cows “works within the budget allocation.”⁴⁵² However, the resulting infrastructure adaptations and procurement complexities involved in including cows in the prison farms would prolong delays, exponentially burst the budget, and leave one project manager frustrated that “it has been quite a complicated matter getting my head around all the to-ing and fro-ing on this.”⁴⁵³ This chapter examines the role that cows have played in the reopened prison farm program, and how the decision to include them has contributed to drastic setbacks in implementation as well as exorbitant costs and animal welfare concerns.

4.1. “Easier to start with goats” || CSC Excludes Cows

As noted in Chapter 1, Save Our Prison Farms created a subsidiary group called the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op to purchase a portion of CSC’s dismantled bovine dairy herd that was sold at auction when Kingston’s prison farms were closed in 2010.⁴⁵⁴ Their goal was to preserve the genetics of this herd so that it could be sold back to CSC when, they hoped, the prison farms would be restored under a new government. Their intentions were recorded in 2017 briefing notes which stated that dairy cows from CSC’s former Holstein herd remained in the Kingston area, and that farmers had “signaled to CSC their interest to sell the cattle to

⁴⁵⁰ Vetter, C. (2018, April 5). Dairy cows not part of prison farm re-opening. *Eastern Ontario Agri-News*. <https://agrinews.ca/dairy-cows-not-part-of-prison-farm-re-opening/>; Haig, T. (2019, September 11). Kingston activists not happy with direction prison farms are headed. *Radio Canada International*. <https://www.rcinet.ca/en/2019/09/11/kingston-activists-not-happy-with-direction-prison-farms-are-headed/>; CSC (2018, February 28). *Media Lines: Re-opening of CORCAN Farm Operations*. CSC A-2018-00333.

⁴⁵¹ Email from Kelly Hartle, CEO of CORCAN (2020, September 17). *Subject: RE: Correctional farms*. CSC A-2020-00407; Snowdon, F. (2018, June 21). More than 30 dairy cows now part of the prison farm program in Kingston. *Global News*. <https://globalnews.ca/news/4289722/more-than-30-dairy-cows-now-part-of-the-prison-farm-program-in-kingston/>.

⁴⁵² Dowling, D. (2018, April 23). *Prison Farm Proposal, April, 2018, from the citizen members of the Prison Farm Advisory Panel*. PSC A-2018-00287.

⁴⁵³ Email from Lawrence Yarema, Project Manager, PSPC (2020, June 23). *Subject: RE: ...Amendment [for] CSC Cow and Goat Barns*. PSPC A-2021-00436.

⁴⁵⁴ “Prison farm supporters purchase part of Frontenac Institution’s herd” (2010, August 26). *Frontenac News*. <https://www.frontenacnews.ca/south-frontenac-news/item/3664-prison-farm-10-34>.

CSC should a farm operation be reopened.”⁴⁵⁵ The briefing notes were written for Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale by former CSC Commissioner Don Head in January and February 2017.⁴⁵⁶ The intention of the documents was to outline options and recommendations for the prison farms but, according to the notes, there were several challenges involved in returning cows to the prison farm program. Procurement of cows would need to adhere to Government Contract Regulations, presumably ruling out the selective purchase of cows from the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op, and CSC no longer had internal use for the milk due to their Food Service Modernization, so CORCAN would have to obtain quota to sell cow milk commercially.⁴⁵⁷

Canada’s legal framework for government procurement requires a public and competitive bid solicitation process that is open, fair, and transparent. Narrow exceptions exist that would allow a federal institution to enter into a contract without soliciting bids, such as a “pressing emergency in which delay would be injurious to the public interest,” or when “only one person is capable of performing the contract.”⁴⁵⁸ These federal procurement restrictions should have ruled out any possibility of selective private purchases to reacquire descendants of CSC’s former Holstein herd. As outlined in Chapter 2, CSC had appointed an Advisory Panel composed almost exclusively of Save Our Prison Farms advocates and Pen Farm Herd Co-Op shareholders. Panel members were bound by a conflict-of-interest agreement with CORCAN prohibiting them from exercising any influence that “may affect or appear to affect the objectivity or fairness of decisions.”⁴⁵⁹ According to this CORCAN agreement, a conflict of interest:

“may be real, potential or perceived in nature” and “may occur when an Advisory Panel member participates in discussion or decision-making about a matter which may financially benefit that member... directly or indirectly, regardless of the size of the benefit.”

This procedural and ethical framework was disregarded as members of CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel publicly and successfully lobbied for the Minister of Public Safety to direct CSC to reverse the decision to

⁴⁵⁵ CSC (2017, January 9). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Reopening of CORCAN farm at Collins Bay Institution*. CSC A-2019-00030. Also: CSC (2017, February 14). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Reopening of CORCAN farm at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institutions*. CSC A-2018-00450.

⁴⁵⁶ These briefing notes were released through a 2018 ATI request for “All records containing any mention of Feihe International/Canada Royal Milk in relation to prison farm plans” (A-2019-00030). The same release contained two other 2017 briefing notes from CSC to Public Safety, containing heavy redactions and nearly 30 pages withheld.

⁴⁵⁷ Many of CSC’s reasons for not including cows were the same as the ones identified by the agribusiness consultants (Monachus) hired by the Liberal government to report on the public consultations in 2016.

⁴⁵⁸ Government Contracts Regulations (SOR/87-402). *Government of Canada*. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/sor-87-402/FullText.html>.

⁴⁵⁹ CSC (2017, June). *CORCAN Farm Advisory Panel - June 2017*. Agreement signed by CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle and Prison Farm Advisory Panel chair Dianne Dowling. CSC A-2018-00440.

exclude cows, and then invoiced CORCAN for the sale of their cows.⁴⁶⁰ ATI records show that CORCAN was aware of the conflict of interest. In a 2018 meeting with the Prison Farm Advisory Panel, after the decision had been made to include cows, it was stipulated that “Livestock purchases have to be within the governmental regulations, therefore we will need to keep discussions very separate from panel to ensure no one placed in a conflict of interest or perception of such.”⁴⁶¹ This did not deter CORCAN from purchasing cows directly from members of its Prison Farm Advisory Panel, or issuing an unconventional solicitation contract specifically for the procurement of dairy cows “that have a demonstrated lineage to the former penitentiary farm herd and from organizations/groups that support the principles of social procurement in support of offender employment or educational training” (i.e. Save Our Prison Farms and the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op).⁴⁶² When questioned by Evolve, CSC said there was no conflict of interest or “perception of such” because purchasing cows from CSC’s Farm Advisory Panel members was “not related to Farm Advisory Panel involvement/activities.”⁴⁶³ CSC went on to say: “Like in any circumstance even if individuals may be the same in different forums, there is an isolation of duties to ensure no conflict.”⁴⁶⁴ In other words, Dianne Dowling and Jeff Peters sold their cows to CORCAN for the prison farm program as “individuals,” separate from their activities in their “different” roles as advisors to CORCAN on the prison farm program.

In addition to the issues with Government Contract Regulations, the inclusion of cows in the program created challenges regarding milk quotas, which apply only to cow dairy operations. CSC’s former farm operations received supply management exemptions for internal use of the prison milk, a point of contention among milk producers and milk marketing boards.⁴⁶⁵ That arrangement existed before CSC’s Food Service Modernization eliminated any internal need for products generated by a reopened prison farm program. CSC’s January 2017 briefing note stated that “CSC now uses powdered milk,” so if CORCAN were to include cows in its prison farm program, “CORCAN would have to either sell the milk to CSC (which will require a supply management exemption from the Dairy Farmers of Ontario) or attempt to obtain milk quotas and sell the raw milk to the Dairy Farmers of Ontario.”⁴⁶⁶ Regardless of the challenges identified by CSC, ATI records obtained in February 2024 reveal that, in March 2017, Public Safety wanted CSC to

⁴⁶⁰ Examples: Undated invoice issued by Dianne Dowling, “board of directors,” to CORCAN for the sale of “6 dairy cattle as specified... delivered to Collins Bay Institution, Kingston, Ontario, June 4, 2019” (CSC A-2019-00085). Invoices from Jeff Peters, “Chairman: Pen Farm Herd Co-Op” for “Prison Farm Herd Co-op Calves” (2020, February 26, March 27, April 29, November 6. CSC A-2020-00323).

⁴⁶¹ CORCAN (2018, June 7). *Record of Discussion: Farm Advisory Panel*. CSC A-2018-00440.

⁴⁶² CSC (2019, June 3). *Contract: Dairy Cattle. Annex A Statement of Work*. CSC A-2018-00441.

⁴⁶³ Statement from CSC to OIC Investigator Allen Cromarty (2023, January 11).

⁴⁶⁴ Statement from CSC as related in an email from OIC Investigator Allen Cromarty (2023, January 11).

⁴⁶⁵ Cumming, I. (2020, August 11). Former prisoner has reservations about current project. *Ontario Farmer*.

⁴⁶⁶ CSC (2017, January 9). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Re-opening of CORCAN Farm at Collins Bay Institution*. CSC A-2019-00030.

proceed with developing both cow and goat dairy options, originally forecasting cow dairy operations at Collins Bay Institution and goat milk operations at Joyceville Institution.⁴⁶⁷ For this, the “preferred option for Collins Bay” was selling the prison’s cow milk to a “company that converts the milk to powdered milk” in Brampton (presumably the Parmalat facility in Brampton). For this, it was acknowledged that “we need a quota (exemption) for cows [sic] milk,” for which “assistance with the exemption from the Dairy Farmers of Ontario”⁴⁶⁸ was expected to come from members of the Prison Farm Advisory Panel, which had not yet been officially appointed.⁴⁶⁹

With the evidence that Public Safety originally intended for cows to be included and even facilitated by members of the prospective Panel, the question arises why CSC subsequently shocked the Panel in March 2018 with the revelation that cows would *not* be included in the reopened farm operations. ATI records do not conclusively reveal why cows were ultimately omitted when they were in the initial plan, and when the government’s public consultation process was openly geared towards Save Our Prison Farms, whose singular focus was the return of the Pen Herd cows. It may have been the prohibitive cost and complexity of obtaining quota. Perhaps Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO) was not as amenable to granting or exempting quota as anticipated. Securing a viable market for prison-produced cow milk may have been a challenge, the company in Brampton may have had reservations about partnering with prison industry. Details are unknown, but a further complication, possibly a deciding factor, may have been a problem of infrastructure. It had been assumed that the former barns at Collins Bay Institution could be repurposed for a restored cow dairy operation, but after engineers reviewed the state of the facilities, it was determined that the existing barns were “structurally compromised,” “inadequate for renovation” for dairy purposes,⁴⁷⁰ or “irreparable.”⁴⁷¹ This meant that the existing barns were only useful as temporary housing for non-milking livestock.⁴⁷²

⁴⁶⁷ Email from Normand Payette, Special Advisor for Public Safety Canada (2017, March 1). *Subject: RE: Meeting with CORCAN on Prison Farms*. CSC A-2018-00310.

⁴⁶⁸ Email from Normand Payette, Special Advisor for Public Safety Canada (2017, March 1). *Subject: RE: Meeting with CORCAN on Prison Farms*. CSC A-2018-00310.

⁴⁶⁹ The Panel was appointed in May 2017. The prison farm proposal submitted in 2016 by Save Our Prison Farms (cow dairy and artisan cheese production) emphasized the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op’s ability to influence decisions made by the provincial milk marketing board that controls cow dairy quota: “One of our Co-op directors is active in representation at Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO) meetings... We believe that DFO will support the initiative... because it is the option most acceptable to the dairy industry” (A Model for the Restoration of the Prison Farm Program at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institutions submitted by directors of the Pen Farm Herd Co-op, Kingston, 2016, September 1. CSC A-2019-00085).

⁴⁷⁰ Email from Jérémie Emond, Senior Director, Facilities, CSC (2020, September 17). *Subject: Correctional farms*. CSC A-2020-00407.

⁴⁷¹ CSC (2019, July 5). *Progress Report: 37F-27 Cattle Barn Renovation*. CSC A-2019-00317.

⁴⁷² The old 10,000-chicken barn at Collins Bay Institution was renovated, including asbestos abatement, as temporary housing to accommodate the initial herd of 800 dairy goat kids. This was “plan B” after the existing barn originally selected to house the goat kids had been deemed “structurally compromised” and had to be demolished. Other barns were renovated as temporary housing for cattle pending new dairy facility construction at Joyceville Institution.

Restoring a cow dairy operation came, then, with complex quota and sales contracts as well as the requirement to construct a second and separate new dairy facility that would not have been factored into the original budget. Since goats were the objective, and the inclusion of cows would have added cost, complexity, and unaffordable delays, it was determined that “logistically, it would be easier to start with goats.”⁴⁷³ Despite the lack of feasibility of including a cow dairy operation, local pressure, stoked by members of CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel, succeeded in rapidly reversing the decision to omit cows.

4.2. “Betrayed” || CSC Panel Lobbies to Include Cows

Prior to CSC’s March 2018 goats-only announcement, members of CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel were evidently aware of CSC’s reluctance to include cows in the prison farm operations. Dianne Dowling, spokesperson for Save Our Prison Farms, and CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel chair, encouraged participants at the 2017 Pen Farm Herd Co-Op AGM to “put pressure on the government.”⁴⁷⁴ According to minutes from the 8th Annual Meeting of PFHC, Dowling handed out a sheet with key politicians’ contact information and urged shareholders to contact Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale, and his Parliamentary Secretary Mark Holland. More explicitly, she said “write to Ralph Goodale who is the strongest person to connect to emphasizing mental health, indigenous people and COWS.”⁴⁷⁵ Despite these efforts, on March 7, 2018, CSC revealed the goats-only decision to the Prison Farm Advisory Panel.⁴⁷⁶ Members of CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel, and their affiliated groups Save Our Prison Farms and the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op, expressed that they were “shocked and heartbroken and angry.”⁴⁷⁷ The

⁴⁷³ Vetter, C. (2018, April 5). Dairy cows not part of prison farm re-opening. *Eastern Ontario Agri-News*. <https://agrinews.ca/dairy-cows-not-part-of-prison-farm-re-opening/>.

⁴⁷⁴ Minutes. *Pen Farm Herd Co-Op 8th Annual Meeting* (2017, November 10).

⁴⁷⁵ Grammar and capitalization as recorded in the meeting minutes.

⁴⁷⁶ The “announcement” was made to the Panel only, who relayed the news to their special interest groups. Despite CSC’s “commitment to keep the public informed about this initiative,” nearly all “information” about the prison farms (outside of Evolve’s independent investigations) has been channelled through Panel members Dianne Dowling and Jeff Peters exclusively to Save Our Prison Farms allies (Calvin Neufeld requested to be added to the newsletter list but was declined). The only announcements made by CSC directly to the public were two media events hosted at the prison farms, one in 2018 and one in 2019, which only Save Our Prison Farms representatives and supporters were permitted to attend (CSC and Public Safety coordinated to “absolutely not allow” Evolve to attend as media or as members of the public, and the dates of the media events were kept “sensitive,” i.e. confidential, until the day before the events). Beyond those two “public” announcements by CSC and the federal government, there was only the publicly issued “update” on March 5, 2021, indicating in the fifth paragraph that the goat program was being “temporarily paused” but “would resume.” Essentially, the “commitment to keep the public informed” was delivered only to and through members of Save Our Prison Farms, while the facts have been unearthed and delivered to the public through the commitment of Evolve.

⁴⁷⁷ “At the prison farm advisory panel meeting today, CSC staff shared some details of the prison farm re-opening. The plan includes a dairy goat farm at Joyceville... Dairy cows were not in the plan presented to the panel today. This news shocked panel members, as I am sure it shocks you. Returning the cows to the prison farm has always been a central objective in our campaign. We have been shocked and heartbroken and angry before... We will persist again, to advocate for an early return of the cows” (Email from Dianne Dowling “for the Save Our Prison Farms committee” to prison farm

decision was framed as a betrayal⁴⁷⁸ because, as Dowling argued, “returning the cows to the prison farm has always been a central objective in our campaign.”⁴⁷⁹

The federal government anticipated that the Panel would have a negative reaction to the exclusion of cows. An unidentified person (name redacted) working in Issues Management in the Prime Minister’s Privy Council Office (PCO) sent an email to a colleague on March 5, 2018, asking “When does this [goats-only decision] become public now?”⁴⁸⁰ Christine O’Nions, PCO Senior Communications Analyst, replied saying that on the 7th of March, CORCAN would explain to the Prison Farm Advisory Panel that “this is the first phase and they will be starting with goats... But no cows for now.”⁴⁸¹ On the day of the meeting, O’Nions sent an email to several unknown persons (names redacted), copying other PCO staff. The email said:

“CSC met today with the advisory panel on prison farms and apparently the advisory panel is unhappy about the fact that the prison farm will have goats instead of cows. They are also concerned about another matter, which I will call you about [redacted]. The head of the advisory Panel will be appearing on [CBC’s] Power Play at 5pm today.”⁴⁸²

A few hours later, O’Nions wrote: “Update: The head of the advisory panel [referring to Jeff Peters, who was not the head of the Advisory Panel] has cancelled his appearance on Power Play.”⁴⁸³ At the same time, the PCO’s O’Nions forwarded a media request that CSC had received,⁴⁸⁴ noting that it was “Pretty innocuous, although there is a cow question.”⁴⁸⁵

supporters, 2018, March 7. *Subject: prison farm update*). Also: MacAlpine, I. (2018, March 8). Cows not in initial prison farm plan. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/2018/03/08/cows-not-in-initial-prison-farm-plan>.

⁴⁷⁸ Davies, J. (2018, March 14). Save our Prison Farm members betrayed by Feds. *Frontenac News*. <https://www.frontenacnews.ca/editorials/item/12224-save-our-prison-farm-members-betrayed-by-feds>.

⁴⁷⁹ Vetter, C. (2018, April 5). Dairy cows not part of prison farm re-opening. *Eastern Ontario AgriNews*. <https://agrinenews.ca/dairy-cows-not-part-of-prison-farm-re-opening/>.

⁴⁸⁰ Email (2018, March 5). *Subject: Cows*. PCO A-2022-00162.

⁴⁸¹ Email (2018, March 5). *Subject: Re: Cows*. PCO A-2022-00162.

⁴⁸² Email from Christine O’Nions, Senior Analyst, PCO (2018, March 7). *Subject: Update: meeting with advisory panel on prison farms*. PCO A-2022-00162.

⁴⁸³ Email from Christine O’Nions, Senior Analyst, PCO (2018, March 7). *Subject: Further Update: meeting with advisory panel on prison farms*. PCO A-2022-00162.

⁴⁸⁴ CSC forwarded media inquiries to the Privy Council Office and Public Safety. Interview requests were declined. The government’s close monitoring of the temperature of the situation, and their apparent nervousness over what the dissatisfied Panel members might say to the media (the subject of which was redacted or discussed by phone, leaving no written record), may have contributed to the sudden and swift reversal of the goats-only decision.

⁴⁸⁵ The sensitivity of the “cow question” in the prime minister’s inner circle stands out as disproportionate to its “innocuous” nature. The reporter’s questions were: “Q1. How many staff and offenders were employed by the farms at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institutions before the closures? ...Q2. How much space of the property the farms occupied at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institutions? ...Q3. How many cows were at these farms?” (Email from Christine O’Nions, Senior Analyst, PCO, 2018, March 7. *Subject: RE: Further Update: meeting with advisory panel on prison farms*. PCO A-2022-00162). The answers were: 1. “17 staff” and “60 inmate jobs” were “affected” as a result of the closures, but all were

This “cow question” gained traction in the weeks following the goats-only announcement, as the Panel members rallied their groups and advocacy networks to pressure the government to include cows.⁴⁸⁶ The day of the announcement, Panel members contacted the Public Safety Minister’s Policy Advisor, Michael Milech, to express their dissatisfaction.⁴⁸⁷ On March 9, 2018, the Panel members met with MP Mark Gerretsen, who stated that it was “unfortunate” that cows were not included “but my understanding is a dairy operation with cows is more elaborate to set up, and what [CORCAN is] proposing is something they can get up and running fairly quickly” and “goats are a good option with the Feihe factory opening in 2019.”⁴⁸⁸

Letters sent to authorities, and comments made to media, serve as evidence that advocates’ arguments for including cows continued to be based on “heartfelt beliefs” rather than “rigorous analysis.”⁴⁸⁹ One letter sent to the Public Safety Minister in March 2018 argued that dairy cows are “much more appropriate than goats” for the purposes of rehabilitation.⁴⁹⁰ Another letter argued that “cows are more likely to create empathy among the prisoners than goats.”⁴⁹¹ A third said “We want them to keep the mommy cows to help those men in there learn how to be good to other beings.”⁴⁹² In an interview with *Edible Ottawa* magazine, Prison Farm Advisory Panel members said that omitting cows would “compromise the rehabilitative potential” because “goats, after all, are not the soulful equivalent of cows.”⁴⁹³

While there is established research on the benefits of animal-assisted therapy in prisons, and it is frequently cited by proponents of animal-based prison farms, this research contradicts these claims. As noted by criminologist Dr. Kelly Struthers Montford, CSC’s claims that prison-based animal agriculture can serve a rehabilitative purpose have relied on a reference to (emphasis hers):

“offered other avenues for employment,” 2. “1,041.00 acres” had been in production at Joyceville and “484.00 acres” at Collins Bay; 3. “a total of 298 cows were at these farms at the time of the closures.”

⁴⁸⁶ Email from Dianne Dowling to prison farm supporters (2018, March 7). *Subject: prison farm update*.

⁴⁸⁷ Vetter, C. (2018, April 5). Dairy cows not part of prison farm re-opening. *Eastern Ontario Agri-News*.

<https://agrinews.ca/dairy-cows-not-part-of-prison-farm-re-opening/>. Michael Milech replaced Public Safety’s Policy Advisor Justine Villeneuve, who had made the “radical changes” to CSC online public consultation questionnaire in 2016.

⁴⁸⁸ MacAlpine, I. (2018, March 8). Cows not in initial prison farm plan. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*.

<https://www.thewhig.com/2018/03/08/cows-not-in-initial-prison-farm-plan>.

⁴⁸⁹ As noted in the Monachus Consulting report, perceptions of the merits of prison farms were “opinions, based on personal observation and heartfelt beliefs and not upon any rigorous analysis of the actual impact of penitentiary farm programs on either rehabilitation or employability of inmates post release” (Monachus Consulting, 2016, September 19. *Report on the Town Hall Meeting on the feasibility of re-establishing penitentiary farms at the Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions*. Formerly posted at <https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/publications/005007-5801-eng.shtml>. CSC A-2018-00333).

⁴⁹⁰ Email to Public Safety Minister Goodale (2018, March 19). PSC A-2018-00300.

⁴⁹¹ Email to Public Safety Minister Goodale (2018, March 10). *Subject: Prison Farm Cows*. CSC A-2018-00310.

⁴⁹² Email to Public Safety Minister Goodale (2016, April 18). *Subject: Healing cows*. PSC A-2018-00451.

⁴⁹³ Enman, C. (2019, January/February). Cow Corrections. *Edible Ottawa*, 15-18.

“a 2006 article by Gennifer Furst, ‘Prison-Based Animal Programs.’ This article, however, evaluates the rehabilitative potential of prison-based *therapeutic* animal programs, such as dog training. Furst is adamant that given the differences between the training of a service dog versus the raising and slaughtering animals in agriculture, her results are *not applicable* to penal animal agriculture programs.”⁴⁹⁴

ATI records obtained by criminologist Dr. Amy Fitzgerald reveal that CSC was aware of this distinction, as detailed in a report prepared by CSC’s Research Branch during the 2016 public consultation process, titled *The Impact of Penitentiary Farms on Correctional Results*:

“As noted by Furst (2006), prison-based animal programs (PAPs) are being implemented by correctional organizations for numerous reasons [however] Furst also noted that livestock care/prison farms may be different from other types of PAPs as they are unlikely to foster the same type of empathetic relationships with animals as more conventional PAPs that use domesticated animals.”⁴⁹⁵

The report, which CSC intended to publish but then never released,⁴⁹⁶ went on to indicate that there is “no research identified” that substantiates the “perceptions of the positive value” of working with livestock on prison farms. When the report was distributed internally, an unidentified CSC staff member specifically

⁴⁹⁴ Struthers Montford, K. (2019, January). Land, Agriculture, and the Carceral: The Territorializing Function of Penitentiary Farms. *Radical Philosophy Review*, 22(1): 113-141.

⁴⁹⁵ CSC (n.d.). *The Impact of Penitentiary Farms on Correctional Results: A Research Document*. CSC A-2018-00310.

⁴⁹⁶ CSC’s original plan for the prison farm public consultations, before Public Safety took control, involved “several dimensions” to foster an open and diverse engagement process. These included “a national roundtable event,” consultations with provincial leaders who “may have specific concerns,” and “an additional element of the consultation process will be to produce key consultation documents. One such item will be a research document that will explore the impacts of prison farms from the perspective of contributing to correctional results” (CSC, 2016, February 10. *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Penitentiary Farm Consultation Process*. PSC A-2018-00451). Even after Public Safety intervened, CSC still intended to release its research document online and at the Kingston Town Hall event, “for transparency sake” (Email from David Molzahn, CSC, 2016, July 20. *Subject: RE: Research report for town hall*. CSC A-2018-00310). This did not occur, however. Shortly after Public Safety’s interventions, CSC Strategic Communications staff indicated that they had “just been informed that the decision has already been made that we will not release the research” (Email from Lori Halfper, Strategic Communications, CSC, 2016, July 28. CSC A-2018-00310). There has never been any public record of the existence of this research document until Evolve found reference to it in ATI records, along with an email from CSC’s Research Branch Director saying that “for a full copy of the report, [people] need to contact our GEN-NHQ Research e-mail. We typically send out a pdf copy of the report in 1 business day” (Email from Andrea Moser, Director, Research Branch, CSC, 2016, July 19. CSC A-2018-00310). On February 2, 2024, Evolve submitted a request for the document at the email address identified but did not receive a response to the request, or to follow-up emails, for 27 days. Finally, Evolve emailed a version of the research document obtained through Access to Information and asked CSC’s Research Branch if they could at least confirm that this was the document that had been prepared for release during the 2016 prison farm public consultation. At this point, Evolve received a response: “The research documents being requested (RIB 16-11 and associated report), were not finalized for publication and thus are not available on the CSC website. We can confirm that the document previously disclosed through an Access to Information and Privacy request corresponds with the report requested” (Email from Partnerships and Knowledge Mobilization Unit, Research Branch, CSC, 2024, February 29).

highlighted the line that “there was no research found that looked at employability of offenders working in prison farms and associated reductions in recidivism.”⁴⁹⁷

While the federal government initially made a brief and feeble attempt to stand by their decision to exclude cows because it was “easier to start with goats,” this stance changed within days. On March 15, 2018, the Public Safety Minister caved to the pressure and held a teleconference with the Prison Farm Advisory Panel, as well as non-panel members of Save Our Prison Farms.⁴⁹⁸ The Minister conceded that “the prison farm plan is ‘open to modification’ within the limits of the money budgeted [\$4.3 million over five years], and with the expectation that the program would be implemented as soon as possible so that it can demonstrate its value.”⁴⁹⁹ He invited the Panel to provide “a side-by-side comparison of a dairy cow operation vs. a dairy goat operation, including costs and timelines, to be presented to him by mid-April.” The Panel’s proposal had to “demonstrate sustainability” of adding a dairy cow operation “at no extra cost.”⁵⁰⁰

The Panel’s “side-by-side comparison” of “advantages” and “challenges” (discussed in the previous chapter) was submitted to the Public Safety Minister on April 23, 2018.⁵⁰¹ The four-page proposal pointed to the potential for early revenue from dairy cows in 2019, on the assurance (or presumption) that 32 kg of quota would be provided by Dairy Farmers of Ontario, but DFO has denied this.⁵⁰² In their proposal, the Panel admitted that revenue growth from cows was not achievable “due to limit on quota,” however they argued that cow dairy could be paired with other operations “that would require more funding and operational support, but could have substantial advantages.” One such option was “a small beef cow-calf herd” at Joyceville Institution: “The abattoir at Joyceville would be important... because transportation costs [to slaughter] would be virtually eliminated.”⁵⁰³ Diversity of species and operations, according to the Panel’s proposal, would result in “more diverse rehabilitation,” and more livestock would somehow reduce “climate change consequences.” Predictably, the Panel concluded in favour of including cows:

⁴⁹⁷ CSC (n.d.). *A Summary of Research Relevant to Prison Farms*. CSC A-2018-00310.

⁴⁹⁸ For example, a local nun who had been active in Save Our Prison Farms advocacy participated in the teleconference with Minister Goodale: “Sr. Pauline Lally, from the Sisters of Providence, sat in on the teleconference with the Minister, and brought up the idea that cows seem more therapeutic than goats. She said, ‘Goats bite you and butt you, and the inmates have had enough of that already in their lives.’ Minister Goodale enjoyed that point, and laughing said, ‘...just like the Opposition!’” (Email from Dianne Dowling to a member of the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op, 2018, March 20. *Subject: Re: Prison Farm needs dairy cows*).

⁴⁹⁹ Email from Dianne Dowling to prison farm supporters (2018, March 19). *Subject: Prison Farm Update*.

⁵⁰⁰ CSC (2018, May 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada’s penitentiary farm operations*. CSC A-2019-00124.

⁵⁰¹ *Prison Farm Proposal, April, 2018, from the citizen members of the Prison Farm Advisory Panel*. CSC A-2018-00440.

⁵⁰² In statements to Evolve throughout 2021-2023, DFO denied having granted or promised quota to CSC.

⁵⁰³ This portion of the Panel’s proposal was redacted from CSC’s released version of the document (CSC A-2018-00440) but not from the version released by Public Safety (PSC A-2018-00287).

“After examining the advantages and challenges related to the cows-only model and the goats-only model, we determined that a model including both cows and goats is feasible, and could fulfill the criteria we were asked to meet.”⁵⁰⁴

On May 18, 2018, CSC reiterated the “findings”⁵⁰⁵ of this review in a briefing note to the Minister:

“Following discussion on the topic of a straight comparative, the Farm Advisory Panel members (community and CSC members) concluded that both types of livestock provide comparable rehabilitation benefits... with a dual approach actually giving enhanced benefit to more offenders.”⁵⁰⁶

Consequently, in the same briefing note, CSC recommended that Public Safety approve the addition of “approximately 55-60” cows on the basis of several alleged advantages:

- A “dual model” provides “mitigation” against the challenges that a goats-only operation would experience (such as “markets” and “international factors”), thereby creating “a situation of lower risk.”
- “Dairy goat and dairy cow operations are compatible, allowing efficiencies, such as operating under one roof.”
- A dual model “improves sustainability... and reduces waste.”
- Cow milk would “offset some longer term kid feeding costs.”

Reversing their previously established position,⁵⁰⁷ CSC assured Public Safety in a May 2018 briefing note that the inclusion of cows in the farm program would be financially and logistically “feasible to achieve.”⁵⁰⁸ Outside of the \$4.3 million in federal funding, CSC had already committed to absorb infrastructure costs for the goat barn, and CSC assured Public Safety in the briefing note that they were willing and able to absorb the additional costs of an expanded “dual function barn.” Where the original goats-only barn had

⁵⁰⁴ *Prison Farm Proposal, April, 2018, from the citizen members of the Prison Farm Advisory Panel.* CSC A-2018-00440.

⁵⁰⁵ CSC communications show skepticism over the lack of objectivity and lack of evidence in the government’s decision-making process: “There is no point mincing word[s] – particularly when, as you point out, there are implications for the Service [and] very concerning points around the interpretation of the ‘findings’” (Email from John Weekes, Ph.D., Senior Research Manager, to Lynn Stewart, Ph.D., C.Psych., Senior Research Manager, Research Branch, CSC, 2016, September 13. *Subject: RE: Feedback on the report.* CSC A-2018-00310).

⁵⁰⁶ CSC (2018, May 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada’s penitentiary farm operations.* CSC A-2019-00124.

⁵⁰⁷ The reversal of CSC’s position on this and other farm-related matters could be explained by evidence in ATI records that Public Safety manipulated CSC’s briefing notes, provided direction on what they wanted CSC’s briefing notes to state, and demanded the destruction of briefing notes that did not conform to Public Safety’s intentions and desired recommendations. For example: “The Minister’s Office has requested that the previous BN be ‘pulled’ essentially meaning destroyed... The Minister’s Office has requested that CSC rewrite the BN... please revise as per the MINO direction” (Emails between various CSC staff, 2016, April 7-13. *Subject: RE: Urgent - Minister’s Office requesting revised BN to Minister on Penitentiary Farm Consultation Process.* CSC A-2018-00310).

⁵⁰⁸ CSC (2018, May 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada’s penitentiary farm operations.* CSC A-2019-00124.

estimated infrastructure costs of \$6.2 million over three years of implementation, “the updated model will require internal CSC capital funding of \$9.75 million over four years of implementation.” Playing down the added millions, CSC advised that “the additional \$3.55 million infrastructure cost” was a worst case scenario and “manageable with current CSC funding.”⁵⁰⁹

On June 4, 2018, the Minister of Public Safety approved the new proposal to include cows,⁵¹⁰ and on June 21, 2018, CSC announced that cows would be added to the prison farm program.⁵¹¹ The sequence of events was summarized by the Prison Farm Advisory Panel chair in a National Farmers Union publication:

“In May 2017, Correctional Service Canada formed the Prison Farm Advisory Panel – that included three NFU members – and together with CORCAN, a division of Correctional Service Canada, we drafted a proposed model for the prison farm program, which involved returning the dairy cows. The following winter [March 2018], we received word of the reopening of prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay; however, the cows were not included in these initial plans. Thankfully, the Minister invited us to resubmit a proposal comparing the costs and benefits. And after much discussion with CORCAN, and also negotiating with the Dairy Farmers of Ontario for quota free of charge,⁵¹² the government finally approved our request.”⁵¹³

Expenses, however, rapidly outpaced the forecasted maximum additional costs expected to be incurred by the inclusion of cows. The escalating costs were due in large part to two major errors captured in CSC’s May 2018 briefing note to Public Safety. First, it was mistakenly assumed that cows and goats could be housed together in one barn;⁵¹⁴ second, it was mistakenly assumed that CORCAN could carry out the

⁵⁰⁹ CSC (2018, May 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada’s penitentiary farm operations*. CSC A-2019-00124.

⁵¹⁰ Minister Goodale’s signature on the May 18, 2018 briefing note is date stamped June 4, 2018.

⁵¹¹ Snowden, F. (2018, June 21). More than 30 dairy cows now part of the prison farm program in Kingston. *Global News*. <https://globalnews.ca/news/4289722/more-than-30-dairy-cows-now-part-of-the-prison-farm-program-in-kingston/>. Among those celebrating the decision to include cows were Liberal MPs Mark Gerretsen and Mark Holland, both “passionate” supporters of the program. MP Holland insisted that “the decision to close [the former prison farms] was ideological. The government of the day thought working on the farms was simply too pleasant an experience for the incarcerated” (Enman, C., 2019, January/February. *Cow Corrections*. *Edible Ottawa*, 15-18). This claim is contradicted by records indicating that the decision to close the farms was practical, not ideological, and that it was CSC’s recommendation to close the farms given their cost, complexity, and lack of relevance to prisoner employability.

⁵¹² Dairy Farmers of Ontario has consistently denied having committed quota for the prison farm program.

⁵¹³ Nelson, A. & Entz, M. (2019). *Saving Our Prison Farms: Cows, Community and Civil Disobedience*. In A. A. Desmarais (Ed.), *Frontline Farmers: How the National Farmers Union Resists Agribusiness and Creates our New Food Future* (pp. 140-158). Fernwood Publishing.

⁵¹⁴ Internally, CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle drafted a timeline of factors contributing to the delays: “2018-04: CORCAN and TSF [Technical Services and Facilities] met to discuss infrastructure for operations based on goat operation... 2018-05: CSC was asked to review the impacts of adding a dairy cow operation... 2018-06: Public announcement made that the penitentiary farms would include both a dairy cow and dairy goat operation. CORCAN revised drawings for dairy barn to include both operations under one roof... 2018-07: original plan to have CORCAN construction complete the projects... 2018-08: In August 2018, a decision between CORCAN and TSF was made to build two separate barns... 2018-08 to 2019-03: Several discussions occurred between TSF, PSPC and CORCAN [and] it was determined that construction for new

construction.⁵¹⁵ These errors, discussed in turn, rippled throughout the prison farm restoration process, contributing to confusion, complexities, cost overruns, and delays. Issues with including cows in the prison farm program not only burst the budget but, as CSC had warned Public Safety, it involved procurement challenges, issues with securing cow dairy quota, and a range of other problems that CSC did not anticipate.

4.3. “Without which this would not be possible” || Quota

As mentioned, one of the key reasons that CSC was not in favour of including cows in the prison farm program was because securing quota for cow milk production would be challenging. With the former prison farms, CSC had been granted special quota exemption on the condition that the milk would be used for prison consumption only. Since the former prison farm closures, CSC modernized its food service and no longer has internal use for milk produced on prison farms, making quota a necessity for any restored cow dairy operation. Both CSC and Public Safety were aware of this, yet when the decision was made to include cows in the program, it appears that no special efforts were made to secure such quota. The reason for this is unknown, but it could be because CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel had communicated to CORCAN, Public Safety, and the media that the quota had been negotiated with Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO).⁵¹⁶

For years, the essential cow dairy quota was discussed as though it had already been granted or otherwise committed by DFO. For example:

- July 2018: Prison Farm Advisory Panel meeting minutes mention the “quota being provided” by DFO.⁵¹⁷

barns and site work would be tendered” (Kelly Hartle, CEO, CORCAN, 2020, May 29. *Penitentiary Farm Barn Construction Status Summary: Penitentiary Farm Implementation Timeline*. CSC A-2020-00407).

⁵¹⁵ “Lastly, as CORCAN will be utilized for all infrastructure, providing offender employment, there is potential for additional cost savings” (CSC, 2018, May 18. *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada’s penitentiary farm operations*. CSC A-2019-00124). Construction was eventually contracted out. Neither CORCAN nor prisoners have been involved in the construction of dairy facility infrastructure, only renovations to existing barns and minor side projects.

⁵¹⁶ “And after much discussion with CORCAN, and also negotiating with the Dairy Farmers of Ontario for quota free of charge, the government finally approved our request” (Dianne Dowling, quoted in Nelson, A. & Entz, M., 2019. *Saving Our Prison Farms: Cows, Community and Civil Disobedience*. In A. A. Desmarais, Ed., *Frontline Farmers: How the National Farmers Union Resists Agribusiness and Creates our New Food Future*, pp. 140-158. Fernwood Publishing).

⁵¹⁷ CSC (2018, July 19). *CORCAN Farm Advisory Panel Record of Discussion*. CSC A-2019-00085.

- August 2019: At the media event for the official prison farm launch, MP Karen McCrimmon, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, stated in her speech: “My thanks as well to the Dairy Farmers of Ontario for their generous contribution of dairy quota, without which this would not be possible.”⁵¹⁸
- January 2020: CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle assured Public Safety that “the dairy cow operation will have an associated research quota assigned.”⁵¹⁹
- October 2020: CSC spokesperson Marie-Pier Lécuyer stated to Evolve: “The quota for the cow milk at the penitentiary farm is to be covered through Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO) research quota granted to the penitentiary farms.”⁵²⁰

Media misreported that the quota had been granted:

- “Dairy Farmers of Ontario has donated some 32 kilograms of industrial dairy quota to Correctional Service Canada, which is enough for milking a herd of 30-35 cows, Correctional Service Canada officials said.”⁵²¹
- “Co-op members celebrated when they first heard the news, but felt cheated when they learned that the plan included a goat herd at Joyceville, but no cows... The government heeded that frustration and, just weeks ago, accepted a proposal to add [cow] dairy operations to the farm plan. The Dairy Farmers of Ontario has granted the operation enough quota to keep between 35 and 40 dairy cows.”⁵²²
- Members of CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel repeatedly claimed that the quota was a done deal, and this was the decision point on which Public Safety approved the addition of cows: “After much discussion with CORCAN, and also negotiating with the Dairy Farmers of Ontario for quota free of charge, the government finally approved our request.”⁵²³

All of the above claims were false. The allegedly secured quota from Dairy Farmers of Ontario was news to DFO when Evolve contacted them October 2021 to confirm the research quota arrangement. A DFO

⁵¹⁸ PSC (2019, August 15). *Speaking Notes for MP Karen McCrimmon: Event - Launch of CSC Penitentiary Farms program, Kingston, ON, August 15, 2019*. CSC A-2019-00325.

⁵¹⁹ Email (2020, January 20). *Subject: Urgent - MO Inquiry - Proposed Response*. CSC A-2019-00323.

⁵²⁰ Email statement from Marie-Pier Lécuyer, Media relations advisor, CSC (2020, October 13).

⁵²¹ Johnson, K. (2018, June 21). ‘The cows are coming home’: two prison farms to reopen in Kingston. *iPolitics*. <https://www.ipolitics.ca/news/the-cows-are-coming-home-two-prison-farms-to-reopen-in-kingston>.

⁵²² White, P. (2018, June 21). Two Ontario prison farms closed by Harper government to be reopened after pressure from nearby residents. *The Globe and Mail*. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-two-ontario-prison-farms-closed-by-harper-government-to-be-reopened/>.

⁵²³ Nelson, A. & Entz, M. (2019). Saving Our Prison Farms: Cows, Community and Civil Disobedience. In A. A. Desmarais (Ed.), *Frontline Farmers: How the National Farmers Union Resists Agribusiness and Creates our New Food Future* (pp. 140-158). Fernwood Publishing.

spokesperson provided the following statement: “Unfortunately, we do not currently have information related to the new prison farm program.”⁵²⁴ In response to a follow-up inquiry in December 2021, DFO stated: “Dairy Farmers of Ontario has not received a formal request for research quota from CSC. Therefore, DFO has not made a decision on this matter and does not have any information to share.”⁵²⁵ By November 2022, more than four years after CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel assured Public Safety that the quota was secured, DFO indicated that CSC had finally initiated contact: “At this time we can confirm that DFO is in contact with the Correctional Service of Canada however, details on this matter are still under discussion and we do not have an update at this time.”⁵²⁶ By June 2023, DFO still had not agreed to provide quota to CSC: “We do not have further update on the matter.”⁵²⁷ For years, Evolve’s media inquiries to CSC about the quota status received no response, but CORCAN’s new CEO Christopher Hill told Evolve in a January 2024 meeting that the quota was still not obtained. In February 2024, weeks from the proposed April 2024 start date of CSC’s cow dairy operation, DFO repeated again that “At this time, Dairy Farmers of Ontario has no new or additional information to share on this matter.”⁵²⁸ In April 2024, CSC stated that the anticipated start date of the dairy research program was delayed until July 2024 (later delayed to September 2024), and “CSC continues to negotiate an agreement with our partners” for quota.⁵²⁹ If CSC is unsuccessful in negotiating quota with DFO, CSC will be left with a \$10.5 million “state-of-the-art”⁵³⁰ cow dairy barn that is unusable for dairy purposes.

Quota aside, a fundamental question that arises is what CSC will do with the cow milk, having no internal use for it. The plan for the goat milk is now known, but what will be done with the prison’s cow milk under

⁵²⁴ Email statement from DFO Media Inquiries (2021, October 22).

⁵²⁵ Email statement from DFO Media Inquiries (2021, December 21).

⁵²⁶ Email statement from DFO Media Inquiries (2022, November 16).

⁵²⁷ Email statement from DFO Media Inquiries (2023, June 2).

⁵²⁸ Email statement from DFO Media Inquiries (2024, February 9).

⁵²⁹ Email statement from Kevin Antonucci, Senior Communications Advisor, CSC (2024, April 8).

⁵³⁰ “[Jeff] Peters said the barn currently on the Collins Bay Institution property [temporarily housing cows for five years] is not up to modern standards and will be torn down. A new barn will be built [at Joyceville Institution] with features that enhance animal welfare... ‘It would be a state-of-the-art barn’ [Peters said]... The cow’s milk will be used to make cheese to supply local Correctional Service Canada institutions and Royal Military College. The cheese will not be sold to the public to not to [sic] compete with local farmers... Peters said his Save The Prison Farms group will be meeting with representatives of Corcan, which will build and operate the farm. ‘All we can say today is that more details are to come,’ David Barnabe, senior media relations and consultation officer with the Department of Finance, wrote in an email after being contacted by the Whig-Standard” (MacAlpine, I., 2018, March 2. Prison farm advocates hope cows will return. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/2018/03/02/prison-farm-advocates-hope-cows-will-return>). The old barns that Peters described as “not up to modern standards” were assessed as “structurally compromised,” “inadequate for renovation,” or “irreparable,” as noted earlier in this report. Even so, CBC described these as “state-of-the-art” facilities: “The facilities and equipment are state-of-the-art, and the offspring of the original Pen Farm herd have been brought back” (CBC Docs POV, n.d., *Prison Farm*. <https://www.cbc.ca/cbcdocspov/episodes/prison-farm>). Peters also described the six-decades-old slaughterhouse at Joyceville Institution as “a clean, well-respected and state-of-the-art facility” days before it was closed on September 30, 2022 (Peters, J., 2022, September 5. Letter: Abattoir story misleading. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/opinion/letters/letter-abattoir-story-misleading>).

a research quota arrangement is a question that neither CSC nor DFO have answered. The only response ever received to this question was in April 2024 when Evolve asked CSC whether their cow milk will be sold to DFO for sale to consumers, and CSC responded that “CSC continues to negotiate an agreement with our partners.”⁵³¹ An agricultural journalist explained to Evolve that cow milk produced under research quota is typically sold to DFO and then sold to the public.⁵³²

Both the cow milk and the goat milk produced by the Correctional Service of Canada will set a precedent, marking the first time in Canadian history that prison-produced milk will be sold to consumers. How prison-produced milk will be received by consumers in Canada and China is another question that has not been addressed. This should have been considered in light of consumer distrust of infant formula after the 2008 melamine scandal in China,⁵³³ and Feihe’s own track record of contaminated milk.⁵³⁴ Feihe’s move to establish its first processing facility outside of China was to restore consumer trust through “safe and reliable” milk supply.⁵³⁵ In the United States, consumer outcry recently compelled a major grocery chain to drop cheese made from prison-produced goat milk from its shelves.⁵³⁶ It should have been flagged as an issue, in developing the goat milk production plan, that Canadians taxpayers and Chinese consumers might object to the Correctional Service of Canada contributing to Feihe’s supply. Likewise, it should have been anticipated, in developing the cow milk production plan, that Canadians might object to footing the bill to be sold prison-produced milk.

⁵³¹ Email statement from Kevin Antonucci, Senior Communications Advisor, CSC (2024, April 8).

⁵³² Statement made by Ian Cumming, agricultural journalist, during Evolve’s tour of the Joyceville prison farm on November 15, 2023. This is consistent with CSC documents indicating that the cow milk will generate “a small amount of revenue” through sales to DFO until the goats arrive, at which time the cow dairy operation will expand to produce surplus cow milk to “offset” goat kid feeding costs (CSC, 2018, May 18. *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada’s penitentiary farm operations.* CSC A-2019-00124).

⁵³³ Branigan, T. (2009, November 24). China executes two for tainted milk scandal: Official news agency says death sentences carried out on pair who added industrial chemical to infant formula. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/nov/24/china-executes-milk-scandal-pair>.

⁵³⁴ “I’m sure you’re aware of the 2008 baby formula scandal in China. Six babies died. An estimated 400,000 babies became sick, many diagnosed with kidney stonesas a result of contaminated milk. Feihe was not one of the manufacturers responsible. However, last year, Chinese authorities discovered that seven batches of goat’s milk from three different companies carried excessive amounts of nitrate or selenium. 2 of them were Feihe. One sample produced by Shaanxi Feihe Guanshan Dairy [sic] Company Limited contained an amount of nitrate that was ten times the national safety standard... we’d like to ask the mayor if the company’s record is of any concern for him” (Email from Lu Zhou, Producer, CBC Toronto, to Christina Thomson, Assistant to the Mayor, City of Kingston, 2022, December 12. City of Kingston MFIPPA).

⁵³⁵ McGregor, J. (2018, October 12). *Trade deal concessions threaten jobs at Kingston, Ont., baby formula plant.* CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/feihe-future-usmca-1.4858338>.

⁵³⁶ Zoukis, C. (2018, February 8). Cheese Made Using Prison Labor Cut from Whole Foods. *Prison Legal News*. <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2018/feb/8/cheese-made-using-prison-labor-cut-whole-foods/>.

4.4. “GoC doesn’t have this experience” || The Dual-Barn Debacle

One of the main reasons for the rising costs of the prison farm program was CSC’s mistaken belief that cows and goats could be housed together in a dual-function barn. This barn was proposed to “realize efficiencies” by housing goat and cow operations “under one roof” and using the cow milk to “offset longer term kid feeding costs,” noting that “dairy cows and dairy goats are compatible livestock operations that in accordance with the association standards can be housed in one barn.”⁵³⁷ In fact, this is expressly prohibited by association standards. Ontario’s Milk Act states that “The milk in the milk house may be cow’s milk or goat’s milk, but the milk of both species may not both be present in the milk house at the same time.”⁵³⁸ Unaware of this regulation, the dual model was approved by Public Safety Minister Goodale on June 4, 2018, and announced by CSC on June 21, 2018, with MP Gerretsen declaring that the decision to add cows to the goat program was done “in the way that democracy promotes and expects us to do it in.”⁵³⁹ CORCAN “revised drawings for dairy barn to include both operations under one roof” and submitted the revised designs for approval by CSC Technical Services and Facilities (TSF).⁵⁴⁰ By August 2018, CORCAN learned that a dual function barn was impermissible: “operational and other reviews initially following announcement resulted in determination that the livestock operations would require 2 separate barns.”⁵⁴¹

There is no available record of CSC notifying Public Safety about the dual function barn error. There are six briefing notes from CSC to Public Safety in 2016 and 2017, but only one in 2018, which was the May 2018 briefing note requesting the Minister’s approval of the dual model. This is followed by a significant gap, with no further briefing notes appearing in ATI releases until nearly one year later, in April 2019. That briefing note – the only (released) one from 2019 – consists of three pages extolling the progress in planning and implementation, along with a single line under “Construction Projects” with a retroactive reference: “Based on CSC’s consultations, it was determined that two separate barns, one for each type of dairy operation, would facilitate construction and implementation of operations.”⁵⁴² The scale and severity of the error, and the absence of records from the time period in which the error would have been discovered and

⁵³⁷ CSC (2018, May 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada’s penitentiary farm operations*. CSC A-2019-00124.

⁵³⁸ Government of Ontario, Milk Act, R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 761, Milk and Milk Products, 14. (1), O. Reg. 392/99, s. 2 (1). <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/900761>.

⁵³⁹ Stafford, T. (2018, June 21). The cows are coming home. *Kingstonist*. <https://www.kingstonist.com/news/the-cows-are-coming-home-prison-farms-to-be-reinstated-at-both-joyceville-and-collins-bay-institutions/>.

⁵⁴⁰ Kelly Hartle, CEO, CORCAN (2020, May 29). *Penitentiary Farm Barn Construction Status Summary*. CSC A-2020-00407.

⁵⁴¹ Email from Kelly Hartle to CSC National Headquarters (2020, September 17). CSC A-2020-00407.

⁵⁴² CSC (2019, April 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Penitentiary farm program implementation*. CSC A-2019-00124.

reported, suggest that some records may have been withheld from ATI releases or destroyed, unless the information was relayed in ways that do not leave a written record, or not relayed at all.

Political complications arose in November 2019 when Ralph Goodale lost his seat as a Member of Parliament in the federal election, and therefore lost his position as Minister of Public Safety.⁵⁴³ A self-described “farm boy,”⁵⁴⁴ Goodale had been the primary proponent of prison farm restoration, alongside Liberal MPs Mark Gerretsen and Mark Holland.⁵⁴⁵ He was also responsible for appointing the organizers of Save Our Prison Farms to CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel, with whom he held frequent meetings before and after their appointment as advisors (see Chapter 2). On November 20, 2019, Goodale was replaced as Public Safety Minister by MP Bill Blair, a retired Toronto police chief. Blair served as Public Safety Minister for nearly two years, until October 26, 2021, yet CSC apparently issued only one (released) briefing note to Minister Blair about the prison farms. This briefing note was dated December 4, 2020, over a year into the new Minister’s mandate, and it outlined the increased costs and complexities of realizing the dual goat-and-cow model, with the recommendation that the Minister support CSC “in not proceeding, at this time, with the dairy goat operation” given “CORCAN’s financial situation.”⁵⁴⁶ Three months later, Minister Blair signed his approval, on March 3, 2021, two days before CSC announced the “temporary pause” of the goat program.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴³ Goodale’s election loss only resulted in the loss of his parliamentary seat and ministerial role, but not his influence within the government. In April 2021, Goodale was promoted to High Commissioner for Canada in the United Kingdom of Great Britain, a role in which he focuses heavily on international dairy trade negotiations (Global Affairs Canada, 2024, January 25. *The Honourable Ralph Goodale, High Commissioner for Canada in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland... Biography*. https://www.international.gc.ca/country-pays/united_kingdom-royaume_uni/london-londres-rep.aspx?lang=eng; Also: Le Couteur, M., 2024, July 5. *Canada’s envoy in London hopeful Britain’s Labour party will restart trade talks*. CTV National News. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/canada-s-envoy-in-london-hopeful-britain-s-labour-party-will-restart-trade-talks-1.6953479>). In a separate role, Goodale was named Canada’s official representative to the Ismaili Imam in December 2023, “a supra-national entity, representing the succession of Imams since the time of the Prophet Muhammad” led by “His Highness the Aga Khan” (The Ismaili Imam: <https://ismaili.imamat/>). The Aga Khan is a close personal friend of Prime Minister Trudeau, and in 2017, Trudeau was found guilty of numerous violations of conflict of interest, and nearly faced charges of fraud, over his involvement with the Aga Khan: “The Aga Khan affair was a political scandal in Canada involving Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. In 2017, Trudeau was found guilty of violating... the Federal Conflict of Interest Act by accepting private-island vacations, gifts, and flights from the Aga Khan, a philanthropist and spiritual leader of the Shia Ismaili religion. This was deemed significant as the Aga Khan Foundation, a registered lobby, had received over \$50 million of federal funding in 2016... The Royal Canadian Mounted Police determined there were ‘reasonable grounds’ to think fraud may have been committed. They considered charging Trudeau; however, they did not do so” (Aga Khan affair. 2024, January 15. In *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aga_Khan_affair).

⁵⁴⁴ PSC (2016, August 17). *Transcript: Town Hall regarding re-establishing prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions - 2016-08-16, 18:00 ET*. CSC A-2018-00310.

⁵⁴⁵ Holland, M. (Host). (2017, September 12). *The Mark Holland Podcast - Episode #1 ‘Prison Farms’ w/ Mark Gerretsen*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tWZkpGREYVc>.

⁵⁴⁶ CSC (2020, December 4). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Penitentiary Farm Program*. CSC A-2021-00213.

⁵⁴⁷ CSC (2021, March 5). *News release: Correctional Service Canada provides update on the Penitentiary Farm Program*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/news/2021/03/correctional-service-canada-provides-update-on-the-penitentiary-farm-program.html>.

Details of the increased costs are redacted from the December 2020 briefing note to Minister Blair, but other documents obtained through Access to Information reveal the trajectory of escalating costs since the June 2018 decision to add cows. The \$4.3 million federal grant was just for start-up costs for equipment and operations for the first two years, as the program was expected to become financially self-sustaining by the third year (2020-2021) and be fully implemented within five years (2023-2024).⁵⁴⁸ Below is a list of the rising cost estimates for the construction of dairy facility infrastructure, not included in the publicly announced \$4.3 million budget:

- \$5 million (February 2018): The original cost estimate for the goats-only barn, “based on preliminary 2017 estimates,” not including site work and CSC administrative costs, while “design and construction was proposed to be completed through CORCAN.”⁵⁴⁹ In addition to this, there was potential for a further \$1.2 million investment should a decision be made to build a small processing plant,⁵⁵⁰ bringing the total maximum original infrastructure cost to \$6.2 million, “noting that \$1.2 million of this amount is a decision point that does not have to proceed if not supported.”⁵⁵¹
- \$9.75 million (May 2018): The revised cost estimate for the “dual function” goat and cow barn (the expansion of the facility to include cows was estimated to add \$3.55 million above the maximum original infrastructure cost of \$6.2 million).⁵⁵²

⁵⁴⁸ CSC (2018, May 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada’s penitentiary farm operations*. CSC A-2019-00124.

⁵⁴⁹ Email from Kelly Hartle, CEO, CORCAN (2020, September 17). CSC A-2020-00407. The fact that there were “preliminary 2017 estimates” for goat barn construction, at a time when officials were entertaining proposals from the public for the new prison farm model, is further evidence that the decision for goat milk production was pre-determined, and the public consultations were a staged engagement process.

⁵⁵⁰ CSC’s May 2018 briefing note contains the only mention of the optional \$1.2 million processing plant in ATI records, suggesting that the option was not supported. It’s not specified what the processing plant would have been for, but since Joyceville already had a slaughterhouse (commonly referred to as a “processing plant”), it was likely a reference to a milk processing plant. As documented earlier in this report, the Prison Farm Advisory Panel had anticipated that the new prison farms would produce artisan cheese for prisons and the military (the model endorsed by Save Our Prison Farms). This may be the reason why CSC included the option of a small processing plant in original cost estimates. At the same time, CSC was clear that “The farm operations will not have an impact on CSC’s Food Services Modernization,” meaning that food from the prison farms – whether milk or cheese or beef production – would not be used within prisons, effectively ruling out the Save Our Prison Farms model. This would explain why the \$1.2 million processing plant option does not appear in any further documents.

⁵⁵¹ CSC (2018, May 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada’s penitentiary farm operations*. CSC A-2019-00124.

⁵⁵² CSC (2018, May 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada’s penitentiary farm operations*. CSC A-2019-00124.

- \$15.2 million (October 2018): The estimated cost of the separate cattle barn (\$6 million) and goat barn (\$5 million) plus additional sub-projects that CSC had identified, such as the demolition of existing structures where the new facilities were to be constructed.⁵⁵³
- \$18 million (July 2019): CSC’s revised forecasted budget, increased from the previously approved budget of \$15.2 million, noting that “this estimate requires further review as each project scope of work has yet to be confirmed [and] the estimated costs of the two [goat and cow] barns are preliminary planning estimates only. PSPC and the Design Consultant must gather the project scope and complete the concept design before having an idea of an estimated cost of the project.” This investment constituted nearly a quarter (22%) of CSC’s National Projects funding allocation. The reason given for the increased costs is that “the scope of the Farm Program was not clearly defined in 2018.”⁵⁵⁴
- \$20 million (January 2020): CSC’s revised cost estimate.⁵⁵⁵
- \$21.08 million (May 2020): CSC’s revised cost estimate “not including consultants and PSPC fees.”⁵⁵⁶
- \$25.9 million (September 2020): CSC’s revised cost estimate for construction of the cattle and goat barns only.⁵⁵⁷

When infrastructure cost estimates reached \$26 million in September 2020, two and a half years into implementation and no construction having started on dairy facilities, Public Safety was pressing CSC for answers:

“Public Safety DM [Deputy Minister] has requested an update brief from CSC on the Correctional Farms... Why the Correctional farms are now valued at \$26M? (cost increase from the original broadcasted \$6-9M) Why the work has not started before?”⁵⁵⁸

Not wanting to “fingerpoint anyone,” CSC brainstormed “ideas” for how to answer Public Safety’s questions.⁵⁵⁹ CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle cautioned that this brainstorm was “highly confidential” and “not

⁵⁵³ CSC (2019, July 25). *CORCAN Farm Program increase from 2018 to 2019*. CSC A-2019-00317. Later, CSC moved the construction site onto the pasture fields as a result of the requirement for separate dairy facilities for the cows and goats. The demolition of the older structures on the existing concrete pad did not take place.

⁵⁵⁴ CSC (2019, August 1). *CORCAN Farm Program increase from 2018 to 2019*. CSC A-2020-00131.

⁵⁵⁵ Email from Ghislain Sauv , Director General, Technical Services and Facilities, CSC (2020, May 27). *Subject: FW: Joyceville Farms Project Update*. CSC A-2020-00407.

⁵⁵⁶ Email from Pierre Carmona, Director of CORCAN Construction (2020, May 27). CSC A-2020-00131.

⁵⁵⁷ Email from J r mie Emond, Senior Director, Facilities, CSC (2020, September 22). CSC A-2020-00407.

⁵⁵⁸ Email from J r mie Emond, Senior Director, Facilities, CSC (2020, September 17). CSC A-2020-00407.

⁵⁵⁹ Email from J r mie Emond, Senior Director, Facilities, CSC (2020, September 17). CSC A-2020-00407.

to be discussed outside of the group on this email at this time,” for “a variety of reasons and the sensitivities on this file.”⁵⁶⁰ The reasons they came up with for the delays and rising costs included:

- “Complex construction, PSPC and GoC [Government of Canada] doesn’t have this experience.”⁵⁶¹
- “Design work took longer, expertise is rare.”
- “Training farms to ensure inmate are getting the right vocational training.”
- “Environmental compliance.”
- “Site preparation (high water table).”
- “A major capital project normally takes between 5 and 7 years from concept to occupations.”
- “COVID-19 delays.”⁵⁶²

All of these points would have been exacerbated by the switch from a goats-only operation to one that included cows. The point regarding inmate vocational training is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5, but for the purposes of this chapter, it is important to note that CSC’s original hope that it could use CORCAN prison labour for the construction of infrastructure was a major cited benefit of the prison farm investment, and it was equally a major error that contributed to the escalation of costs and delays, a matter discussed next.

4.5. “The soap opera continues” || Construction Costs & Delays

CSC envisioned that it could work within the budgetary limits set by the federal government because it saw potential to save on expenses by using prisoners for construction labour: “As CORCAN will be utilized for all infrastructure, providing offender employment, there is potential for additional cost savings.”⁵⁶³ This did not come to fruition. Neither CORCAN nor prisoners have been involved in the construction of new dairy

⁵⁶⁰ Email from Kelly Hartle, CEO, CORCAN (2020, September 23). CSC A-2020-00407.

⁵⁶¹ This statement stands in contrast to an earlier claim by CORCAN, when PSPC was reporting feedback from goat bidders who questioned “what expertise the CSC representatives have that warrant their opinion as authoritative in regards to assigning/deducting evaluation points,” CORCAN’s response was “bidders can always believe that Government of Canada does not have expertise for certain things. CORCAN has the necessary expertise” (Email exchange involving Heather Bellmore, Team Leader, PSPC, and Kelly Hartle, CORCAN CEO, 2019, October 24. CSC A-2020-00131).

⁵⁶² Despite listing COVID-19 delays as a contributing factor, the dairy facilities were originally projected to be completed prior to the start of the pandemic. Moreover, throughout 2020, CSC insisted that the pandemic would have no effect on implementation timelines: “At this point, there has been no impact with regard to construction timelines. CSC and Public Services and Procurement Canada continue to work together to design the new barns for Joyceville Institution that will house the dairy goat and dairy cow operations. We anticipate construction on the new barns to commence in 2020” (Email statement from Marie-Pier Lécuyer, Communications Advisor, CSC, 2020, May 15).

⁵⁶³ CSC (2018, May 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada’s penitentiary farm operations*. CSC A-2019-00124.

facility infrastructure, although CORCAN and prisoners have worked on some smaller projects such as the renovation of a shed⁵⁶⁴ and a Sugar Shack.⁵⁶⁵ Construction for the cow dairy barn at Joyceville Institution was eventually contracted out for a rate more than double the prison farms' \$4.3 million five-year budget, at \$10,486,900.⁵⁶⁶ This was ten times the standard rate for a barn of that size and style, according to industry experts,⁵⁶⁷ and it was actually over two million *less* than CSC had obtained approval to spend: "Estimated tender value is: \$12,500,000 plus HST (contingency not included)."⁵⁶⁸

CORCAN's expectation that prison labour would be used for construction was not only to achieve cost efficiency but to provide prisoners with "valuable" construction experience: "The re-opening of penitentiary farms [is] providing offenders with valuable employment skills though involvement in... building of necessary infrastructure."⁵⁶⁹ The promise of prisoners being included in the construction process collapsed in October 2018 when, after receiving CSC's revised concept drawings for the dual-function barn, Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) took the project out of CORCAN's hands, "requested to obtain design services," and "determined that construction for new barns and site work would be tendered."⁵⁷⁰ Publicly, officials were still talking about prisoners being involved in the construction process while CSC and PSPC were developing tenders to contract out construction.⁵⁷¹ Internally, CSC was struggling to revise media lines to reflect the change of plan while still maintaining the political illusion. In one draft revision, an unidentified CSC employee noted in a side comment that:

"Offenders will not be employed under the construction tender. CORCAN may employ offenders once the construction contract is completed to provide additional work to the site including landscaping, groundskeeping, fencing, etc."⁵⁷²

⁵⁶⁴ Email from Jordan Riddle, CORCAN Construction (2019, July 31). CSC A-2019-00317.

⁵⁶⁵ CORCAN (n.d.). *Statement of Work: PP-56 Sugar Shack: Renovation to upgrade for future use*. Objective: "to renovate & upgrade the Farm equipment repair building to accommodate for future use as a Maple Syrup and honey facility. The current building has been used... for crate building shop for the last couple of years." CSC A-2021-00381.

⁵⁶⁶ CanadaBuys (2022, March 11). *Construction of Dairy Facility and Cattle Barn at Joyceville Institution*. <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/award-notice/eq734-221264001pwl>.

⁵⁶⁷ Neufeld, C. (2023, December 6). Prison Farms Fraught with Problems, Delays, Cost Overruns, and Aimlessness. *Frontenac News*. <https://www.frontenacnews.ca/item/16949-prison-farms-fraught-with-problems-delays-cost-overruns-and-aimlessness>.

⁵⁶⁸ Email from Lawrence Yarema, Project Manager, PSPC (2021, September 28). PSPC A-2021-00436.

⁵⁶⁹ PSC (2018, May 9). *Response to [Evolve's] Petition No. 421-02359. Subject: Correctional facilities*. Sponsored by MP Mark Gerretsen. Signed by Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale. PSC A-2018-00451.

⁵⁷⁰ Hartle, K. (2020, May 29). *Penitentiary Farm Barn Construction Status Summary*. CSC A-2020-00407.

⁵⁷¹ "What is great is that inmates will be involved in all aspects of the operations, including the actual renovation and construction associated with the reopening" (PSC, 2019, August 15. *Speaking Notes for MP Karen McCrimmon: Event - Launch of CSC Penitentiary Farms program, Kingston, ON, August 15, 2019*. CSC A-2019-00325).

⁵⁷² CSC (n.d.). *Media Lines: Request for Proposal - Cattle Barn - Penitentiary Farm Program*. CSC A-2021-00381.

In other words, instead of gaining “valuable” construction experience, CSC anticipated that prisoners “may” gain the opportunity to do odd jobs after a private company completes the construction work. Even this is open to doubt when the “scope of work” in cow barn tender includes landscaping.⁵⁷³ Prisoners have, however, done some fence work as part of the prison farm program.⁵⁷⁴ Furthermore, CSC has issued tenders for pesticide application,⁵⁷⁵ combining and trucking,⁵⁷⁶ and installing grain bins on behalf of CORCAN Construction.⁵⁷⁷ All of this calls into question what employment opportunities remain available to prisoners in this agricultural training program other than generic work,⁵⁷⁸ such as fence repair and shed renovations, and what role or relevance CORCAN is left with in the overall project.⁵⁷⁹

Another unforeseen factor that contributed to the delays in getting the dairy facilities built was the fire code. CORCAN had purposefully developed the designs for the cattle and goat barns to incorporate vocational training classrooms for participating prisoners.⁵⁸⁰ This was a key selling point for CSC and featured in the

⁵⁷³ PSPC (2021, November 22). *Requisition No. EQ734-221264: Construction of Dairy Facility and Cattle Barn at Joyceville Institution*. “The work includes but is not limited to: a large purpose built dairy cattle barn including office spaces, a manure holding tank... access roads, earthworks and surface drainage structures, area/street lighting, concrete walkways, and landscaping.” PSPC A-2021-00436.

⁵⁷⁴ A prisoner alleged in a media interview (confirmed visually by the reporter) that the fencing was installed upside down (Cumming, I., 2020, October 13. Former dairy farmer watches government at work from his cell: Prisoner is appalled by what he sees as examples of government largesse. *Ontario Farmer*).

⁵⁷⁵ CanadaBuys (2023, September 13). *Pesticide application services for Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution*. <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/tender-notice/ws4092314045-doc4209875524>. ATI records show that the pesticide application tender failed repeatedly: “There’s now been 4 attempts at tendering [but] there were no bids... we will have to come up with a different strategy” (Email from Sandra Wilford, Senior Procurement Officer, CSC, 2023, September 12. CSC A-2023-00388).

⁵⁷⁶ CanadaBuys (2023, January 31). *Combining and Trucking Services*. <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/tender-notice/pw-23-01024147>.

⁵⁷⁷ CanadaBuys (2023, September 1). *Grain Bins and Related Equipment – Supply and Install*. <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/tender-notice/cb-8725-94384198>.

⁵⁷⁸ The Correctional Investigator of Canada has called on Public Safety to improve vocational training opportunities, reporting that CSC’s “futile,” “make-work” training programs are “not at all in tune with today’s job market,” a problem that “seriously puts into question [CSC’s] legal obligation to prepare and assist offenders for release... It is concerning that the majority of offenders who were interviewed for this investigation working in CORCAN, were learning very few skills that would benefit them in obtaining a job in the community.” The response from Public Safety was to point to “the relaunch of CSC’s farm employment programs at Collins Bay and Joyceville institutions” as the lone example of how CSC is improving in this area. The problem of CSC continuing “to maintain and invest in obsolete industries and infrastructure” was condemned by the Correctional Investigator as “insoluble” (Zinger, I., 2020, June 26. *Office of the Correctional Investigator Annual Report 2019-2020*. Office of the Correctional Investigator. <https://oci-bec.gc.ca/en/content/office-correctional-investigator-annual-report-2019-2020>).

⁵⁷⁹ CORCAN has failed to demonstrate that it is competent, effective, or financially viable. Moreover, as demonstrated in Chapter 2, CORCAN has been functioning as a Special Operating Agency without a legislated Advisory Board for the past decade, and the Public Safety Ministry has deliberately maintained that lack of independent oversight. Since CORCAN’s status as a Special Operating Agency is what permits it to legally engage in public-private partnerships, one wonders if this is the role that CORCAN ultimately plays, knowingly or otherwise, in the federal government’s ambitions for an industrial goat dairy operation to subsidize goat milk production for Feihe.

⁵⁸⁰ “The operation of the two facilities will be managed by CORCAN on behalf of CSC. Skills development training for offenders will be undertaken within the facility. Each barn will have a dedicated operations area designed to suit the following activities of operations staff, and trainees: Office Spaces (including Supervisors Office and Veterinary Office), Break Room [and] Conference rooms/classrooms” (CSC, 2020, January 15. *Design Consideration for the Joyceville Institution Farm Project*. CSC A-2020-00131).

Impact Assessment notice.⁵⁸¹ As it turned out, this was another major error. Just as preparations were being made to finally issue a tender for construction of the cow dairy barn in early 2020, CSC's Fire Protection Division reviewed the design and determined that the presence of vocational training classrooms would mean that construction would need to adhere to the more stringent National Building Code (NBC) instead of the National Farm Building Code (NFBC) which did not require sprinkler systems, fire alarms, and the use of non-combustible building materials (emphasis theirs):

“While the occupant load densities for the Cattle and Goat facilities are within the allowable limits for applying the NFBC (1955), the Joyceville Institution Farm Facilities may not classify as purely farm facilities due to the presence of training activities... applying the National Farm Building Code of Canada (1995) for the building design of the *Cattle and Goat Barn facilities* is not supported.”⁵⁸²

Instead of more delays, more expenses, and another complete overhaul of the engineering plans in order to meet the fire code regulations, the decision was made to simply remove the classrooms for offender programs and proceed with combustible building materials.⁵⁸³ The alternative recommended by CSC was to explore “possible vocational training” in the old beef feedlot buildings instead of demolishing them.⁵⁸⁴ To further cut costs and accelerate implementation, CSC also eliminated the “green” aspects of the farm plan, including solar panels and an anaerobic digester, and withdrew the recommendation for a “Net Zero” design. As outlined by Dawne Flaborea, CSC’s National Manager, Water Quality and Environmental Protection:

⁵⁸¹ “As part of the re-opening of CORCAN farms at Joyceville Institution, Ontario, new barns will be built for dairy operations. The barns will be of 9,547 m² in total size, and will house the operations for both cow and goat dairy farming. The barns will also include offices for staff and classrooms for offender programs” (IAAC, 2021, March 18. *Joyceville Institution Cattle and Goat Barn Construction*. <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/80844>).

⁵⁸² Email from Amar Beilouni, Deputy Chief Fire Protection Engineer, CSC Fire Protection Division, CSC (2020, January 15). *Subject: RE:... Joyceville Institution Farm - Concept Design Review Files...* CSC A-2020-00131.

⁵⁸³ Email from Lawrence Yarema, Project Manager, PSPC (2020, June 2). CSC A-2020-00131.

⁵⁸⁴ PSPC (2021, August 31). *CSC- Cow Barn & Manure Tank (Document Set 2)*. Taylor Hazel Architects. Records show that CSC had originally considered a pre-fabricated barn model, which would have substantially saved time and money, but for reasons that are redacted in ATI releases, CSC did not proceed with this option. It is possible that the desire to incorporate vocational training classrooms, and to involve prisoners in the construction process, may have contributed to the decision not to proceed with pre-fabricated construction. If so, this would be ironic, given that circumstances resulted in the classrooms being eliminated and prisoners not being involved in the construction. There is some evidence to support this theory. Multiple emails from 2019 show that “pre-fab” construction was being considered: “An option to keep the pre-fab building within CSC authority is to build the office section at a later date, so keeping the barn building to what is essential” (Email from Brigitte Ng, Director, Capital Projects Implementation, CSC, 2019, June 11. *Subject: FW: Procurement of the pre-fab Cattle Barn and Goat Barn within CSC authority?* CSC A-2020-00132). Emails from 2020, however, show that the decision was made not to proceed with that option: “The reasons why PSPC is reluctant to go with the Pre Fab building” (Email from Hossam Abbass, Design Coordinator, Technical Services and Facilities Branch, CSC, 2020, April 16, forwarding an email [content redacted] from Lawrence Yarema, Project Manager, PSPC, 2020, April 15. *Subject: ... II Cattle & Goat Barns - PSPC Response to Prefab Shell Concept for Cattle Barn*. CSC A-2020-00131).

“Sustainability / Solar: In line with the Government of Canada's Greening Government Strategy... the Environmental Protection Program routinely recommends that projects support the implementation of technologies to reduce GHG emissions and the overall environmental impact. However, the very tight timeline for this project and the manner in which budget was publically [sic] announced prior to project specifications being developed, has impacted CSC's ability to properly assess the cost/benefit of certain environmental technologies [and] unfortunately the project schedule/deadline does not allow for this. As a result, for this project/buildings, we are not recommending a Net Zero design.

Additionally, considering the potential impact to project schedule [and] cost... we are not recommending the installation of solar panels on either building now or in the future.

Sustainability / Anaerobic Digesters: Finally, we are also not recommending the design/build of an anaerobic digester to treat the farm waste.”⁵⁸⁵

By 2021, delays in dairy facility construction were becoming quite serious. Three years into implementation, CSC had not only failed to start construction, but did not even have a procurement tender ready to solicit a private contractor to perform the work. Publicly, however, CSC maintained that implementation was proceeding “full force.”⁵⁸⁶ Pressure was mounting as this “very political”⁵⁸⁷ project “got off on an awkward start procurement plan wise,” and had escalated to “super-high priority”⁵⁸⁸ status. In September 2021, PSPC’s Project Manager, Lawrence Yarema, wrote that CSC’s farm procurement was “already flagged as sensitive with PSPC,” yet CSC was urging PSPC to proceed “without further delay.”⁵⁸⁹ An email from Yarema, listing CSC’s arguments for escalating the priority of a cow barn above other federal procurement projects, provided the following reasons for the urgency:

- “Why urgent?: ...It is essential for the provision of new, adequate and industry standard accommodations for the existing livestock temporarily housed at Collins Bay Institution.”

⁵⁸⁵ Email from Dawne Flaborea, National Manager, Water Quality and Environmental Protection, CSC (2020, January 8). CSC-A-2020-00131.

⁵⁸⁶ When asked by *The Kingston Whig-Standard* in 2020 if implementation was proceeding “on schedule,” CSC’s Regional Deputy Commissioner answered: “The buildup for the farms has been going strong [and] I know the plans for the acquisition of the goat farm are continuing into 2020 as well, so a full-force launch here” (MacAlpine, I., 2020, January 3. Q & A with Scott Harris, regional deputy commissioner for Correctional Service Canada. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/news/local-news/q-a-with-scott-harris-regional-deputy-commissioner-for-correctional-service-canada>).

⁵⁸⁷ Email from Gina Brewer, Director, Contracting and Material Services, CSC (2020, January 20). Subject: RE: BF January 22 - ACTION REQUIRED Hot Issues. CSC A-2019-00325.

⁵⁸⁸ Email from Lauren Woodhall, Supply Officer, PSPC (2020, June 22). Subject: RE: ...CSC Cow and Goat Barns. PSPC A-2021-00436.

⁵⁸⁹ Email from Lawrence Yarema, Project Manager, PSPC (2021, September 10). Subject: RE: ...JI Farm - Cow Barn tender... urgency / impact of delay. PSPC A-2021-00436.

- “Health and Safety: Temporary dairy cattle facilities and equipment at Collins Bay Institution are not to industry standard.”
- “CSC budget implications: ...Virtually no work being accomplished.”
- “Environmental implications: Temporary dairy cattle facilities and equipment for handling and treating animal waste at Collins Bay Institution are not to industry standard.”
- “Other key issues: Animal welfare conditions are not at optimal industry standard. Interim animal care operations are not as efficient as they will be.”⁵⁹⁰

To complicate matters, a federal election was held in September 2021, resulting in another shuffle of Prime Minister Trudeau’s cabinet. Public Safety Minister Bill Blair was replaced by Marco Mendicino, a former federal prosecutor. The new Minister took a “keen interest” in the “soap opera” of the prison farm file, and his office demanded “brutal but realistic” answers from CSC:

“The soap opera continues with the tender posting... This file is of keen interest to the office of our new minister; our credibility has suffered repeated blows with the ongoing delays. Can I trust the latest update, or will there be another delay... I would prefer a response that’s brutal but realistic, over one that’s infatuated with optimism.”⁵⁹¹

PSPC was made aware of the seriousness of the barn situation for CSC: “The DG [Director General] from CSC has advised that they are and have lost credibility with their new ministers [sic] office... This has been escalated [and] it will be escalated higher than that today.”⁵⁹²

ATI records show that CSC blamed PSPC for the delays. To provide an example, CSC’s Senior Director Facilities, François Sauvé, wrote in an email:

⁵⁹⁰ Email from Lawrence Yarema, Project Manager, PSPC (2021, September 10). *Subject: RE: ...JI Farm - Cow Barn tender... urgency / impact of delay.* PSPC A-2021-00436. CSC’s arguments did not seem convincing to PSPC, as Yarema added: “PS. I was really hoping CSC would give me some better lines...”

⁵⁹¹ “Le roman-savon de l’affichage pour l’appel d’offre se poursuit... Ce dossier est d’un intérêt vif au bureau de notre nouveau ministre; notre crédibilité a subi des coups répété [sic] avec les délais qui se succèdent. Est-ce que je peux avoir confiance dans la dernière mise à jour, ou est-ce qu’il y aura un autre délai... Je préférerais une réponse brutale mais réaliste, plutôt qu’une entiché d’optimisme” (Email from Ghislain Sauvé, Director General, Technical Services and Facilities, CSC, 2021, November 16. *Subject: ...JI Farms - Cattle Barn Tender.* CSC A-2021-00381).

⁵⁹² Email from Kent Watson, Regional Client Service Director, PSPC (2021, November 17). *Subject: Kingston Farms project.* PSPC A-2021-00436.

“In my exchanges with PSPC these past few days, I have made it clear that the date they give us must not shift again to the right and we were not happy with how they were handling this file. Hopefully they understood the message.”⁵⁹³

On the other side, PSPC’s Project Manager was commenting that “I fully understand their exasperation and I share it.”⁵⁹⁴ Numerous ATI records show PSPC expressing frustration at how CORCAN was handling the multiple (and constantly changing) procurement files involved in the prison farm project (dairy cows, beef cattle, goats, and barn construction) and ignoring PSPC’s recommendations.⁵⁹⁵

After years of delays and finger-pointing, on November 25, 2021, PSPC finally issued a tender on behalf of CSC for construction of a cow barn at Joyceville Institution.⁵⁹⁶ On March 11, 2022, the contract was awarded to Strong Bros Construction for \$10,486,900.⁵⁹⁷ This is significantly higher than CSC’s original estimate of \$3.55 million in extra costs to add cows into an expanded “dual-function” goat barn, and higher than the revised \$6 million estimate for CORCAN to construct the separate cow barn. The \$10.5 million cow barn will house 30 cows initially,⁵⁹⁸ under an as-yet-unconfirmed research quota arrangement,⁵⁹⁹ and eventually expand to “approximately 55-60 dairy cows” whose “excess” milk will “offset some longer term kid feeding costs” once the goat operation is established.⁶⁰⁰ According to industry experts, a barn of this

⁵⁹³ Email from François Sauvé, Senior Director Facilities, Technical Services and Facilities, CSC (2021, November 18). *Subject: FW: New Issue for Tender Date - Joyceville Farms*. CSC A-2021-00381.

⁵⁹⁴ Email from Lawrence Yarema, Project Manager, PSPC (2021, November 17). *Subject: RE: Kingston Farms project*. PSPC A-2021-00436.

⁵⁹⁵ For example, in one heavily redacted email exchange in 2019 between a PSPC Manager and Director, there is discussion of “escalating the issue” of PSPC’s goat procurement recommendations, anticipating “push back from CORCAN.” Asked whether there are “other levels of management in Corcan” other than CEO Kelly Hartle that could be engaged, the response was “I don’t think they are a particularly big organization” (Emails between Rick Calich, Manager, and Louise Kelly, Director, PSPC, 2019, May 10 & 13. *Subject: Re: Goat issues for further discussion*. PSPC A-2019-00259).

⁵⁹⁶ CanadaBuys (2021, November 25). *Construction of Dairy Facility and Cattle Barn at Joyceville Institution*. <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/tender-notice/pw-pwl-048-2587>.

⁵⁹⁷ CanadaBuys (2022, March 11). *Construction of Dairy Facility and Cattle Barn at Joyceville Institution*. <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/award-notice/eq734-221264001pwl>.

⁵⁹⁸ CSC (2020, January 15). *Design Consideration for the Joyceville Institution Farm Project*. CSC A-2020-00131. 30 cows are approximately the number that could be milked with the 32 kg of quota that was said to have been secured from Dairy Farmers of Ontario (which DFO has denied): “A new joint cow and goat milking barn will be constructed across the street from the Joyceville Institution. The plan is that inmates would build the barn as part of their rehabilitation programming... Dairy Farmers of Ontario has donated some 32 kilograms of industrial dairy quota to Correctional Service Canada, which is enough for milking a herd of 30-35 cows, Correctional Service Canada officials said” (Johnson, K., 2018, June 21. ‘The cows are coming home’: two prison farms to reopen in Kingston. *iPolitics*. <https://www.ipolitics.ca/news/the-cows-are-coming-home-two-prison-farms-to-reopen-in-kingston>. PCO A-2022-00162).

⁵⁹⁹ In a January 2024 meeting, CORCAN confirmed to Evolve that quota had not yet been secured from Dairy Farmers of Ontario. As of February 2024, Dairy Farmers of Ontario stated that it had “no new or additional information to share on this matter” (Email statement from DFO, 2024, February 9).

⁶⁰⁰ CSC (2018, May 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada’s penitentiary farm operations*. CSC A-2019-00124.

size could have been built “ten cents to the dollar” for an estimated \$1.4 million.⁶⁰¹ The \$10.5 million cost of the cow barn was even further removed from early estimates provided to CSC in 2016 by the directors of the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op who were appointed to CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel: “Should new barn construction be required, we are aware of two local family farms that recently constructed tie stall barns for about 80 cows; each was built for less than one million dollars.”⁶⁰²

The extravagant cost and extraordinary complexity of what would have been a simple barn-build for anyone operating outside of the limitations of federal procurement and the expanse of federal budgets, was not lost on PSPC staff. In preparing to issue the barn construction tender, under the original title “Joyceville Institution Construct Dairy Cattle Barn,” PSPC Communications representative Graham Holt noted that “dairy cattle barn” does not sound impressive “and does not seem to justify the cost”; instead, to “mitigate some questions and negative attitudes from the start,” Holt suggested the alternate wording “Dairy Production Facility and Cattle Barn.”⁶⁰³ PSPC Project Manager Lawrence Yarema replied, suggesting that “we skip the word ‘Production’ because that intimates that it will be operating in competition with local business as opposed to being primarily a vocational experience for inmates (which is in keeping with what ‘pro’ side of the public has been promoting.”⁶⁰⁴ Holt answered: “Dairy Facility works for me, so long as it isn’t just ‘barn’.”⁶⁰⁵

As the budget exceeded real world dimensions, so did the construction timeline. Under the original plan for CORCAN to complete construction, CORCAN projected that construction of the cow barn would be completed in 12 months; later, the same 12-month timeline was originally projected by PSPC.⁶⁰⁶ By the time the construction contract was awarded, that estimate had extended to 18 months: “The contractor took control of the site at Joyceville Institution on March 28, 2022. Construction on the new cattle barn is expected to begin in April [2022] and be completed in October 2023.” By December 2023, construction was still far from complete, a matter that was worsened when the structure – in the framing stage at the time

⁶⁰¹ Neufeld, C. (2023, December 6). Prison Farms Fraught with Problems, Delays, Cost Overruns, and Aimlessness. *Frontenac News*. <https://www.frontenacnews.ca/item/16949-prison-farms-fraught-with-problems-delays-cost-overruns-and-aimlessness>.

⁶⁰² *A Model for the Restoration of the Prison Farm Program at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institutions submitted by directors of the Pen Farm Herd Co-op, Kingston* (2016, September 1). CSC A-2019-00085.

⁶⁰³ Email from Graham Holt, Communications, PSPC (2021, November 19). PSPC A-2021-00436.

⁶⁰⁴ Email from Lawrence Yarema, Project Manager, PSPC (2021, November 19). PSPC A-2021-00436.

⁶⁰⁵ Email from Graham Holt, Communications, PSPC (2021, November 19). PSPC A-2021-00436.

⁶⁰⁶ “2018-07: original plan to have CORCAN construction complete the projects with a completion date for the dairy cow barn by June 2019... [Later] PSPC provided construction schedule showing 12-month duration for cattle barn construction” (Kelly Hartle, CEO, CORCAN, 2020, May 29. *Penitentiary Farm Barn Construction Status Summary: Penitentiary Farm Implementation Timeline*. CSC A-2020-00407).

– collapsed due to a windstorm.⁶⁰⁷ The revised construction completion date was set for April 1, 2024, which is also the date that CSC anticipated that its cow dairy research program would begin.⁶⁰⁸ By April 2024, CSC still had not secured research quota to begin cow dairy operations, and the construction completion was set back again: “The completion of the [cow] barn and hand over to CSC is anticipated to be completed in June 2024 with cow operations to commence approximately one month after the construction has completed.”⁶⁰⁹ As of June 2024, the anticipated date of cow barn completion “is now July 2024,”⁶¹⁰ and “the current anticipated start date for milking operations is September 2024.”⁶¹¹

By the time the cow barn is finished, it will have been under construction for 27 months, or more. By the time dairy operations begin, CSC’s will have kept cows in “temporary housing” for over five years. Compounding the level of irresponsibility, the costs associated with bringing the prison farms to fruition (or failing to do so) have not been systematically tracked.

4.6. “Not systematically tracked” || Tracking the Costs

Since 2021, Evolve has submitted periodic media requests to CSC on prison farm spending. Below is a tracking of CSC’s disclosed direct spending only,⁶¹² providing a measure of how costs have changed over time:

- \$6.6 million (January 2021): “In 2018, the government allocated \$4.3 million of new funds over five years for the reopening of the farm operations. To date, CSC has invested approximately \$2.4M for facilities and has incurred \$2.7M in expenditures for implementation and operations, in addition to \$1.5M invested in capital equipment.”⁶¹³

⁶⁰⁷ Statement by CSC’s Farm Supervisor Tiffany Babcock during Evolve’s tour of the Joyceville prison farm on November 15, 2023. Also: Cumming, I. (2023, November 28). Still under construction, prison farms regain their shape. *Ontario Farmer*.

⁶⁰⁸ Statement by CSC’s Farm Supervisor Tiffany Babcock during Evolve’s tour of the Joyceville prison farm on November 15, 2023. CSC’s tender for Veterinary Services at Joyceville Institution also had a start date of April 1, 2024 (CanadaBuys, 2024, February 1. *Veterinary Services*. <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/tender-notice/cb-879-27934359>).

⁶⁰⁹ Email statement from Kevin Antonucci, Senior Communications Advisor, CSC (2024, April 8).

⁶¹⁰ Email statement from Esther Mailhot, Senior Advisor, Issues Management and Media Relations, CSC (2024, June 12).

⁶¹¹ Email statement from Esther Mailhot, Senior Advisor, Issues Management and Media Relations, CSC (2024, June 11).

⁶¹² Through Access to Information, Evolve has accessed numerous invoices for procurement and consultants revealing millions in undisclosed costs not included in CSC’s reporting.

⁶¹³ Email statement from Kyle Lawlor, Senior Communications Advisor, CSC (2021, January 22).

- \$8.8 million (November 2021): “To date, CSC has invested approximately \$3.9M for facilities and has incurred \$3.4M in expenditures for implementation and operations, in addition to the \$1.5M invested in capital equipment.”⁶¹⁴
- \$9.47 million (March 2022): “To date, CSC has invested approximately \$4.27M for facilities and has incurred \$3.7M in expenditures for implementation and operations, in addition to the \$1.5M invested in capital equipment.”⁶¹⁵
- \$13.1 million (September 2022): “To date, CSC has invested approximately \$7.2M for facilities and has incurred \$4.3M in expenditures for implementation and operations, in addition to the \$1.6M invested in capital equipment.”⁶¹⁶
- \$16.3 million (February 2023): “CSC has invested approximately \$9.9M for facilities and has incurred \$4.7M in expenditures for implementation and operations, in addition to the \$1.7M invested in capital equipment.”⁶¹⁷
- \$20.9 million (October 2023): “To date, CSC has invested approximately \$14.4M for facilities and has incurred \$4.8M in expenditures for implementation and operations, in addition to the \$1.7M invested in capital equipment.”⁶¹⁸
- \$27.7 million (June 2024): “To date, CSC has invested approximately \$20 million for facilities and incurred \$6 million in expenditures for the implementation and operations... in addition to the \$1.7 million invested in capital equipment.”⁶¹⁹

This spending is a fraction of total costs. An October 2023 Order Paper question submitted by MP Scott Reid saw CSC disclosing costs, across various budgets, totalling \$53,690,981.⁶²⁰ This included:

- \$4,435,472 spent from the \$4.3 million federal funding;
- \$15,083,425 from CSC’s capital budget for “improvements, salaries, and new additions”;

⁶¹⁴ Email statement from Esther Mailhot, Senior Media Relations Advisor, CSC (2021, November 2).

⁶¹⁵ Email statement from Esme Bailey, Senior Media Relations Advisor, CSC (2022, March 31).

⁶¹⁶ Email statement from Esme Bailey, Senior Media Relations Advisor, CSC (2022, September 22).

⁶¹⁷ Email statement from Judith Gadbois-St-Cyr, Senior Media Relations Advisor, CSC (2023, February 24).

⁶¹⁸ Email statement from Kevin Antonucci, Senior Media Relations Advisor, CSC (2023, October 20).

⁶¹⁹ This last update on spending was from a parliamentary exchange between MP Scott Reid and MP Jennifer O’Connell, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Safety Dominic LeBlanc (O’Connell, J., 2022, May 5. “Correctional Service of Canada.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 331*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/documentviewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-331/hansard>).

⁶²⁰ House of Commons (2023, October 26). *Order Paper Question No. Q-1946*. Reply to MP Scott Reid by MP Jennifer O’Connell, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs Dominic LeBlanc.

- \$7,059,200 from CORCAN’s Revolving Fund for “salaries & benefits and operations & maintenance” and capital expenditures “for machinery and equipment”;
- and \$27,112,884 for “Construction Related Costs.”⁶²¹

In this Order Paper response, CSC declined to disclose spending on procurement and consultancy fees, citing “the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response” since those expenses are “not systematically tracked.” A subsequent Order Paper question submitted by MP Reid attempted to extract disclosure of procurement and consultancy fees specifically. In response, CSC disclosed an additional \$2,843,760 in spending.⁶²² Together with the \$53,690,981 disclosed in Q-1946, these amounts provide the closest available estimate of the cost of the prison farm program to date: \$56,534,741.

This, of course, is merely the cost of partial implementation, as CSC has not yet succeeded in implementing any actual dairy operation or other agribusiness enterprise, nor has CSC made progress in implementing its core enterprise of goat milk production. Questions remain as to whether CSC has fully disclosed costs, particularly in relation to procurement and consultancy. Documents obtained by Evolve show procurement and consultancy fees in the millions, and potentially in the tens of millions. One procurement service agreement alone is \$9,987,598. This is for PSPC disbursements and fees “for consultant contract costs for contract document production, tender and construction administration [and] contingencies” for “CSC Farm Project, Joyceville, Ontario.”⁶²³ Another procurement service agreement shows \$7,180,500 for “Phase 1 Geo-Tech Investigations, Analysis & reports, Phase 2 Geo-Tech, Hydrogeology, Electrical, Concept Design, construction drawings, Tender Documents, pkg. Phase 1 & Phase 2 Architectural consultants, concept design, detailed design and construction drawings, tender pkg.”⁶²⁴

There are many such records released to date through Access to Information, showing various totals in the millions, and these records only go to 2021-2022 before dairy facility construction was tendered, awarded,

⁶²¹ The document does not specify what construction is included in the \$27 million figure for “Construction Related Costs.” Since the cost of cow barn construction is known at \$10,486,900, the remaining \$17 million may be an indication that construction of the larger “future goat barn” is still budgeted for full implementation of the prison farm program, despite CSC’s 2021 “pause” of that portion of the project.

⁶²² Procurement and consultancy fees disclosed by CSC in response to Q-2368 minus costs already disclosed in Q-1946 such as PSPC disbursements for cow barn construction (House of Commons, 2024, February 22. *Order Paper Question No. Q-2368*. Reply to MP Scott Reid by MP Jennifer O’Connell, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs Dominic LeBlanc).

⁶²³ PSPC (2022, March 31). *Specific Service Agreement - Real Property Services: CSC Farm Project, Joyceville, Ontario*. CSC A-2019-00317.

⁶²⁴ PSPC (2019, September 11). *Specific Service Agreement - Real Property Branch: CSC Farm Projects (Collins Bay & Joyceville) Ontario*. CSC A-2019-00317.

and started. Additional costs incurred since that time have not yet been disclosed, as ATI requests for more recent records of this nature have been delayed.⁶²⁵ It is unclear how to interpret these procurement service agreements, or how to align them with CSC's varying disclosures in response to media inquiries and Order Paper questions. Without the cooperation of CSC, Public Safety, or PSPC, it is impossible to clarify the full cost of the prison farm program.

Nonetheless, the still-mounting costs of the prison farm investment will not end with the completion of the cow barn. Until the goat operation is established and generating large volumes of goat milk for commercial sale, there will be little revenue potential and few avenues to achieve a return on investment to meet CSC's requirement that any agribusiness "must, at a minimum, break even for CSC financially."⁶²⁶ This was evident in MP Reid's Order Paper questions, which saw CSC disclosing \$56.3 million in expenses in comparison to \$1.3 million in revenues since the program began in 2018.⁶²⁷ Far from becoming "self-sustaining" by its third year, the program appears to have accrued a minimum \$55 million deficit by its sixth year. Even if the goat operation proceeds, and proceeds optimally, it is unlikely to reduce this deficit. In fact, it is likely to *increase* the financial losses. The cost of building the larger goat barn could exceed the \$10.5 million spent on the cow barn; the acquisition of the initial goat herd will cost nearly \$1 million,⁶²⁸ and CSC's financial projection for the 2,200-goat dairy operation paired with the cow dairy operation shows a cumulative 10-year *net loss* of nearly \$6 million (\$5,802,392).⁶²⁹

Meanwhile, the costs of animal care, even for CSC's small dairy cow herd, will be significant and ongoing. The barn that is being constructed for the 30-cow dairy research program has been designed with a dedicated

⁶²⁵ Evolve's ATI request for more detailed and up-to-date disclosures (PSPC A-2024-00002) has been delayed.

⁶²⁶ "It is important that any agribusiness opportunities pursued have minimal start-up costs and must, at a minimum, break even for CSC financially" (CSC, 2015, November 27. *BN to Minister - Opportunities for New Agribusiness*. Quoted in email from David Molzahn, Manager, Community and Stakeholder Relations, CSC, 2016, August 11. CSC A-2018-00310).

⁶²⁷ Revenues from the farm operations since implementation began in 2018 total \$1,311,477. CSC was asked, but did not disclose, the source of these revenues, but it may have been largely from the sale of the crops that had been planted for CSC's intended livestock operations (House of Commons, 2023, October 26. *Order Paper Question No. Q-1946*. Reply to MP Scott Reid by MP Jennifer O'Connell, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs Dominic LeBlanc).

⁶²⁸ Budgets for goat acquisition are redacted in nearly all ATI records. However, redactors missed one line in a 2018 requisition showing that CSC had approved \$700,000 (pre-tax) for 800 female goat kids (that line was redacted when the document was released under another ATI request) (PSPC, 2018, August 30. *9200 - Requisition for Goods and Services and Construction: Request for Contract(s) for the purchase of 800 Female Dairy Goats (Kids)*. CSC A-2018-00440). Also, an email associated with that requisition mentioned "CRB approval obtained on Aug. 02, 2018 @ \$791K including taxes" (Email from Estelle Carrière, National Manager, NHQ Contracting Operations, CSC, 2018, August 30. *Subject: FW: 2969474 - Dairy Goats (Kids)*. CSC A-2019-00146). If the cost of 800 goats kids was approximately \$800,000 in 2018, it is likely to have increased in the six years since.

⁶²⁹ CSC (2018, May 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada's penitentiary farm operations*. CSC A-2019-00124. The 10-year financial projection was contained in a "Cost Estimate" appendix that was originally withheld but later disclosed in a supplementary release following a complaint and investigation by the Office of the Information Commissioner.

veterinary office.⁶³⁰ In February 2024, CSC issued a tender for Veterinary Services at Collins Bay Institution and Joyceville Institution.⁶³¹ This tender failed and a new tender for Veterinary Services was issued on June 18, 2024.⁶³² The specifications attached to the tender stipulate that the veterinarian will be required to be on call “within 90 minutes... 24 hours a day, 7 days a week” for any emergency situation that may arise, in addition to the routine veterinary care that must include, at minimum, pregnancy checks every two weeks, health checks on the entire herds every 4-6 weeks, 14 annual visits, 12 annual consultation calls, and four times per year participating in four-hour meetings “to discuss animal welfare and research practices as it relates to the CORCAN herd.”⁶³³ Prisoners do not have this level of access to medical professionals. To provide a comparison, at one federal penitentiary in Ontario, the posted minimum Health Care Wait Times are as follows:

- Doctor 8 weeks
- X-ray 2 weeks
- Dentist 1 month / Urgent request 1 week
- Optometrist 3 months
- Psychiatry 6 to 8 months
- Physiotherapist 1 month
- Infectious Disease 1 to 2 weeks

*Patients must see a nurse first. Expect to wait approximately 7 working days for a nurse.

The individual who collected this information for Evolve added the comment: “So yes, the cows will have better medical attention than inmates.”⁶³⁴ While it is important to highlight the discrepancies in medical treatment afforded to prisoners versus the animals they will be farming, it is also important to keep in mind that any “care” and “welfare” these animals receive is in service of profit and not necessarily for the animals’ inherent health and best interests. Nonetheless, the point remains, while a great deal of money has been used to establish a prison animal farm, this money might have better been spent responding to the health needs of prisoners.

⁶³⁰ “The Cattle Facility is designed to house an initial herd of 30 cows” and will have “Office Spaces (including Supervisors Office and Veterinary Office)” (CSC, 2020, January 15. *Design Consideration for the Joyceville Institution Farm Project*. CSC A-2020-00131).

⁶³¹ “The estimated contract period will be 36 month(s), with a proposed start date of 2024/04/01” (CanadaBuys, 2024, February 1. *Veterinary Services*. <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/tender-notice/cb-879-27934359>).

⁶³² CanadaBuys (2024, June 18). *Veterinary Services*. <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/tender-notice/cb-70-39566283>.

⁶³³ CSC (2024, June 18). *Request for a Standing Offer: Veterinary Services*. Solicitation No. 21C40-23-4448497/B. <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/tender-notice/cb-70-39566283>.

⁶³⁴ The individual who collected this information in 2024 will not be identified.

The magnitude of investment of federal funds and resources “to provide offenders with the opportunity to work with livestock”⁶³⁵ defies all logic. Not only has it been an exceedingly expensive exercise that has failed to give meaningful job opportunities to inmates (discussed more in Chapter 6), but the decision to include cows includes a range of other costs, including environmental impacts.

4.7. “A rather large red flag” || Environmental Impact

While the environmental impact of an intensive goat dairy operation will be substantial, the impact of the decision to add cows is not to be underestimated. ATI records provide ample evidence of the significant environmental burden that the dairy facility construction is imposing on the ecosystem, threatening species at risk, and risking the contamination of groundwater, local lands, and waterways.

As detailed in CSC’s five-year Nutrient Management Strategy, the volume of manure and milking washwater generated from even a relatively small number of cows is substantial.⁶³⁶ According to this document, the maximum 90 dairy cows will generate almost the same amount of liquid and solid material waste (417,064 cubic feet) as 2,200 goats (495,803 cubic feet), and 75 milking cows will generate nearly as much milking centre washwater (202,686 cubic feet) as 2,200 goats (241,032 cubic feet). Disconcertingly, it appears that CSC did not account for the additional waste that would be generated by the cows. The manure lagoon, 120 feet in diameter and 14 feet in depth, is sized for a maximum threshold of 300 “Nutrient Units.” The 2,200 dairy goats have a calculated total of 275 Nutrient Units, so the manure lagoon was evidently sized for the dairy goat operation, but it was not sized for the addition of cows. The “maximum of 90 milking age Large Frame (Holstein) Dairy Cows” have a calculated Nutrient Unit total of 128.6, which, combined with the goats, amounts to 403.6 Nutrient Units. The Nutrient Management Strategy prepared for CSC warns that “Due to the fact that the total Nutrient Units for this livestock enterprise is calculated to be 403.6 which is in excess of the 300 Nutrient Unit threshold,” this presents the “potentially serious issue” that CSC’s manure lagoon will “not provide adequate storage” for the “total (annual) projected production of 3246 tons of solid material, and 1,022,213 gallons of liquid material.” To address this, “there is a very clear suggestion... to approach at least one of the neighbouring cash crop farmers to ‘secure’ additional land base” to spread the surplus waste.

⁶³⁵ Anne Kelly, Commissioner, CSC (2020, September 14). *Message from the Commissioner*. CSC A-2020-00407.

⁶³⁶ Eastern Crop Doctor Inc. (2019, February 20). *Correctional Service Canada Corcan Farms: Nutrient Management Strategy Submission*. CSC A-2020-00131.

After CSC learned that it cannot have two types of livestock in a single facility, designs were again redrawn for two separate facilities, and a new construction site had to be identified. Not only did the addition of cows mean that CSC's manure lagoon and hundreds of acres of fields will be inadequate to absorb the volumes of liquid and solid waste produced by the dairy operations, but the addition of cows changed the construction plan entirely and resulted in the need to pave over farmland instead of building on an existing concrete pad. The construction site and associated manure lagoon were relocated to the pasture field, over an existing well, in an area with a "high water table,"⁶³⁷ in an ecologically sensitive region on the banks of the Rideau River and the UNESCO-designated Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve.⁶³⁸

As previously noted, after deciding to add a cow dairy herd, CSC's original architectural designs for the goat barn were expanded into a "dual function barn" for both cows and goats. While that revised design was submitted to OMAFRA for approval, the required Environmental Effects Evaluation (EEE)⁶³⁹ and Species at Risk (SAR)⁶⁴⁰ assessments were conducted in 2018 based on CSC's expectation that construction of the dual function barn would still be at the original planned site over an existing concrete pad where old barn structures would first be demolished. Since the construction was to be "within the boundary of the concrete pad," the EEE noted that "no major vegetation removal or soil disruption will be required."⁶⁴¹ The 2018 EEE and SAR reports identified several species at risk in the surrounding fields.⁶⁴² The SAR report said if there were any changes to the construction plan, "the potential for impacts on grassland birds should be re-examined," concluding that the project should proceed "as soon as possible following the SAR search" because if it is "postponed until after the snow has begun to thaw in early spring of 2019 then a new search for SAR should be conducted."⁶⁴³

⁶³⁷ Email from Kelly Hartle, CEO, CORCAN (2020, September 23). CSC A-2020-00407.

⁶³⁸ "Joyceville Institution borders the Rideau Canal system and the UNESCO designated Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve; Joyceville Institution is located in immediate proximity (1 km - 5 km) to an elementary school, a community playground, a golf and country club, a church, and numerous residential homes and family farms in an area interspersed with campgrounds, sensitive waterways, and tourist opportunities; Intensive animal agriculture will impose a significant environmental burden, causing air and odor pollution, industrial traffic, and potential contamination of groundwater, local lands and waterways" (House of Commons, 2020, April 28. *Petition: E-2423 (Correctional system)*). Government of Canada. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/petitions/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-2423>).

⁶³⁹ A & A Environmental Consultants (2018, December 10). *Environmental Effects Evaluation, 3766 Highway 15, Kingston, ON, Report #4306-Kingston Joyceville Institution*. CSC A-2018-00440.

⁶⁴⁰ Natural Resource Solutions Inc. (2018, September 4). *Correctional Service of Canada Species at Risk Surveys - Joyceville Institution*. CSC A-2018-00440.

⁶⁴¹ A & A Environmental Consultants (2018, December 10). *Environmental Effects Evaluation, 3766 Highway 15, Kingston, ON, Report #4306-Kingston Joyceville Institution*. CSC A-2018-00440.

⁶⁴² Bald Eagle, Barn Swallow, Bobolink & Eastern Meadowlark, Chimney Swift, Nighthawk, Golden-winged Warbler, Eastern Wood-Pee-wee & Wood Thrush, Grasshopper Sparrow, Eastern Milksnake, Eastern Ribbonsnake, Midland Painted Turtle & Snapping Turtle, Monarch, Henslow's Sparrow, and other animal, insect, and plant species at risk.

⁶⁴³ Natural Resource Solutions Inc. (2018, September 4). *Correctional Service of Canada Species at Risk Surveys - Joyceville Institution*. CSC A-2018-00440.

Despite these caveats, ATI records reveal that the Impact Assessment for the changed construction project (different barn structures, different construction site, different year) relied on the EEE and SAR assessments conducted in 2018. By 2020, this was identified as “a rather large red flag” by a PSPC specialist who indicated that new assessments would be “a necessity”:

“I’m trying to pull together all of the piecemeal information into one document. To confirm, my review is based on the understanding that there will no longer be any demolition and that the construction is on the greenfield (or pasture)... I’ve reviewed the EEE that was completed in 2018 for the project and have come across a rather large red flag... This is red flagging for a couple of reasons [because] an EEE for the construction was not completed [and] because of the presence of SAR in the area... Based on this information there is a necessity to complete an EEE [and] it is key that they follow the SAR and Wildlife Mitigation Measures in the mitigation measure form.”⁶⁴⁴

Even though this red flag was raised in 2020, CSC continued to rely on the 2018 assessments when construction on the site began in 2022.⁶⁴⁵ Furthermore, even though the 2018 SAR report recommended that construction should avoid SAR breeding and nesting seasons from April to October, CSC stated in March 2022 that “Construction on the new cattle barn is expected to begin in April [2022] and be completed in October 2023.”⁶⁴⁶ After ignoring the recommendations of the 2018 SAR and EEE reports, and the red flag raised by PSPC, CSC openly boasted that its farm operations respected the Species at Risk Act:

“Collins Bay, for example, has wetlands onsite which are home to many species, one being a frog protected under the Species at Risk Act. We are working with Environment Canada to make sure that the onsite farming operations and new building construction don’t negatively impact their habitat.”⁶⁴⁷

The mitigation measures to reduce impacts on species at risk, which CSC said were available by request but then attempted to withhold when requested by Evolve,⁶⁴⁸ includes a long list of measures that CSC is required to follow, many of which CSC has demonstrably not done. These include:

⁶⁴⁴ Email from Barbara Slezak, Senior Environmental Specialist, PSPC (2020, June 26). *Subject: RE: SAR investigation and mitigation efforts -CSC Farm Project*. CSC A-2021-00215.

⁶⁴⁵ The Species at Risk Map attached to the construction tender is from the 2018 SAR assessment.

⁶⁴⁶ Email statement from Esme Bailey, Senior Media Relations Advisor, CSC (2022, March 31). This means that CSC planned for construction to take place precisely during the active SAR breeding and nesting seasons, two years over, and as construction has dragged on to at least July 2024, it has extended into a third year’s SAR breeding and nesting season.

⁶⁴⁷ CSC (2021, June 3). CSC: Protecting People and the Environment. Previously published in *Let’s Talk Express* at <https://www.lte-ene.ca/en/csc-protecting-people-and-environment>.

⁶⁴⁸ In March 2021, CSC posted a Notice of Determination in Canada’s Impact Assessment Registry indicating that “The Correctional Service of Canada has determined that the proposed Barn Construction Project for cattle and goats at

- “Exclusion fencing should be maintained around the perimeter of the project site/construction areas to ensure that no [SAR] can access the site [and] the fencing should be checked daily to ensure there are no tears or holes that may allow snakes into the site.” (Evolve has monitored and photographed the construction site since 2022 and there has never been any fencing.)
- “Stockpiled soil... should be covered to prevent turtles and birds from nesting in the material.” (Stockpiled soil observed and photographed by Evolve was not covered.)
- “Minimize period of disturbance.” (The construction was supposed to be completed within 12 months, then 18 months, and has since extended to 27 months.)

In 2023, Evolve compiled the evidence of contraventions of environmental and species at risk legislation, and brought the information to the attention of municipal, provincial, and federal authorities,⁶⁴⁹ including Frontenac County (Joe Gallivan, Director of Planning & Economic Development), the City of Kingston (Paul MacLatchy, Environment Director), Ontario’s Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Ontario’s Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, and Environment Canada. All of these agencies responded by saying that the environmental policies being violated were not a matter under their jurisdiction or authority.⁶⁵⁰

Joyceville Institution is not likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects.... Therefore, the Correctional Service of Canada may carry out the project, exercise any power... to enable the project to be carried out in whole or in part.” The notice stated that “All of the mitigation measures taken into account for this determination can be requested by email at: GEN_NHQ_ENV@csc-scc.gc.ca” (IAAC, 2021, March 9. *Notice of Determination: Joyceville Institution Cattle and Goat Barn Construction*. <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/138394>). On May 14, 2021, Evolve sent a request for the mitigation measures to the email address provided, which bounced back as undeliverable. With some searching, Evolve discovered that the correct email address should have hyphens in lieu of underscores, and sent a second request to the appropriate address, alerting CSC to the typo (which has never been corrected). The CSC contact person was Dawne Flaborea, National Manager, Water Quality and Environmental Protection, who replied: “Although I am listed as the contact person on the IAA website, documentation requests must go through the appropriate process internally. We have redirected your request and you should hear back from the appropriate division shortly” (Email from Dawne Flaborea, 2021, May 18). ATI records reveal what happened next. Flaborea forwarded Evolve’s request to CSC National Headquarters, stating that she was “not comfortable sharing this information without higher approval” (Email from Dawne Flaborea, 2021, May 17. CSC A-2020-00131). Whatever internal discussion followed is not revealed in ATI records, but after multiple follow-ups by Evolve, on June 8, 2021, Flaborea responded with a blank checklist of mitigation measures.

⁶⁴⁹ All levels of government have policies and bylaws that would apply. For example, the County of Frontenac Official Plan (section 7.1.4.5 Endangered and Threatened Species) prohibits new development or site alteration within the habitat of endangered or threatened species, or within 120 metres of such, unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts (County of Frontenac Official Plan, Adopted October 15, 2014. <https://www.frontenacounty.ca/en/business/development.aspx>).

⁶⁵⁰ Frontenac County referred the matter to the City of Kingston. The City of Kingston referred the matter to the provincial authorities. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry referred the matter to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, which referred the matter to the federal Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Canada. Environment Canada referred the matter to Public Safety Canada, which did not respond. In his response, the minister responsible for Environment Canada, Steven Guilbeault, said that CSC can “choose to develop

Earlier, in 2021, Evolve filed a request for the IAAC to investigate CSC’s failure to comply with the Impact Assessment Act on numerous counts. The stated purpose of the Impact Assessment Act is to ensure transparency and accountability; to allow members of the public to voice concerns; and to prevent federal construction projects from adversely affecting the environment.⁶⁵¹ Evolve submitted evidence that CSC had failed to comply with those conditions. This included evidence of lack of transparency since CSC never disclosed details of the project to the public. This effectively prevented members of the public from voicing concerns over how the project could adversely affect their quality of life, air quality, water quality, and property values, among other considerations. Also, the contact information provided in CSC’s Impact Assessment notice was incorrect, and CSC had failed to allow public comment for the period of time indicated in the Public Notice, all factors contributing to the prevention of public input on the project.⁶⁵² The IAAC’s response to the evidence of violations submitted by Evolve was that CSC is not required to adhere to the Impact Assessment Act; that the IAAC can do nothing about inaccurate, incorrect, or misleading information published in the IAAC registry; and that there is no minimum amount of time required under the Act to allow public comment.⁶⁵³ Evolve countered with a detailed letter to Minister Guilbeault, copying IAAC Senior Compliance Officer Steven Fraser, showing that CSC was not in compliance with the Impact Assessment Act for reasons that included lack of transparency; no assessment for the manure lagoon construction; incorrect contact information; failure to disclose information; altered construction plans and location; and (emphasis as written):

“Failure to allow public comment for the period of time indicated.”⁶⁵⁴ The Public Notice (Notice of Intent) for this project indicates that the Notice was posted August 17, 2020, and that public input was open until September 16, 2020. This information was repeated in an email from CSC’s Dawne Flaborea dated June 8,

their own procedures and practices” and it is up to CSC “to determine that the Project is not likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects” (Letter from The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2022, February 23).

⁶⁵¹ Impact Assessment Act (2019, June 21). Government of Canada. <https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-2.75/FullText.html>.

⁶⁵² Letter from Calvin Neufeld, Evolve Our Prison Farms, to The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change (2021, November 23). *Re: Prison Farms & Impact Assessment Compliance*.

⁶⁵³ Phone call and email from Steven Fraser, Senior Enforcement Officer, IAAC, 2021, September 14). This statement was surprising given that 30 days is the standard period for public comment on federal and provincial projects. Even CSC was not aware that there is no legal minimum period of time under the Act. In response to Evolve’s inquiry about the dates that the Public Notice was allegedly posted, CSC replied: “The comment period for this project was 30 days (August 17, 2020 to September 16, 2020), as per Impact Assessment Act (IAA) requirements” (Email statement from Dawne Flaborea, National Manager, Water Quality and Environmental Protection, CSC, 2021, June 8).

⁶⁵⁴ Section 11 of the Impact Assessment Act (Public participation) states: “The Agency must ensure that the public is provided with an opportunity to participate meaningfully, in a manner that the Agency considers appropriate, in its preparations for a possible impact assessment of a designated project, including by inviting the public to provide comments within the period that it specifies.”

2021: “The comment period for this project was 30 days (August 17, 2020 to September 16, 2020), as per Impact Assessment Act (IAA) requirements.” Inconsistently, the date posted on the Notice page is August 26, 2020, and source code confirms that the page was posted on August 26, 2020.⁶⁵⁵ *The date range posted in this Notice is inaccurate and misleading, and public input was not open for the period of time specified in the Notice.*

Section 11 of the Impact Assessment Act (Public participation) states: “The Agency must ensure that *the public is provided with an opportunity to participate meaningfully, in a manner that the Agency considers appropriate*, in its preparations for a possible impact assessment of a designated project, including by inviting the public to provide comments *within the period that it specifies*.”⁶⁵⁶

In response, Minister Guilbeault wrote that “The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency) has a limited role in the implementation of the requirements under the IAA related to projects on federal lands. While the Agency provides guidance to authorities on their obligations under the IAA, shares best practices, and hosts the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry website (the Registry), the Agency does not review or approve the determinations nor the analysis conducted by authorities,” and the Correctional Service of Canada “has determined that no further action is required.”⁶⁵⁷

Regardless of the evidence and arguments brought forward by Evolve, the federal agency responsible for ensuring transparency, environmental protection, and “providing Canadians with the opportunity to participate in that process and with the information they need in order to be able to participate in a meaningful way,”⁶⁵⁸ maintained that it has no authority in these matters. IAAC defended CSC’s freedom to self-monitor, self-assess, and self-approve its construction work, in whole or in part, and to issue false, inaccurate, incorrect, and misleading information, all while proceeding with an environmentally harmful project.

Months after this unfolded, ATI records of internal exchanges at the IAAC emerged. There were substantial redactions throughout and Evolve requested a review of the exemptions by the Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC). As a result of the OIC investigation, two sentences were unredacted, both relating to the IAAC’s internal discussion of the complaints and evidence submitted by Evolve:

⁶⁵⁵ Later confirmed in ATI records as well.

⁶⁵⁶ Letter from Calvin Neufeld, Evolve Our Prison Farms, to The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change (2021, November 23). *Re: Prison Farms & Impact Assessment Compliance*.

⁶⁵⁷ Letter from The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change (2022, February 23). Copied to The Honourable Marco Mendicino, Minister of Public Safety.

⁶⁵⁸ Impact Assessment Act (2019, June 21). Government of Canada. <https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-2.75/FullText.html>.

“We were wondering if you guys are able to provide us with a line or two in why the Agency is not enforcing the compliance with these provisions of the IAA (federal lands projects)?”⁶⁵⁹

“The only thing that is bugging me is that they [Communications] are not saying that we don’t enforce this part of the IAA, but rather that CSC is in compliance. So their response is not totally accurate.”⁶⁶⁰

Evolve was unsuccessful in all attempts to raise red flags with government agencies responsible for ensuring environmental protection, transparency, accountability, and accuracy.⁶⁶¹ Despite the multitude of documented and reported violations of municipal, provincial, and federal policies, Public Safety has insisted that “all agricultural operations are being implemented in accordance with provincial and federal government legislation.”⁶⁶² CSC has indicated the same: “All applicable Federal, Provincial and Municipal Codes and legislation must be followed and the strictest of each shall be adhered to.”⁶⁶³

4.8. “CORCAN lacks the expertise” || Buying, Keeping & Killing Cattle

Despite CSC’s “concern that the Barn will not be ready to house the Cattle by January 2020,”⁶⁶⁴ CSC started purchasing beef cattle and dairy cows in 2019. Ignoring Government of Canada Contract Regulations and conflict of interest policies, CSC’s first dairy cows were purchased from CSC’s Farm Advisory Panel members (directors of the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op), who sold a minimum of nine heifers to CSC,⁶⁶⁵ although the total number of sales may have been 12 or more.⁶⁶⁶ With the delivery of the goats delayed by

⁶⁵⁹ Email from Jacinthe Bélec, Manager, Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Division, IAAC (2021, June 18). *Subject: FW: Question about Public Comment period notice for Joyceville Cattle and Goat Barn Construction project.* IAAC A-2020-00068.

⁶⁶⁰ Email from Jacinthe Bélec, Manager, Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Division, IAAC (2021, June 23). IAAC A-2020-00068.

⁶⁶¹ Accuracy is specified as a requirement in the administration of the Impact Assessment Act, as is integrity: “The Government of Canada, the Minister, the Agency and federal authorities must, in the administration of this Act, exercise their powers in a manner that adheres to the principles of scientific integrity, honesty, objectivity, thoroughness and accuracy.” Impact Assessment Act (2019, June 21). Government of Canada. <https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-2.75/FullText.html>.

⁶⁶² Damoff, P. (2022, May 5). “Labour.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 065*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-65/hansard>.

⁶⁶³ CORCAN (n.d.). *Statement of Work*. A-2021-00381.

⁶⁶⁴ CSC (2019, August 1). *CORCAN Farm Program increase from 2018 to 2019*. CSC A-2020-00131.

⁶⁶⁵ Email statement from Esther Mailhot, Senior Advisor, Issues Management and Media Relations, CSC (2024, March 15).

⁶⁶⁶ Records obtained by Evolve suggest that at least 12 cows may have been purchased by CSC from members of its Prison Farm Advisory Panel who are directors of the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op. These records include the Co-Op Treasurer’s Reports from 2019-2021, compared against ATI records of the Co-Op’s invoices to CORCAN and CORCAN’s contracts for purchasing cows from the Co-Op. The invoices were issued by Prison Farm Advisory Panel chair Dianne Dowling, Prison Farm Advisory Panel member Jeff Peters, and the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op Treasurer Meela Melnik-Proud. There is some

procurement challenges, records show that CSC was in a hurry to get some livestock on the farms as quickly as possible. As a result, CSC was aggressively pursuing options for procuring beef cattle even before dairy cows were acquired. This process turned out to be less straightforward than they had anticipated, as all potential avenues violated federal procurement policies.⁶⁶⁷

In May 2019, CSC quietly⁶⁶⁸ acquired the first herd of 13 beef cattle, with a couple more individual purchases bringing the total initial beef herd to 17.⁶⁶⁹ The aim was to “provide offenders... with the opportunity to commence working with livestock.”⁶⁷⁰ The 17 beef cattle were substantially fewer than the 50-80 beef cattle CSC had hoped to procure at an estimated cost of \$104,500.⁶⁷¹ PSPC had refused to tender the requirement for CSC to obtain cattle, stating that it was “not within PSPC’s mandate” to do so, and warning CORCAN to be “prudent” since the barns were not yet ready to receive cattle:

“It is not within PSPC mandate to award contracts for goods and services that will be resold to the public. Since these beef cattle will be resold by CORCAN to the public, this procurement cannot be performed by PSPC... [It is] our opinion that CORCAN’s procurement strategy does not fit any of PSPC’s procurement models... It would be prudent to run a multi-phased procurement [but] from our conversations it appears that CORCAN lacks the expertise to develop these specifications. CORCAN should consider establishing a consultant services contract through a competitive process to come up with an expert who can write the specification for them. This procurement strategy could take at least 5 months. This would be more appropriate for delivery of cattle next fiscal year if CORCAN does not have buildings to accommodate the cattle over the winter.”⁶⁷²

minor inconsistency in the Co-Op Treasurer’s Reports, but based on the available records, the total payments for cows sold to CSC from its Advisory Panel members appear to total \$10,815.73. In 2021, former prison farm worker Shaun Shannon was informed by Jeff Peters that CSC had bought “18 cows from the coop herd and they are getting ready to send more” (Email from Shaun Shannon, 2021, March 6). The total number is less important than the fact that, as advisors bound to a conflict-of-interest agreement, CSC’s Panel members should not have sold any cows, signed any contracts, issued any invoices, or received any financial benefits from their recommendations for the program.

⁶⁶⁷ CSC was required to purchase beef cattle through Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) since any federal procurement exceeding \$25,000 must go through PSPC, and the assessed value of CSC’s requirement of beef cattle exceeded \$100,000. PSPC refused, however, advising that it is “not within their mandate” to procure goods (cattle) that will be resold to the public; CSC then sought to independently acquire beef cattle at auction, but CSC’s procurement officer indicated that this would not be permissible under CSC protocols.

⁶⁶⁸ “Just a heads up - we understand that the first 13 beef cattle will be delivered to Joyceville today. So far we haven’t heard of any potential protest on the part of Evolve” (Email from David Showell, Associate Assistant Commissioner, Communications & Engagement, CSC, to Michael Milech, Parliamentary Assistant, and Scott Bardsley, Senior Advisor, PSC, 2019, May 15. *Subject: Cattle arriving at Joyceville*. CSC A-2019-00126).

⁶⁶⁹ Ferguson, E. (2019, August 15). Prison farms reopen at Collins Bay, Joyceville institutions. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/news/local-news/prison-farms-reopen-at-collins-bay-joyceville-institutions>.

⁶⁷⁰ CSC (2019, June 17). *Penitentiary Farms. Question Period Note*. PSC A-2019-00102.

⁶⁷¹ Email from Sandra Wilford, Senior Procurement Officer, CSC (2019, April 1). *Subject: RE: Questions... Beef Cattle - 9200*. CSC A-2019-00075.

⁶⁷² Email from Herb Choquette, Manager, PSPC, to Kelly Hartle, CEO, CORCAN (2019, April 19). *Subject: Purchase of Beef Cattle for CORCAN*. CSC A-2019-00075.

Unwilling to be delayed by prudence, CORCAN proceeded to pursue beef cattle purchases independently, through auctions, as “plan C for the beef cattle.”⁶⁷³ This was done even though CSC’s own procurement officer warned that this was not permitted: “CORCAN cannot buy the cattle piecemeal through several purchases under \$25,000. They have to assess their entire requirement and, if it exceeds \$25,000, it should be referred to PSGSC [PSPC].”⁶⁷⁴ Having received this advisement, CORCAN’s CEO issued a \$25,000 purchase order for the piecemeal purchase of beef cattle from the Kawartha Lakes Community Sales Barn on May 14, 2019.⁶⁷⁵ After more than a year of the prison farm program’s failure to launch, it appears that the urgency to get some animals onto the prison farms was pressing enough to disregard procurement protocols.⁶⁷⁶

Within days of the arrival of the first 17 beef cattle, a photo-op was arranged with CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle and MP Mark Gerretsen at Joyceville Institution,⁶⁷⁷ even though it is not located within MP Gerretsen’s political riding.⁶⁷⁸ That herd was sold out for slaughter through a public sales barn six months

⁶⁷³ Email from Estelle Carrière, National Manager, NHQ Contracting Operations, CSC, to Kelly Hartle, CEO, CORCAN (2019, April 4). *Subject: plan c -beef cattle*. CSC A-2019-00075.

⁶⁷⁴ Email from Michèle Chouinard, Procurement Officer, CSC (2019, April 23). CSC A-2019-00075.

⁶⁷⁵ CORCAN (2019, May 14). *Purchase Order: Purchase Livestock at Auction*. CSC A-2019-00075.

⁶⁷⁶ In 2022, Evolve filed a complaint with the federal Office of the Procurement Ombudsman (OPO) over CSC’s violation of numerous federal procurement regulations. The OPO investigated the case and considered the evidence serious enough for referral to the Canadian International Trade Tribunal (CITT) for a review of CSC’s procurement practices in relation to the farm program. The CITT thoroughly reviewed the evidence submitted by Evolve and issued a detailed six-page decision ruling that the case could not be investigated by the CITT solely on the technicality that Evolve was not a “potential bidder” as required by section 30.1 and subsection 30.11(1) of the CITT Act. The CITT did, however, recommend that the OPO consider conducting a Procurement Practice Review (PPR) (“an independent, in-depth and objective review of federal government contracting practices”) (Jamieson-Holloway, B., 2023, January 26. *Procurement Decision and Reasons: File PR-2022-058 C. Neufeld*. CITT). In a phone conversation, the OPO indicated to Evolve that the evidence was substantial enough to warrant a PPR (for example, the OPO noted that there was clear evidence of “contract splitting” in CSC’s beef procurement). The file was reviewed by two OPO directors but due to the small number of ad hoc PPRs that the OPO can conduct annually, the OPO decided that they “will not be launching a PPR regarding the procurement of beef cattle and dairy cows outside of standard procurement processes at this time. This request will be included in our annual planning exercise where all issues are analyzed for future PPR’s” (Email from Kenneth Bradley, Senior Intake Officer, OPO, 2023, April 11. *Subject: OPO-2621 - For review: Reply to possible PPR*).

⁶⁷⁷ Mark Gerretsen. (2019, May 23). *Earlier this week, Corrections Canada took possession of its first herd of cattle since the prison farms were closed in 2010. More to follow...* [Status update]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/markgerretsen/photos/pb.100047114861541.-2207520000/2291213307607338/?type=3>.

⁶⁷⁸ Joyceville Institution is located within the political boundary of Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston, the riding held by MP Scott Reid. After MP Reid raised questions about the prison farms and the Joyceville abattoir nine times in the House of Commons in the first six months of 2022, MP Gerretsen began lobbying, successfully, for Elections Canada to redraw the electoral map so that Joyceville Institution will be in his riding as of the next federal election (Mark Gerretsen. 2022, August 22. *Do you live in Kingston north of the 401? You belong in Kingston and the Islands!* [Status update]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/markgerretsen/posts/pfbid0GjYho3TvnqMFYpuxpeMBgRDU4NfpY7RZpivFtLRgKR11swGNUJRVSKbawoBwhk89l>) According to the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission redistribution report, the way the map was redrawn in favour of Kingston and the Islands has “given the district a deviation from the Quota of +15.3%, the highest in the province.” Normally, electoral maps are redrawn to make the distributions more equitable, not less. The Commission was clearly aware of this problem and uncomfortable with the decision, observing “that it may not be reasonably possible to maintain these boundaries in the future” (Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the

later, in November 2019.⁶⁷⁹ To replace that herd, in December 2019, CSC purchased its next piecemeal batch of “19 young bull calves...through a public auction.”⁶⁸⁰

By this time CSC was struggling with a range of animal welfare issues. CORCAN’s Herd Event Log Book shows calves suffering from diarrhea, respiratory pneumonia, lameness, chronic lung obstruction, and chronic bronchitis.⁶⁸¹ These records also show that most of the 19 bull calves acquired at auction died within months of arriving on the prison farms. While CSC claimed that “the specific cause is unknown,”⁶⁸² ATI records show that these calves had suffered serious illness and had received “Nil” vaccinations at purchase.⁶⁸³ Despite CSC’s alleged ignorance of what caused the deaths, CSC insisted that it was “unrelated to the care they received” and there would be “no further investigation” to determine the cause.⁶⁸⁴ The situation only grew more precarious and urgent as the new cattle barn construction was delayed year after year, and “key issues” flagged included “Temporary dairy cattle facilities... are not to industry standard,” and “Animal welfare conditions are not at optimal industry standard.”⁶⁸⁵

It is unlikely that there would have been any public knowledge of the calf deaths if it were not for prisoners reaching out to Evolve to say that animals were dying on the prison farms. Evolve confirmed the reports and began tracking the death count through media inquiries to CSC. In the first year of livestock procurement (June 2019 – June 2020), 31 of the 36 beef cattle purchased by CSC were no longer alive; approximately half were slaughtered and half died from “unknown” or undisclosed causes.⁶⁸⁶ In December 2020, another bull calf was acquired but “subsequently died the same month.”⁶⁸⁷ The unexplained deaths continued into 2021, as CSC confirmed that “Three bull calves have died in 2021 (one in June, July and October respectively).”⁶⁸⁸ From one cause or another, at least 35 of CSC’s cattle had died between June 2019 and October 2021, at which time Evolve stopped tracking. However, a new Access to Information release obtained in July 2024 contained Herd Health & Treatment logs from late 2023 showing continuing

Province of Ontario, 2023, February 8. *Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Ontario*. https://redcoupage-redistribution-2022.ca/com/on/rprt/on_rprt_e.pdf.

⁶⁷⁹ Email statement to Evolve from Esther Mailhot, Communications Advisor, CSC (2020, January 17).

⁶⁸⁰ Email statement to Evolve from Esther Mailhot, Communications Advisor, CSC (2020, February 25).

⁶⁸¹ CORCAN (2020, September 2). *CORCAN Farms: Herd Event Log Book*. CSC A-2020-00154.

⁶⁸² Email statement from Esther Mailhot, Communications Advisor, CSC (2020, January 17).

⁶⁸³ CORCAN (n.d.). *Beef Cattle*. CSC A-2019-00325.

⁶⁸⁴ Email statement from Ashley Cain, Communications Advisor, CSC (2020, July 21).

⁶⁸⁵ Email from Lawrence Yarema, Project Manager, PSPC (2021, September 10). *Subject: RE: ...JI Farm - Cow Barn tender... urgency / impact of delay*. PSPC A-2021-00436.

⁶⁸⁶ CSC’s first herd of 17 beef cattle was auctioned off for slaughter, and 14 of 19 calves from the second herd died from “unknown” causes. Email statements from CSC Media Relations in 2020 and 2021.

⁶⁸⁷ Email statement from Esther Mailhot, Senior Media Relations Advisor, CSC (2021, March 5).

⁶⁸⁸ Email statement from Esther Mailhot, Senior Media Relations Advisor, CSC (2021, December 15).

calf deaths (bodies “composted”) and chronic illnesses.⁶⁸⁹ This release package also contained information about a research partnership with Ridgetown (University of Guelph) that had been underway in 2023 with a “Calf Trial” at Collins Bay Institution, but this research had to be cancelled. The reason for the failure was that CORCAN had started growing its dairy cow herd in anticipation of the cow dairy barn construction being completed in April 2024, at which time the herd would have been moved out of temporary housing into the new dairy barn at Joyceville Institution. Because construction was delayed again, the herd had outgrown the temporary housing space. CORCAN’s Farm Manager Chris Stein notified CORCAN CEO Christopher Hill of the problem in December 2023 (quoted as written):

“Due to a lack of space we need to stop the milk feeding study at CBI with U of G. We will still be feeding milk to the calves, not milk will be wasted. We will simply be feeding calves milk longer and providing them with more milk. This change is as a result of lack of housing space for the cattle at Collins Bay. This study was to end originally in April when we move the dairy cattle to Joyceville, but [ended] do to lack of space. This change has no impact of operations, offenders will still milk cattle and feed calves milk.”⁶⁹⁰

CORCAN’s Farm Supervisor Tiffany Babcock notified the researcher (name redacted) of the cancellation:

“We are anxiously awaiting the completion of our new dairy facility at Joyceville [sic] Institution. We have been trying to build up our herd in anticipation of its opening, unfortunately in doing so it has created some spatial concerns at Collins Bay. Therefore we will have to pause our involvement with the calf study as of January 1, 2024.”⁶⁹¹

Putting a positive spin on the situation, Babcock added: “The study has been beneficial to both the animals and our offenders, as it has helped offenders learn how to identify sick calves, and taking temperatures twice a week has helped us identify sick calves sooner.”

In early 2024, a CSC spokesperson responded to an inquiry from Evolve, stating that a total of 321 cattle had been purchased by CSC since 2019.⁶⁹² This number can be compared against CSC’s December 2023 statement, when asked how many animals CSC had on the prison farms at the time, that “12 animals are

⁶⁸⁹ Illnesses listed include “Off feed,” injured leg, lameness, “Other - ate rocks,” mastitis, diarrhea, several “Grain OD?” and 23 boxes checked for calves suffering from respiratory pneumonia (CORCAN, 2023. Herd Health & Treatment Logs. CSC A-2023-00388).

⁶⁹⁰ Email from Chris Stein, CORCAN Farm Manager (2023, December 27). *Subject: FW: Calf Trial*. CSC A-2023-00388.

⁶⁹¹ Email from Tiffany Babcock, CORCAN Farm Supervisor (2023, December 22). *Subject: Calf Trial*. CSC A-2023-00388.

⁶⁹² Email statement from Esther Mailhot, Senior Advisor, Issues Management and Media Relations, CSC (2024, March 15).

currently being milked.”⁶⁹³ These numbers suggest that, since 2019, somewhere in the range of 300 animals in the prison farm program have died from slaughter, disease, and “unknown” causes. These numbers stand in stark contrast to the narrative of cows gratefully “coming home” and “Mooving back to prison – Thank you.”⁶⁹⁴

The realities of slaughter and disease in animal agriculture are not unique to cattle and will manifest multifold in an industrial goat dairy operation with thousands of animals intensively farmed in an indoor facility under questionable monitoring and management. As Dr. Fitzgerald noted in Evolve’s 2021 prison farm report,⁶⁹⁵ if even a single case of disease such as scrapie is identified in a goat herd, “all goats are ordered destroyed” under protocols set by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.⁶⁹⁶ The disease outbreaks that have already plagued CSC’s small cattle herds should serve as forewarning for CSC’s future goat ambitions.

The animal welfare issues, together with the complexity of quota, market uncertainties, and ballooning barn-building costs, all point to how the inclusion of cows was a poorly researched and poorly managed endeavour that has had major ramifications. At worst, and at best, the decision has derailed the prison farm program. If not for the decision to add cows, CSC’s implementation of its industrial goat farm to supply Feihe’s operations would have begun in 2018 and may have proceeded relatively unobstructed. Not only has the reopening of the prison farms been characterised by suspicious business dealings, lack of transparency,⁶⁹⁷ policy violations, and continuous failures to start, but it has also been exceedingly

⁶⁹³ Email statement from Chris MacMillan, Senior Communications Advisor, CSC (2023, December 28). While awaiting dairy barn construction and quota, the small number of dairy cows have been bred and milked, with their milk being fed to their calves and to “stocker beef calves” (males born as a byproduct of the insemination and birthing process required for females to produce milk) before the male calves are sold annually for slaughter. This is “part of the program cycle” and “part of the plan for consumption of the milk” (CSC, 2021, November 2. *Record of Discussion: Farm Advisory Panel Teleconference*. CSC A-2021-00381).

⁶⁹⁴ Johnson, K. (2018, June 21). ‘The cows are coming home’: two prison farms to reopen in Kingston. *iPolitics*.

<https://www.ipolitics.ca/news/the-cows-are-coming-home-two-prison-farms-to-reopen-in-kingston>.

⁶⁹⁵ Fitzgerald, A. J., Wilson, A., Bruce, J., Wurdemann-Stam, A., & Neufeld, C. (2021, January 31). *Canada’s proposed prison farm program: Why it won’t work and what would work better*. Evolve Our Prison Farms.

<https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/prison-farm-report/>.

⁶⁹⁶ CFIA (2024). *Understand what to expect if scrapie has been detected on your farm*. Government of Canada.

<https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/scrapie/if-your-animals-may-be-infected/eng/1355963623752/1355963789207>.

⁶⁹⁷ Transparency was identified as a priority by the consultants hired to assess the 2016 public consultations: “In moving forward with the completion of the feasibility study as proposed above, CSC should put in place a transparent and on-going communications and engagement initiative. The on-line and Town Hall consultations demonstrated a strong level of public dissatisfaction with the approach taken during the closure of the farms. Openness about the process of completing a feasibility study and its results would contribute to preventing this from re-occurring” (Monachus Consulting, 2016, August 16. *Re: Report on the Town Hall Meeting on the Feasibility of Re-establishing Penitentiary Farms at the Joyceville and Collin’s Bay Institutions - Recommendations/Next Steps*. CSC A-2018-00333). No feasibility study was conducted, and no transparency was put in place. Instead, the real reasons for reopening the farms have been deliberately withheld, and Evolve’s efforts at seeking transparency have been deliberately obstructed.

expensive to taxpayers. As previously noted, by 2020, the estimated construction costs alone had reached \$26 million, and information obtained by MP Scott Reid in 2023 saw a figure north of \$56 million for spending to date and construction-related costs. While the exclusion of dairy cows was initially controversial, the real controversy is their inclusion and the government's willingness to continually throw money into a failing operation. In addition to its protracted and expensive rollout, CSC has failed to justify or demonstrate how the program benefits prisoners. Indeed, CSC's own documents are clear and conclusive: prison farms will not contribute to prisoner employability and will divert resources away from more relevant vocational training opportunities.⁶⁹⁸ Throughout the prison farm planning and implementation process, there has been an incredible series of errors in judgement, not the least of which is the failure to account for the interests and needs of incarcerated persons.

⁶⁹⁸ As noted in Chapter 2, one of the key questions that Public Safety struck out of CSC's online questionnaire was whether respondents would support restoring prison farms "knowing that it meant directing financial resources to this business line at the expense of training offenders in other employment industries that have been shown to have higher rates of offender employability upon release."

5. “ERROR IN JUDGEMENT” || PRISONERS & STAFF

One of the biggest failures of the prison farm program is how it will address the issues that CSC raised to justify the farm closures in 2009-2011. The new program continues to be characterised by every issue that closed the former farms, including: financial losses, lack of relevance, logistical headaches, environmental hazards, and accidents and injuries. Furthermore, there is still no evidence to support claims that farms improve post-release employability of incarcerated persons. As will be discussed in this chapter, not only are the jobs in the prison farm program ill-organized and unsafe, but staff and prisoners alike are skeptical that the work will equip prisoners with the skills they need to succeed in a contemporary, urban society. Prisoners have had little space to be critical of the program, with those who voice their opinions and frustrations risking punitive consequences.

By CSC’s own admission, the agricultural sector “is not a viable, realistic market” for inmates leaving prison.⁶⁹⁹ CSC also does not have any use for prison farm products. Therefore, from a correctional policy perspective, the reopening of prison farms in Kingston is illogical and counterproductive. Despite this, CSC has been forced to navigate the complexities of attempting to deliver a prison farm program for political purposes while publicly defending the endeavour and bearing the costs and consequences to the safety of staff and prisoners.

Of the tens of millions spent on the farms since implementation began in 2018, there has been no discernable benefit to prisoners. The prison farm investment was sarcastically described by procurement staff as “The project that keeps on giving (to the consultants in any case).”⁷⁰⁰ In all matters related to Kingston’s prison farms, it is evident that the interests of industry and politics are being served rather than the interests of prisoners and public safety. Despite this, the enormous investment of public funds and federal resources into this “agricultural training program” is positioned as “benevolent,”⁷⁰¹ giving prisoners “the skills and the experience they require to become positive, contributing members to society.”⁷⁰² Not only is this claim

⁶⁹⁹ Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. (2010, March 25). *Evidence*. 40th Parliament, 3rd session, meeting no. 5. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/40-3/SECU/meeting-5/evidence>.

⁷⁰⁰ Email from Lawrence Yarema, Project Manager, PSPC (2021, March 9). PSPC A-2021-00436.

⁷⁰¹ As noted by Dr. Kelly Struthers Montford: “Penal agricultural labour was positioned as a benevolent means to make proper Canadian citizens [through] the unquestioned institution of prison farming and the acceptance of its rehabilitative potential (and outcomes). Prison-based agriculture is then a form of ‘rehabilitation’ that tracks along settler ontologies whereby land and animals exist as commodified resources to be directed to human ends” (Struthers Montford, K., 2019. Land, Agriculture, and the Carceral: The Territorializing Function of Penitentiary Farms. *Radical Philosophy Review*, 22(1): 113-141).

⁷⁰² Mendicino, M. (2022, April 8). “Labour.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 056*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-56/hansard>.

unsupported by any evidence, it is contradicted by CSC’s own established research, and there is a high likelihood that the prison farms will jeopardize the health and safety of prisoners and correctional staff, surrounding communities, and ecologically sensitive lands and waterways.⁷⁰³

5.1. “Working the barn isn’t for everybody” || Farm Jobs & Protocols

At the time of the prison farm closures (2009-2010), there were 285 prisoners working on prison farms nationally, averaging 47 inmate jobs at each of the six federal prison farms:

“There were approximately 285 federal offenders involved in the farm program nationally at the time of the closures. Inmates performed activities including farm maintenance, feeding cattle, operating machinery, maintaining cleanliness of the barn, raking and bailing [sic] hay, plowing and harvesting corn silage, operating a grain mill, grain truck and loading grain, tilling the land/spreading fertilizer and planting crops, etc.”⁷⁰⁴

Today, after more than six years and as much as \$56 million invested into Kingston’s new prison farm program, there are fewer inmates than ever working on the prison farms. At the time of the closures, based on the above referenced average, there would have been approximately 100 inmates working at the two prison farm sites in Kingston. In restoring Kingston’s prison farms, it was promised that the investment would create 40-60 offender jobs.⁷⁰⁵ Had these jobs actually manifested, that would place the price tag at approximately \$1 million per job equipping inmates with farm labour experience. However, by the program’s fourth year, in April 2022, CSC wrote that “There are currently 11 offenders participating in the Agriculture program at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institutions (total for the two sites).”⁷⁰⁶ By November 2023, there were only eight inmates working odd jobs on the Joyceville Institution farm, performing tasks

⁷⁰³ Fitzgerald, A. J., Wilson, A., Bruce, J., Wurdemann-Stam, A., & Neufeld, C. (2021, January 31). *Canada’s proposed prison farm program: Why it won’t work and what would work better*. Evolve Our Prison Farms. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/prison-farm-report/>.

⁷⁰⁴ CSC (n.d.). *Penitentiary Farms Background*. Prepared by Leanne McCarthy, Parliamentary Relations Unit, CSC. PSC A-2018-00451. At the time of the closures, it was commonly reported that 716 offenders were employed on the prison farms nationally (example: Bielski, M., 2017, March 16. A Herd and a Hope: The Fight to Reopen Canada’s Prison Farms. *Pulitzer Centre*. <https://pulitzercenter.org/stories/herd-and-hope-fight-reopen-canadas-prison-farms>). Some CSC documents do state that 716 was the total number of inmates who had worked on the prison farms nationally over the course of the last full fiscal year of farm operations in 2009-2010, but there was a high rate of turnover, so the total number of inmates working over the course of a year is not a reflection of the total number of jobs. 285 was the total number of inmates employed at the time of the farm closures, and therefore a more accurate reflection of the total number of inmate jobs that the six former prison farms offered.

⁷⁰⁵ CSC (2018, February 28). *Media Lines: Re-opening of CORCAN Farm Operations*. CSC A-2018-00333.

⁷⁰⁶ Email from Jordan Crosby, CSC Parliamentary Relations Unit (2022, April 11). CSC A-2022-00099.

vaguely described as “working the land” and “mending fences.”⁷⁰⁷ This is consistent with statements from prisoners at Joyceville Institution who reported that “Mending fences and cutting hay were about the only activities done here in 2023 involving inmates,”⁷⁰⁸ and “there is a fairly big turnover in the few inmates that work on the farms (parole and quitting to do other things).”⁷⁰⁹ More recently, in response to an Order Paper question from MP Reid, CSC disclosed that as of February 2024, Collins Bay Institution had 10 individuals assigned to farm operations, and Joyceville Institution had seven.⁷¹⁰ With only 17 inmates working in the farm program between the two sites, that places the price tag at \$3.3 million per prisoner farm job, based on the current cost estimate of \$56 million.⁷¹¹ After six years, there are no more inmates working in the farm program than there were in the first year, when CSC disclosed that “There are currently eight offenders at each site participating in fence repair, farmland repair, crop planting...”⁷¹² The number of inmate jobs is not indicative of the total number of individual inmates who have participated, which is higher given the rate of turnover. In response to a 2024 Order Paper question, CSC reported that “since 2018, 163 offenders have participated in on-the-job training in the penitentiary agriculture program.”⁷¹³ This breaks down to an average of 27 inmates per year between the two sites, or about 13 prisoners per year, per farm, gaining this allegedly transformative rehabilitative experience, while CSC spends more than \$500,000 annually on farm “staff salaries and benefits” alone.⁷¹⁴

⁷⁰⁷ Statement by CSC staff during the Joyceville farm visit with MP Scott Reid and Calvin Neufeld, November 15, 2023.

⁷⁰⁸ Letter from an inmate at Joyceville Institution to Evolve (2023, December 4).

⁷⁰⁹ Letter from an inmate at Joyceville Institution to Evolve (2023, October 12).

⁷¹⁰ House of Commons (2024, February 22). *Order Paper Question No. Q-2368*. Reply to MP Scott Reid by MP Jennifer O’Connell, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs Dominic LeBlanc.

⁷¹¹ As previously noted, CSC had originally attempted to inform respondents in the 2016 online consultation that supporting the reopening of prison farm “means directing financial resources to this business line at the expense of training offenders in other employment industries that have been shown to have higher rates of offender employability upon release.” Yet this is precisely what CSC was made to do in service of political and industry interests. In CSC’s draft 2019-2020 annual report, CSC noted that resources had been reallocated “to support higher priorities such as the correctional farms” and “fifteen offenders participated in farming operations employment assignments” that year, but these lines were removed from the publicly posted version (CSC, 2020. *DRAFT 2019-20 Departmental Results Report*. CSC A-2020-00407). The censored final version was posted at <https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/publications/092/005007-4500-2019-2020-en.pdf> but it no longer appears online.

⁷¹² House of Commons (2019, May 2). *Order Paper Question No. Q-2494*. Reply to MP Scott Reid by Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Ralph Goodale. PSC A-2019-00099.

⁷¹³ House of Commons (2024, February 22). *Order Paper Question No. Q-2368*. Reply to MP Scott Reid by MP Jennifer O’Connell, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs Dominic LeBlanc.

⁷¹⁴ Based on 2018-2019 fiscal year spending on the prison farm program (House of Commons, 2019, May 2. *Order Paper Question No. Q-2494*. Reply to MP Scott Reid by Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Ralph Goodale. PSC A-2019-00099). The question of who really benefits from money poured into CORCAN training programs is answered by one prisoner who wrote to Evolve in 2019 (quoted as written): “I am incarcerated in Dorchester Minimum Security Institution [in New Brunswick] in Dominic Lablanc’s riding. I work as a cleaner in a Corcan Shop where tents, mattresses, and furniture is manufactured for government departments in a five million dollar building at taxpayer expense. In reality what is being manufactured is Corcan staff wages and benefits with no public oversight of the operational procedure” (Letter from an inmate at Dorchester Institution, 2019, July 10).

Even when the dairy operations are established, few inmate jobs will come with them. Modern dairy farms do not involve much human labour, and CSC has been aware of this from the outset. CSC personnel toured dairy operations in 2016 and observed that with modern technology, dairy farms “are operated by about 3 people, which calls into question the ratio of investment versus offender employment opportunities.”⁷¹⁵

CSC documents state that when the cow barn reaches full capacity, it will only require four staff.⁷¹⁶ The substantially larger 2,200-goat operation will also not create many jobs, with only “10 Staff” required for the largely automated facility.⁷¹⁷ It is not clear how many of the staffing requirements will be filled by inmates versus civilian staff as the mainstay of these complex “7 day per week” operations.⁷¹⁸ Given the high rates of turnover in inmate jobs, and the unpredictability of inmate labour in an environment characterized by institutional lockdowns, inmate transfers, parole hearings, releases, multiple daily counts, and restricted work hours, it does not seem feasible that prisoners would constitute the primary workforce filling the staffing requirements in the cow and goat barns.⁷¹⁹

Not only are there few farm jobs available to inmates on the prison farms, but the jobs that prisoners are expected to do are not well coordinated or communicated. Inmates have complained about the lack of organization at Joyceville Institution, as shown in examples from two inmate letters below:

“Even the fellows that work on the various farm projects are not informed, which several have told me was frustrating for them... It is a discouragement for the inmate farm workers, as many of them are told only a few minutes ahead of when they have to do a task. A lot of “dead time” waiting to get instructions on the next task. It seems that CSC does not want to share its farming plan(s) if, in fact, they even have any???”⁷²⁰

⁷¹⁵ Email from Sara Parkes, Communications Advisor, CSC (2016, August 11). *Subject: Urgent Consultation - Request for background information from Commissioner - Agribusiness and Farm Closures - Deadline 3PM today.* CSC A-2018-00310.

⁷¹⁶ CSC (n.d.). *Dairy Goat and Dairy Cattle barns-Joyceville: PROJECT BRIEF QUESTIONS.* CSC A-2020-00132.

⁷¹⁷ CSC (2020, April 20). *Cow and Goat Barn, Joyceville, Ontario, Room Data Sheets.* CSC A-2020-00132.

⁷¹⁸ CSC’s draft tender for the purchase of bulk dairy coolers stated that “The authorized dealer must respond to service calls within 24 hours.” The PSPC Supply Specialist revising the draft asked, “Are service calls required Monday – Friday or 7 days a week?” CSC responded, “This is a 7 day per week operation and the dealers [must] have technicians on call during off hours” (CSC, 2018. *DRAFT: Annex A - Statement of Requirement Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution - Dairy Bulk Coolers.* CSC A-2020-00132).

⁷¹⁹ Further complicating matters, the dairy infrastructure is being constructed across the highway from Joyceville Institution. Prisoner participation in dairy operations will likely require escorted vehicular transport to bring prisoners to the site for work and back to the institution for regular daily counts, mealtimes, and common routine activities such as educational or personal development programs (ex. high school equivalency), visitations, meetings with lawyers, parole officers, Case Management Teams, and so forth. The former dairy operation at Collins Bay Institution was located immediately beside the institution and inmates were able to walk there and back independently. Inmates could also be called out at any hour of the night for emergencies or births, according to former prison farm worker Shaun Shannon.

⁷²⁰ Letter from an inmate at Joyceville Institution to Evolve (2023, October 28).

“As inmates, we notice that communication from CSC is very limited at best and nothing is ever circulated about the farm operations. Even when the workers on the farm applied for their jobs, they really did not get a very useful description of what the work entailed. About three years ago, CSC was readying to build barns for the goats and milking operation. It was said to be for manufacturing baby formula for a Chinese company, but that is about all we heard about it. Three years ago, there were House Worker positions [and] many liked their jobs. However, with the pending farming operations returning to the prisons, staff suddenly got concerned that there might not be 40-60 inmates available to work on the farm projects. They cancelled the House Worker jobs with the intention of creating the jobs at the farm. However, it was definitely a ‘cart before the horse’ scenario as only about 7 men ever got jobs working on the farm and the goat barns were more like a futuristic ‘Pipe Dream.’ Many of us doubt whether the goat operations will ever come to fruition.”⁷²¹

It is widely recognized that “Canada’s prison system is broken.”⁷²² The fact that CSC’s “futile,” “make-work” training is “not at all in tune with today’s job market”⁷²³ is arguably the least of the problems that could have been addressed by the funds poured into a farm program. Prisons are beleaguered by chronically inadequate medical and dental services, and equally inadequate provision of programs addressing the exceedingly high rates of addictions and substance abuse, mental illness and trauma, substandard education and literacy levels, and the range of Adverse Childhood Experiences that are known contributors to crime.⁷²⁴ Instead of investing in evidence-based solutions, an enormous sum of money was invested to provide prisoners with agricultural experience.⁷²⁵ In reality, it was a covert attempt to subsidize industry, but even if the government were purely motivated by a desire to help incarcerated persons, a farm is not the “huge” solution that Public Safety declared it to be.⁷²⁶ Public Safety has persistently promoted the prison farms by appealing, as ever, to sentiment: “These men were naming baby calves and bottle-feeding them and were well on their way to transitioning to a life free from crime.”⁷²⁷

⁷²¹ Letter from an inmate at Joyceville Institution to Evolve (2021, June 17).

⁷²² Ling, J. (2021, February 28). Houses of hate: How Canada’s prison system is broken. *Macleans*. <https://macleans.ca/news/canada/houses-of-hate-how-canadas-prison-system-is-broken/>.

⁷²³ Zinger, I. (2020, June 26). *Office of the Correctional Investigator Annual Report 2019-2020*. OCI. <https://oci-bec.gc.ca/en/content/office-correctional-investigator-annual-report-2019-2020>.

⁷²⁴ Perrin, B. (2023). *Indictment: The Criminal Justice System on Trial*. University of Toronto Press.

⁷²⁵ Statements by MP Mark Gerretsen and Prison Farm Advisory Panel chair Dianne Dowling at the 2019 prison farm launch (PSC, 2019, August 15. *Transcript - Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Karen McCrimmon News Conference - August 15, 2019*. PSC A-2019-00317).

⁷²⁶ “I am really pumped. I am thrilled... This is huge.” Speech by MP Karen McCrimmon, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, at the 2019 prison farm launch (PSC, 2019, August 15. *Transcript - Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Karen McCrimmon News Conference - August 15, 2019*. PSC A-2019-00317).

⁷²⁷ Damoff, P. (2022, May 5). “Labour.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 065*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-65/hansard>.

Public Safety’s sentiment-based approach to correctional policy is not only void of evidence (and contradicted by evidence), but even prisoners who had positive experiences on the former prison farms reported some degree of emotional trauma from the job. See for example the following statements from prisoners who worked on the dairy farm at Collins Bay Institution in the 1990s and 2000s:

“When I had to go in and take a baby calf away from her mother, I was putting my life at risk, because them cows were wanting to kill me when I would go in and try to take the calf. They knew what we were doing, and they were going to do whatever was in their power to stop that. So I mean that affected me. Of course it affected me. It was like, whoa man, what am I doing here? They would cry, the mother and the baby would be talking to each other, and it’s – oh my God. And you know that hurt, that affected me.”⁷²⁸

“A cow had a calf right at lunch time and it wasn’t breathing. There was no barn supervisor, no other inmates or guards around, nobody. And I’m telling you, I did everything for this calf—I scooped mucus out of his throat, threw him half over the stall to open his airways—every trick in the book. I was hollering for staff because I didn’t want to lose a calf. Finally, when I was done I put him on the floor. I said I don’t want to see nobody because I’m going to kill them. That’s all I was thinking, that I’d kill the next person I see.”⁷²⁹

As noted in Chapter 2, Evolve gave a presentation to CORCAN and the Prison Farm Advisory Panel in August 2017, outlining an evidence-based model that would have allowed therapeutic human-animal interactions. This proposal was dismissed in favour of a dairy model that is deeply problematic and lacks any evidence to support its vocational or therapeutic benefits. While political actors and media have projected a pastoral picture of prisoners “caring” for animals on the prison farms, CORCAN’s protocol sheets provide a sobering wake-up call to the realities of animal agriculture and the reasons why CSC’s researchers understood that farming animals is “unlikely” to foster empathy.⁷³⁰ Graphic descriptions of

⁷²⁸ Shaun Shannon quoted in Neufeld, C. & Shannon, S. (2020, February 6). *Prison Farm (R)evolution: A Conversation Between Prison Farm Activists*. Videoconference. Evolve Our Prison Farms. Edited transcript published in Piché J., House J., & Struthers Montford, K. (Eds.) (2022). *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons*, 31(2): 50-62. University of Ottawa Press. In the interview, Shannon described his first job coming out of prison: “I worked in a slaughterhouse when I first got out in Alberta. I sat in a bobcat with a raincoat on because I was pushing guts off the floor, and I lost it after a couple of months. I lost it, I couldn’t do it anymore, I lost it. How can you do that? I couldn’t do it every day. I just lost it. I said enough is enough. I broke down.”

⁷²⁹ Pat Kincaid quoted in Berman, S. (2016, July 2). What it Was Like Working at One of Kingston’s Prison Farms. *Vice*. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/qbnm5q/what-it-was-like-to-work-at-kingstons-now-closed-prison-farms>. Kincaid went on to say that the calf survived: “Then I looked at my calf one more time, and my god, it started breathing.”

⁷³⁰ CSC’s Research Branch specifically noted that the academic literature on the therapeutic benefits of prison-based animal programs does not extend to animal agriculture because “livestock care [is] unlikely to foster the same type of empathetic relationships with animals” (CSC, n.d. *The Impact of Penitentiary Farms on Correctional Results: A Research Document*. CSC A-2018-00310).

CORCAN's protocols detail the use of weapons, force, and violent measures to keep the farms operational.⁷³¹ These protocols include:

- Down cattle protocols (“Cattle that are unable or unwilling to stand”)
- Use of electric prods (“Discouraged as the risk of abuse is great”)
- Euthanasia (“Three acceptable methods... barbiturate overdose... captive bolt followed by a secondary kill step... gunshot to destroy the brain”)
- Confirmation of death (“Touch the eyeball; no blinking should occur”)
- Deadstock disposal (“Properly dispose of dead animals in a safe, environmentally adequate manner... kept out of public view”)
- Castration of a calf (“The removal or inactivation of the testicles... to make the animal docile... have one person hold the head of the calf so it does not move... pull both testicles into the scrotum... stretch the rubber band while the band is positioned around the neck of the scrotum above the testes”)
- Dehorning [disbudding] a calf (“Dehorn when the calf is a week old... electric and gas irons work best when they are ‘red’ hot... when the burning hair begins to smoke, slowly rotate the dehorner by turning your wrist... do not leave the dehorner in place for longer [than 10-15 seconds because] heat can be transferred through the bones of the skull and damage the calf’s brain”)
- Disbudding [dehorning] a goat kid (“Disbudding when the kid is between 4 to 14 days old... there needs to be two persons to perform this procedure [and] a goat disbudding holding box”)
- Calving (“Wash the vulva and rectum with warm soap and water... don and lubricate insemination gloves. Lubricate the vagina. This is important”)

In the CORCAN protocols, the persons responsible for performing the above tasks are listed as “Inmates, Instructor(s), Supervisor(s).” Everything from burning, castrating, and killing animals would be performed by inmates, except for impregnating them, a practice which CSC encourages prisoners to watch. When CSC began performing artificial insemination on its dairy cows in 2019 (even though dairy operations would be delayed until 2024), CSC indicated that the insemination was performed by an “insemination technician” with “interested offenders observing the process.”⁷³² The “process,” to be specific, is the insertion of an arm into the cow’s rectum and the insertion of an insemination gun into the cow’s vagina (details in footnote).⁷³³

⁷³¹ CORCAN Farm protocol sheets obtained from CSC A-2019-00325 and A-2020-00154.

⁷³² “To date, seven cows have been bred - four in the fall of 2019 with resulting births in September 2020. The other three cows were bred one each in February, June and August 2020 with respective due dates in November 2020; March 2021 and June 2021. The breeding of the cattle was conducted through artificial insemination by an insemination technician and incorporated with the offender training program, ensuring animal care and industry standards for breeding timeframes and procedures were respected, with interested offenders observing the process for learning purposes” (Email statement from Marie-Pier Léculyer, Media relations advisor, CSC, 2020, October 13).

⁷³³ “Use your left hand in the rectum and right hand to guide the insemination gun... In virgin heifers, a reasonable goal is a first-time conception rate of 55% or more... Properly restrain the cow when it is time to breed; it is important for both the

Disturbingly, there have been accounts and concerns raised regarding sexual abuse of animals on Kingston's prison farms, past and present. In March 2018, on condition of anonymity, an account was shared with Evolve by a retired CSC employee about an incarcerated farm worker who was found having sex with a cow:

"I personally know of a case where a farm worker at Frontenac [Collins Bay Institution] was caught by his peers having sex with a cow. He was placed in segregation at CBI and other offenders were either amused or disgusted, and were bellowing 'mooooooo...' at him for days. Just awful all the way around."⁷³⁴

This is not the only reported case of sexual abuse of animals on the prison farms. In January 2020, Evolve received a report from a different CSC employee in Kingston, who also wished to remain anonymous:

"Staff are overwhelmingly opposed to having animals at the prison, and they feel that the whole thing is being pushed by farmers who want access to prison labour... everyone knows that sexual abuse of the animals is rampant, and this isn't just historical but happening with the new cows at Collins Bay... this is common knowledge and talked about amongst the guards. Their view is that vulnerable animals simply should not be there, period."⁷³⁵

CSC's guidelines for animal therapy in prisons recognize "potential for abuse."⁷³⁶ Animals are not only vulnerable to sexual abuse but physical violence also, as warned by one former prison farm worker who said that by having animals in a prison "you're opening the door for guys that are having a bad day and they're going to lash out at these animals."⁷³⁷ This potential for violence is exacerbated by the fact that most

cow's and inseminator's safety... Preparing the semen straw: Using tweezers, quickly remove the desired straw of semen from the goblet below the frost line... After the straw is thawed, dry it off with a clean towel and verify that you have grabbed the correct semen straw for the desired mating. Warm the breeding gun by stroking vigorously with hand five or six times... Place the sterile sheath over the gun and push on until it seals. Sheath protectors can also be helpful to maintain a clean gun for insemination. Place the gun between your body and shirt to maintain optimal temperature until you are ready to breed the cow. Let the cow know that you are there by gently patting her on the rump or talking in a soft voice. Enter the rectum by forming a cone like shape with your fingers. Gently palpate the cow and remove any excess manure. Place the tail on the back side of your left arm so that it is not in the way during insemination. Wipe the vulva... With your left hand make a fist and press down directly on top of the vulva. This will spread the vulva lips allowing easy access to insert the gun" (Johnson, K., 2023. *Artificial insemination of cattle*. University of Minnesota Extension. <https://extension.umn.edu/dairy-milking-cows/artificial-insemination-cattle#inserting-the-loaded-breeding-gun-2130810>).

⁷³⁴ Account (2018) from a retired correctional officer who worked in Kingston institutions for decades.

⁷³⁵ Account (2020) from an employed correctional officer at Collins Bay Institution.

⁷³⁶ CSC's research paper "Pet Facilitated Therapy in Correctional Institutions" was online until 2023, according to internet archives; as of 2024, it is no longer available at the former link (<https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/publications/fsw/pet/pet-eng.shtml>) but can still be retrieved in internet archives.

⁷³⁷ Evolve Our Prison Farms. (2019, August 2). *Ex-Prison Farm Worker Interview* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fd6gGw8cpAQ&t=962s>.

prisoners do not have previous experience working with farmed animals, a concern captured by the next two inmate accounts of their experiences working on the former prison farms in Kingston:

“I had never been this close to a cow in my life. All of my assumptions about how soft and cuddly cows were went right out the window when I stepped up behind one, grabbed its shitty tail and got a hard kick in the shins. It wasn’t easy to adjust to being around cows. I’d been on milking duty a couple of weeks when one of the cows stepped on my foot. I began to hit it with punches like a professional boxer. The next day, another cow crushed me against a railing and I rolled a series of punches on its side and on its head. After a few days of this, the cows would moo and prance around nervously when I came into the barn, making it harder to milk them. One day, a cow coughed when I was behind it. Green shit flew out of her ass and all over my face. I tore into that cow with my fists. Next thing I knew, the camp boss, Mr. Kirby, was standing beside me. ‘Atkinson, I knew something was up. Milk production is down. You hit a cow again, I’ll kick your ass.’... My immediate job, however, was preparing cows for slaughter. It was my job to decide which seven cows would end up on death row on any given day. It was also my habit, while they waited to head down that ramp to their fate, to read the Bible aloud to them... Hearing a voice calmed them and helped me hone my speaking skills. I’d grown up a lot since the days when I was hitting the poor beasts with my fists.”⁷³⁸

“Working the barn isn’t for everybody. Some inmates can’t stand the smell of shit or hay or cows, or they think they’re hard to milk and they didn’t want to take the time to learn to milk ‘em right. Some cows will lay right down on top of their food ‘cause they don’t want to be milked. Some guys would kick ‘em.”⁷³⁹

Given the high rate of animal deaths and the years of keeping cattle in substandard temporary housing, the greater risk posed to animals is CSC’s lack of responsible planning and management, as well as the farm protocols that CSC will require inmates to engage in as part of their training. In addition to carrying out procedures of a violent nature and observing activities of a sexual nature, other CORCAN protocols outline instructions for dealing with a range of unpleasant problems such as uterine infections, odorous mucopurulent discharge, mastitis, massive peritonitis, musculoskeletal injury, “proper placement of a dead animal in a compost pile,”⁷⁴⁰ and other common complications and tasks involved in dairy operations. All these aspects of animal agriculture are counterproductive to therapeutic goals and unappealing to the

⁷³⁸ Atkinson, R. (2017). *The Life Crimes and Hard Times of Ricky Atkinson: Leader of the Dirty Tricks Gang*. Exile Editions. Atkinson worked on the former farms at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institutions.

⁷³⁹ Pat Kincaid quoted in Berman, S. (2016, July 2). What it Was Like Working at One of Kingston’s Prison Farms. *Vice*. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/qbnm5q/what-it-was-like-to-work-at-kingstons-now-closed-prison-farms>. Kincaid worked on the former farm at Collins Bay Institution.

⁷⁴⁰ CORCAN (2020, September). *Protocol: Collins Bay and Joyceville Penitentiary Farms: Dead Stock Disposal*. CSC A-2020-00154.

predominantly urban prison population and to Millennials who will “never aspire” to “muck stables.”⁷⁴¹ They are also problematic in that the work itself is risky for prisoners and does little to prepare them for the job market post release.

5.2. “Past and present injuries” || Unsafe Working Environments

Operationalizing a federal prison farm is logistically complex and unlikely to be viable for many reasons.⁷⁴² Farming is financially demanding and poses considerable risks for prisoners and staff. The agriculture sector, animal agriculture in particular, has one of the highest rates of workplace injuries compared to other occupational sectors, ranking “among the most hazardous industries worldwide, with high rates of occupational fatalities, injuries, and illnesses.”⁷⁴³

It is perhaps unsurprising then that in September 2021, the two unions representing correctional staff held a meeting with CORCAN and CSC to discuss safety concerns related to prison farm activities.⁷⁴⁴ Representatives of the Union of Safety and Justice Employees (USJE) and the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers (UCCO) pointed to “past and present injuries” in CORCAN’s farm operations. Some of the concerns that the unions raised included the daily use of tools and heavy equipment, the challenges of getting staff members on site after hours in emergencies, and risks to CORCAN staff who “aren’t issued PPA’s [Personal Portable Alarms] & rely on their cellular telephones for all modes of communication.”⁷⁴⁵

⁷⁴¹ Fraser, G. (2021). Employability Hurdles for Inmates Reintegrating on Release. *Out of Bounds Prison Magazine*, Winter Season Edition 2021, 13-17.

⁷⁴² As MP Scott Reid stated: “I have practical doubts that it will be possible for a federal government agency to produce goat’s milk at a profit. Running tight, budget-minded competitive enterprises is not a specialty of the federal government” (Statement from MP Scott Reid. Evolve Our Prison Farms. 2021, July 21. *Wise words from Conservative Scott Reid, MP..* [Status update]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/EvolveOurPrisonFarms/photos/pb.100064814345725.-2207520000/4250786728348055/?type=3>). Even plant-based operations have unique challenges in the prison environment. CSC’s soybean harvest in 2023 didn’t occur until November 15, weeks behind schedule, because combine repairs were delayed by the slow federal procurement process, as explained by CSC’s Farm Supervisor during Evolve’s farm tour with MP Reid on November 15, 2023.

⁷⁴³ Hayden, M.A. et al (2022). Occupational Safety and Health with Technological Developments in Livestock Farms: A Literature Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19, 16440. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192416440>.

⁷⁴⁴ CSC (2021, September 13). *Follow-Up to IJOSH: Corcan Operations*. CSC A-2021-00381.

⁷⁴⁵ This problem was raised in the House of Commons by MP Scott Reid: “Mr. Speaker, meeting notes obtained via access to information reveal that the union representing prison staff is alarmed that, at Correctional Service of Canada’s existing prison farm, staff are required to work with inmates after hours in unsafe conditions. This includes being alone and unaccompanied, and being denied the personal paging devices necessary to call for immediate backup. The union’s fears include the potential for assault and hostage taking. If the government cannot provide safe working conditions at its existing, relatively small, prison farm, how will it do so at its planned vast, new goat- and cow-milking operation?” (Reid, S. 2023, May 12. “Correctional Service of Canada.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard* 196. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-196/hansard>).

The unions demanded that no staff be expected or permitted to work with prisoners alone “under any circumstances.” Chris Stein, CORCAN’s farm manager, argued that “it might not be practical or possible to have two staff onsite.” Most, or all, of CORCAN’s hired Agricultural Instructors are farmers who return to the duties of their own private farms after hours.⁷⁴⁶ Even during regular work hours, CORCAN’s farm staff have been required to work alone with prisoners, and the unions’ concerns included “the potential for assault/hostage taking, workplace injury and/or incapacitation and the potential for allegations of inappropriate conduct.” Separate from this meeting, unions have also expressed concerns that the prison farms may already be jeopardizing institutional security by providing additional opportunities for contraband to enter the institutions through increased outside traffic and drone activity (details in footnote).⁷⁴⁷

It is obvious from this meeting that there have been concerning incidents in which staff have been put at risk and injured. Obtaining records of accidents and injuries involving prisoners and civilian employees working in CSC’s farm and slaughter enterprises has proven to be exceptionally difficult. For example, CSC refused to release accident and injury reports and psychological assessments for incarcerated persons working in the Joyceville abattoir, on the grounds that CSC “would have to go through every offender’s file to retrieve the records and at the end it would be withheld in its entirety under section 19(1) [personal information].”⁷⁴⁸ The same barrier exists to accessing records of inmate injuries in the farm operations.

⁷⁴⁶ For example, CSC’s Farm Supervisor Tiffany Babcock manages her own “80-cow tie-stall Master Breeder herd” (Cumming, I. 2023, November 28. Still under construction, prison farms regain their shape. *Ontario Farmer*). The “essential qualifications” for CSC’s farm instructors were “completion of secondary school” or the “degree equivalency” of “experience in animal husbandry [and] crop production for livestock operations and sale” (Government of Canada. Public Service Resourcing System. *Instructor – Agriculture: Correctional Service of Canada - CORCAN. Closing date: 6 September 2018. CSC A-2019-00107*).

⁷⁴⁷ In communications with Evolve, union representatives have expressed that any outside traffic coming into prisons is a contraband risk, and drones have recently emerged as a top security issue. The location of the dairy facilities across the highway, out of direct sight of the institution, in a pasture field surrounded by hundreds of acres of trees, could increase drone drop opportunities. Since the prison farms returned, the rate of drone drops at Collins Bay and Joyceville have increased significantly. As reported by *Kingstonist* in March 2024: “So far this year, there have been 11 seizures of packages at Joyceville Institution and six at Collins Bay Institution, most of which are believed to have ended up on the properties of the institutions by way of ‘suspected drone drops’... When asked about the apparent increase in seizures of contraband and unauthorized items in the Kingston area, the CSC [replied] ‘CSC has noted an increase in successful seizures of drone packages... There are institutions that appear to experience more drone incidents than others’” (Foley, J., 2024, March 15. CSC responds to increased contraband seizures at Kingston area institutions. *Kingstonist*. <https://www.kingstonist.com/news/csc-responds-to-increased-contraband-seizures-at-kingston-area-institutions/>). By May 2024, there had been 17 reported seizures of contraband at Joyceville and 11 at Collins Bay (Foley, J., 2024, May 23. CSC says ‘suspected drone drop’ behind latest seizure at Joyceville Institution. *Kingstonist*. <https://www.kingstonist.com/news/csc-says-suspected-drone-drop-behind-latest-seizure-at-joyceville-institution/>). By July 2024, the number of contraband seizures resulting from drone drops at Joyceville reached 20, compared to only three at another Kingston prison (Millhaven Institution) which does not have a prison farm (Foley, J., 2024, July 19. CSC report 20th seizure of contraband at Joyceville Institution in 2024. *Kingstonist*. <https://www.kingstonist.com/news/csc-report-20th-seizure-of-contraband-at-joyceville-institution-in-2024/>).

⁷⁴⁸ Email statement from Francine Brazeau, ATIP Analyst, CSC (2019, October 4).

There is an additional challenge in assessing the rates of prisoner injuries. Prisoners are not legally classified as employees and do not have the legal right to standard protections afforded to free workers or recourse to compensation in the event of workplace injury, yet despite these obstacles, researchers have compiled an impressive array of records of accidents and injuries on the former prison farms across Canada.⁷⁴⁹ Evolve, meanwhile, has gathered new evidence that accidents and injuries have already begun to occur since the relaunch of CSC’s penitentiary agriculture program in Kingston.

In January 2019, *Farmers Forum* reported that a farmer, Rob O’Connor, had sustained serious injuries in an abattoir in Joyceville.⁷⁵⁰ The article did not specify that the accident occurred in CSC’s abattoir at Joyceville Institution, however it is the only one in the region, and Rob O’Connor confirmed to Evolve that the 2018 accident occurred in CSC’s slaughterhouse⁷⁵¹ when a hanger broke and an “1800 lb. carcass” fell on him, “breaking his shoulder in two places, dislocating his hip, fracturing his knee and shinbone and tearing tendons and ligaments.” Due to his extensive injuries, O’Connor spent months in hospital undergoing surgeries before he was released in January 2019 “still in a wheelchair.”⁷⁵²

Injuries sustained by civilian employees such as O’Connor could present a legal liability for CSC.⁷⁵³ Evolve filed an ATI request with CSC for records related to this abattoir accident. CSC claimed to have no record of the incident.⁷⁵⁴ Evolve requested another search, given that O’Connor had confirmed that it occurred in CSC’s abattoir, and Evolve argued that security and other CSC personnel would surely have been notified of a life-threatening accident occurring in a CSC-owned and inmate-staffed facility requiring emergency medical response and an ambulance entering prison property. CSC justified their lack of information regarding the incident on the grounds that, *if* it occurred, it would have happened in a private company’s operation and was therefore not CSC’s responsibility and not something that CSC “had a need to know” about:

⁷⁴⁹ In their book *Solidarity Beyond Bars: Unionizing Prison Labour*, labour studies scholar Dr. Jordan House (Brock University) and human rights lawyer Asaf Rashid (Asaf Rashid Law) have documented many accidents and injuries on CSC’s former prison farms, which is impressive given “the fact that accidents in [CSC’s] agricultural operation were not tracked.” The authors point out that “Some of the best information on workplace accidents involving prisoners is in legal filings and court decisions, although these are also limited. They only represent a select few cases that were serious enough to pursue – and were pursued by prisoners with the means to engage in litigation” (House, J. & Rashid, A., 2022. *Solidarity Beyond Bars: Unionizing Prison Labour*. Fernwood Publishing).

⁷⁵⁰ Lynch, C. (2019, January 15). Fundraiser for injured Joyceville beef farmer. *Farmers Forum*. <https://farmersforum.com/eastern-ontario-fundraiser-for-injured-joyceville-beef-farmer/>.

⁷⁵¹ Telephone conversation with Evolve (2023, August 8).

⁷⁵² Lynch, C. (2019, January 15). Fundraiser for injured Joyceville beef farmer. *Farmers Forum*. <https://farmersforum.com/eastern-ontario-fundraiser-for-injured-joyceville-beef-farmer/>.

⁷⁵³ Rob O’Connor was working for Wallace Beef alongside incarcerated workers. As of August 2023, O’Connor said he had still not fully recovered from his 2018 injuries.

⁷⁵⁴ CSC (2023, August 8). A-2023-00049 Response Letter.

“The accident would have occurred on a leased property, not a CSC operated facility (i.e. a private company running a private business). CSC had no further oversight beyond the leasing of the building. CSC had a company who ran their operation out of the abattoir building at Joyceville. The company had their own employees/team. In addition... an employee of a private company working in a private industry operation, would not be filing information specifically with CSC other than what CSC had a need to know.”⁷⁵⁵

The accident occurred just days after O’Connor had applied for the position of CSC Agriculture Instructor.⁷⁵⁶ However, at the time of the accident, he was an employee of Wallace Beef, a private company that had contractual relationships with CSC and CORCAN⁷⁵⁷ to operate the abattoir (which only produced meat commercially, not for prison use) with CSC supplying inmate labour. When pressed, CSC stated that “If anyone has information related to the accident it would be Wallace Beef who was the company that had leased the building. Wallace Beef ran their own operation (including HR, finance, etc.) on their own and independent of CSC.”⁷⁵⁸ This argument, however, is contradicted by CSC’s contracts with Wallace Beef, which require that “the Licensee (Wallace Beef) shall immediately notify the Project Authority (CSC) of any issues, problems, or areas of concern as they arise.” The contract also stipulates that Wallace Beef must “Notify and report to CSC any damages to CSC property” and attend regular health and safety meetings “to address any safety issues relating to the abattoir.”⁷⁵⁹

In April 2021, another serious accident occurred on the prison farms. An incarcerated person communicated to Evolve that one of CSC’s Agriculture Instructors had been badly injured in a tractor accident at Collins Bay Institution.⁷⁶⁰ To protect the source of information, Evolve waited months before inquiring into the

⁷⁵⁵ Email from Kelsey Welsh, ATIP Analyst, CSC (2023, August 22). To put this in perspective, ATI records show Duty Officer Reports that were filed about small Evolve demonstrations off prison property observed by CSC staff: “On 2019-12-04 at approximately 1600 hours Mobile patrol officers report to CBI Operations Desk that 3 individuals from ‘Evolve the Prison Farms’ are protesting. The 3 individuals are not on institutional property and their actions have had no impact on the institution” (CSC, 2019, December 4. *Duty Officer Report on Reportable Incidents*. CSC A-2019-00319). Another Duty Officer Report states: “At approximately 1400 hours, mobile patrol officers contacted the operations desk to inform the correctional manager that two citizens were protesting along Bath Rd just off of institutional property. This protest is comprised of two citizens with a banner stating, ‘Evolve our prison farms.’ This protest has had no impact to the institution at this time” (CSC, 2019, December 28. *Duty Officer Report on Reportable Incidents*. CSC A-2019-00319). It is scarcely credible that CSC would have Duty Officer Reports and email correspondence about two or three individuals standing off prison property, yet no record of a near-fatal accident occurring on prison property.

⁷⁵⁶ Email from Dana Vaughan, Project Coordinator, CORCAN to Rob O’Connor (2018, October 19). *Subject: RE: GL-MAN-07 Interview Invitation*. CSC A-2019-00107.

⁷⁵⁷ The CSC contract was for the operation of the abattoir. CORCAN’s contract was separate, relating to the “vocational training” of inmates.

⁷⁵⁸ Email from Kelsey Welsh, ATIP Analyst, CSC (2023, August 22).

⁷⁵⁹ CSC (2021, September 28). *Leave and Licence Agreement for Joyceville Minimum Abattoir Operation*. CSC A-2021-00382.

⁷⁶⁰ The news was communicated to Evolve with difficulty and trepidation via a covert chain of communication: “Letters like this go out with guys we trust that are getting out” (Statement to Evolve from a Joyceville prisoner, 2021, May 14). This

accident. On August 2, 2021, Evolve submitted an Access to Information request for records related to the accident. Initially, the ATI analyst assigned to the request attempted to “absorb” it into a separate larger request that had been filed by Evolve on another subject.⁷⁶¹ Evolve declined and requested that another ATI analyst be assigned to the file, due to a history of obstruction from this analyst.⁷⁶² On August 26, 2021, the new ATI analyst assigned to the request responded saying that “an accident, as described in your request text, has not occurred.”⁷⁶³ Convinced of the credibility of the incarcerated person who had reported the incident, Evolve revised the request text to broaden the scope, and requested a new search. In September 2021, CSC issued a 90-day extension, which would have resulted in the release of records (if they existed) by December 2021.⁷⁶⁴ By June 2022, CSC still had not issued a response, so Evolve requested an update. CSC indicated that “The request is currently being reviewed by ATIP management.”⁷⁶⁵ By November 2022, there was still no response, so Evolve filed a delay complaint with the Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC). The delay complaint was assigned to an OIC investigator on January 31, 2023. Finally, 561 days after the ATI request was filed, CSC issued a nine-page release on February 14, 2023.⁷⁶⁶

The records consisted of two documents: a Hazardous Occurrence Investigation Report and a Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) report from the April 2021 tractor accident, which had indeed occurred as the inmate had reported. According to the heavily redacted documents, CSC’s Agriculture Instructor had been “Struck/Caught” in a “Motor Vehicle Incident” and sustained disabling injury that required immediate

shows the apprehension prisoners have over potential reprisals. It was also said, but not confirmed, that the Agriculture Instructor was working alone when the accident occurred. If so, it underscores the concerns raised by the unions, and it may have been a triggering factor for the unions calling the meeting with CSC and CORCAN in September 2021.

⁷⁶¹ Email from Ray Davidson, ATIP Analyst, CSC (2021, August 6).

⁷⁶² This particular ATI analyst (Ray Davidson) should not have been assigned this ATI request. He had been barred from processing Evolve’s requests after he had attempted to alter, complicate, obstruct, delay, and eventually block Evolve’s requests, which he alleged were “frivolous,” “vexatious,” “irrelevant,” “in bad faith,” and “not of the type envisioned by the architects of the law.” His unprofessional conduct included an intimidating phone call to Calvin Neufeld, which Neufeld recorded, in which he expressed his intention to ensure that Evolve’s requests would not be processed. Following this phone call, Davidson assigned Evolve’s ATI requests to himself and filed a Notice of Application to Decline to Act on each. Neufeld successfully challenged this by filing a complaint with the OIC, and the notices were withdrawn. Afterwards, Neufeld met with CSC’s ATIP Director, and it was mutually agreed that Davidson would no longer process Evolve’s requests. These events occurred in 2020, so Davidson should not have responded to the 2021 tractor accident ATI request with an attempt to “absorb” it into a larger Evolve request for all records related to CSC’s communications with the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada regarding dairy facility construction. In January 2022, Neufeld was informed that Davidson was “no longer with CSC-ATIP” (Email from Marie Botros, Acting Director, ATIP, CSC, 2022, January 4).

⁷⁶³ Email from Stéphane Brisson, ATIP Director, CSC (2021, August 26).

⁷⁶⁴ Government institutions must respond to ATI requests within 30 calendar days unless an extension is issued on reasonable grounds that include “consultations are necessary to comply with the request that cannot reasonably be completed within the original time limit,” or “the request is for a large number of records.” Both of these were cited as reasons for the extension on Evolve’s request for records relating to the tractor accident that CSC alleged did not occur. To reiterate: First CSC alleged that the accident did not occur, then CSC issued a 90-day extension citing a large volume of records, and finally CSC delayed the release of nine pages by 561 days.

⁷⁶⁵ Email from Sarmatha Sathianathan, ATIP Analyst, CSC (2022, June 23).

⁷⁶⁶ CSC A-2021-00216.

on-site first aid from CBI Minimum Health Care Staff and ambulance transport to a hospital emergency department.⁷⁶⁷ The 2021 WSIB form indicates that he was unable to return to work.⁷⁶⁸ While the details of the accident are redacted, the cause of the hazardous occurrence is handwritten as “error in judgement put him in wrong place at wrong time.”⁷⁶⁹

As difficult as it was to obtain simple confirmation that the accident had in fact occurred (a fact that CSC initially denied), Evolve was unsuccessful in seeking further records related to this accident. Farm accidents must be reported to provincial authorities, but in this case the accident occurred on a federally funded farm on federally owned land, so it was unclear whether CSC would have reported to provincial or federal authorities. To verify whether CSC had complied with the requirement to report the incident to the “Minister of Labour,”⁷⁷⁰ Evolve filed a provincial Freedom of Information request with the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, as well as a federal Access to Information request with Employment and Social Development Canada. Both agencies conducted a thorough search and found no responsive records.⁷⁷¹ As neither agency had any record of the accident, it appears that CSC failed to comply with the requirement to submit a copy of the accident report to authorities. This lack of transparency and accountability makes already dangerous agricultural work even more risky for prisoners and civilian staff who may have limited recourse in the event of an accident or injury.

5.3. “Cheating prisoners” || Inefficacy of Farm Labour for Employability

With CSC staff, inmates, and CSC’s own research stating that prison farms do not improve employability, CSC faced the “challenge” of addressing this inconsistency in the lead up to the 2016 public consultation process, where prison farm restoration was on the political table:

⁷⁶⁷ Report of Injury (2021, April). WSIB Ontario. CSC A-2021-00216.

⁷⁶⁸ In 2019, CSC hired four Agriculture Instructors: Tiffany Babcock, Benjamin Johnston, Kevin Hansen, and Garry Posthumus. In response to a 2023 inquiry by Evolve, the list of Agriculture Instructors provided by CSC included only the first three names, minus Posthumus (Email statement from Esther Mailhot, Senior Advisor, Issues Management and Media Relations, CSC, 2023, November 30).

⁷⁶⁹ Employment and Social Development Canada. *Hazardous Occurrence Investigation Report*. CSC A-2021-00216.

⁷⁷⁰ The Hazardous Occurrence Investigation Report, an Employment and Social Development Canada form, requires that a copy be submitted to the “Minister of Labour.”

⁷⁷¹ Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (2022, January 10). *G-2021-01244 Decision Letter*. Government of Ontario. Also: Employment and Social Development Canada (2023, April 12). *Letter to applicant A-2022-04038*. Government of Canada. ESDC A-2023-04038.

“Our challenge will be to address the inconsistency between these views/perceptions from the public related to successful employability generated by the farms program and my understanding of the hard facts that in reality we have no statistics nor evidence to support offender employment in the farming business.”⁷⁷²

Not only did CSC have to navigate its own established position on the matter which collided with the new political tide, but they needed to circumnavigate public perceptions which collided with “the hard facts.” CSC wrestled with this conflict while preparing the online consultation questions in 2016: “One of the goals is to have an evidence based approach and part of our story is that there is little evidence.”⁷⁷³ Even in 2020, well into prison farm implementation, media lines reveal CSC’s continued awareness of the absence of evidence to support the decision to reopen. In response to the question “Is there research about the successfulness of the farm program?” CSC admitted that “There is no research conducted specifically about the farm employment program.”⁷⁷⁴

As noted in Chapter 1, at the time of the former farm closures, CSC testified that there was little or no evidence that prison farms contribute to employability or reductions in recidivism,⁷⁷⁵ and CSC defended the need to redirect resources to programs “beyond agriculture” that would “better serve offenders” and be “more consistent with the current labour market.”⁷⁷⁶ CSC media lines from 2011 state that jobs in the agriculture sector are sparse and primarily rural, and since the vast majority of prisoners return to urban centres, the agriculture sector does not “meet the needs and realities offenders are facing in today’s urban labour market.”⁷⁷⁷

Despite the strength of CSC’s evidence-based position, opponents to the closures claimed that animal-based agricultural programs developed prisoners’ skillsets, taught empathy, and helped offset the high costs of incarceration. It was argued that prison farms provided generic “soft skills” and “transferable skills”⁷⁷⁸ that

⁷⁷² Email from Patrice Miron, Director, Communications and Engagement, CSC (2016, September 28). *Subject: RE: MO Request – “Factoids” on farm consult.* CSC A-2018-00310.

⁷⁷³ Email from David Molzahn, Manager, Community and Stakeholder Relations, to Scott Harris, Regional Deputy Commissioner, CSC (2016, July 21). *Subject: FW: RIB 16-11 (Prison Farms).* CSC A-2018-00310.

⁷⁷⁴ CSC (2020, April). *Media Lines: Reopening of CORCAN Farm Operations.* CSC A-2020-00407.

⁷⁷⁵ Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. *Government Response.* 40th Parliament, 3rd session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/documentviewer/en/40-3/SECU/report-1/response-8512-403-25>.

⁷⁷⁶ Letters issued by CSC (2010 & 2011). Examples: Letters from E. Van Allen, Assistant Commissioner, Public Affairs and Parliamentary Relations (2010, March 25, April 7, May 3, July 20). Email from Chris Price, Assistant Commissioner, Correctional Operations and Programs (2010, March 3). Email from Ellen Henderson, CORCAN Corporate Communications (2010, August 24). CSC A-2018-00310.

⁷⁷⁷ CSC (2011, July 19). *Media Lines.* CSC A-2018-00333.

⁷⁷⁸ In a media interview, CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle defended the farms: “Soft skills acquired through CORCAN are useful for offenders when they are back in the community” (Email from Marie-Pier Léculyer, Media Relations Advisor, CSC, 2021, March 9. *Subject: Summary - Interview with Global News Kingston - Goat operations and penitentiary farm program.* CSC

would transform prisoners into more “punctual” and “responsible” people, and on this premise, it was even suggested that farm skills were more important than trades certifications.⁷⁷⁹ The arguments put forward in defence of the farm program were simplistic and often caricatural: “Offenders working on the farms and caring for the animals have a purpose for getting up in the morning and leaving their rooms.”⁷⁸⁰ Another common, but misguided, assumption was that by putting prisoners to work on farms, they were “paying their way through agriculture,”⁷⁸¹ when in fact the farms operated at a financial loss.⁷⁸² Opponents of the closures countered this fact by frequently misreporting that while other farms were losing money, the Frontenac farm at Collins Bay Institution was uniquely profitable:

“Ted Hsu, the Liberal MP for Kingston and the Islands, argues that – despite claims by the Conservative government that the prison farm operations were losing money – Frontenac was the sole profitable prison farm of the six closed across the country... Dianne Dowling speculates that this operation was perhaps more profitable because of the eggs and milk, which are high value items.”⁷⁸³

CSC records show, however, that even the Collins Bay farm operated at a deficit, with a net loss of \$319,000 in its last full year of operations (2009-2010).⁷⁸⁴ As to correctional results, an abundance of records show

A-2021-00213). Likewise, the goat procurement tender stated that “The penitentiary farm training model will include technical skills, transferable and soft skills training” (PSPC, 2019, December 18. *Request for Proposal: Dairy Goats (kids)*. CSC A-2020-00131).

⁷⁷⁹ In parliamentary testimony, Dianne Dowling stated that trades certifications are less important than soft transferable skills gained in farm work: “We were startled to hear that inmates on the farm program did not gain employable skills. We feel that they gained hard skills like operating equipment, repairing it, and looking after it... Probably just as important--or more important--are the attitudes of punctuality, teamwork, responsibility, and so on. All of those characteristics are transferable to other jobs and, in fact, are critical to keeping a job. If you have a welding certificate, you might get the job, but you’re not going to keep it if you can’t get along with your employer or your colleagues” (Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. 2010, March 30. *Evidence*. 40th Parliament, 3rd session, meeting no. 6. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/40-3/SECU/meeting-6/evidence>).

⁷⁸⁰ “I feel it is a grave mistake for the Government and Corrections to consider closing these farms in favour of ‘new’ programs that may or may not prove successful... Offenders working on the farms and caring for the animals have a purpose for getting up in the morning and leaving their rooms... These farms help pay for themselves by providing food for other institutions. The sign outside Collins Bay Institution states: ‘PAYING OUR WAY THROUGH AGRICULTURE’. The offenders may not work on farms when released from custody but they will have learned some work ethics” (Letter from unknown sender [name redacted] to CSC Commissioner Don Head, 2010, April 1. CSC A-2018-00310).

⁷⁸¹ This slogan, used in the campaigns to “Save” and “Restore” the prison farms, was taken from CSC’s sign at the Collins Bay (Frontenac) Institution farm: “Jeff Peters... pointed to the large Frontenac Institution lawn sign ‘Paying their way through agriculture’ and explained, ‘The food on this farm is consumed by the inmates’” (“Campaign to save prison farms - back in high gear,” 2009, October 1. *Frontenac News*. <https://www.frontenacnews.ca/item/5231-prison-farm-09-39>).

⁷⁸² “Latest figures show the farms generated revenues of \$7.5 million, but had expenses of \$11.6 million, for a loss of \$4.1 million” (“Protesters vow to block animals from leaving prison farm as auction looms,” 2010, July 23. *The Canadian Press*. CSC 2018-00310).

⁷⁸³ Reeve, J. (n.d.). *The Kingston Prison Farms at Frontenac and Pittsburgh Correctional Institutions*. Adapted from an unpublished Masters of Environmental Studies major research paper, York University, Toronto, ON.

⁷⁸⁴ The farm at Joyceville Institution had a net loss of \$473,000 that year. If not for \$521,000 in revenues from the abattoir, the Joyceville farm’s net loss would have been just shy of \$1 million in its last year of operation (CSC, 2017, February 14. *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Reopening of CORCAN Farm at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institutions*. PSC A-2018-00450).

that, leading up to the reopening of prison farms, CSC's Research Branch found "very little academic literature on prison farms specifically, especially related to their impact on correctional results," and "no research" on the impact of inmates working with farm animals, other than the research suggesting that prison-based livestock operations are "unlikely to foster... empathetic relationships with animals."⁷⁸⁵ CSC's Research Branch summarized their findings in a brief (RIB 16-11) titled: *The Impact of Penitentiary Farms on Correctional Results: A Research Document*. The brief was to be released as a "foundational"⁷⁸⁶ component of the 2016 public consultation process, but for reasons that are not revealed in ATI records, it was decided not to release the document.⁷⁸⁷ Instead, CSC Communications advised that they would only share generic information as part of the public consultations and not get "into the weeds" of actual research:

"I was thinking instead of providing the research brief about the farms we could consider one of our already-published research briefs about prison industries and the benefits of teaching offenders work skills. We have done research that shows the importance of teaching offenders work skills and trades generally. This would mean not getting into the weeds of the farm closure decision and how only a small number of offenders were finding work in farming post-release."⁷⁸⁸

The poor performance of prison farms in terms of employability was echoed by two former CSC wardens who, upon hearing the Liberal Party's promise to restore prison farms in 2015, published letters to the editor in local newspapers. One letter was written by retired warden Charles Stickel, a 30-year veteran of CSC with a degree in agriculture, and author of *The Inside Out Prison: The Story of Beaver Creek Minimum Security Institution*. The second letter was published by Robert Clark, a former deputy warden and author of *Down Inside: Thirty Years in Canada's Prison Service*. In these letters, both men upheld CSC's original standpoint that agricultural labour in prison does not translate to meaningful employment upon release.

Charles Stickel: "This morning I woke to read another article about the desire to restore the Frontenac [Collins Bay] Prison Farm. This issue has renewed a past frustration, so I thought I would share a couple of thoughts now that I am not obliged to silence by my employer.

⁷⁸⁵ CSC (n.d.). *The Impact of Penitentiary Farms on Correctional Results: A Research Document*. CSC A-2018-00310.

⁷⁸⁶ "The minister has approved a consultation process that includes a research component... This research report will be foundational for the consultation experiences" (Email from Line Saucier on behalf of Scott Harris, Assistant Commissioner, Communications & Engagement, to Larry Motiuk, PhD, Assistant Commissioner, Policy, CSC, 2016, April 5. *Subject: Farm consultation research*. CSC A-2018-00310).

⁷⁸⁷ It is not clear who made the decision to withhold the research brief that CSC prepared for the public consultation, but ATI records show that shortly before the consultations were launched, "the Minister's office expressed interest in seeing the research paper" (Email from David Molzahn to Amanda Nolan, Senior Research Officer, Research Branch, CSC, 2016, May 13. CSC A-2018-00310).

⁷⁸⁸ Email from Sara Parkes, Communications Advisor, CSC (2016, July 20). *Subject: Research report for town hall*. CSC A-2018-00310.

I have enjoyed Corrections, but I had really wanted to be a farmer. I worked on a relative's tobacco farm in Tillsonburg during my youth and went to the University of Guelph to get a B.Sc. in Agriculture (Animal Science) hoping to become a farmer and enjoy what I saw as a great lifestyle. Upon graduation I sought employment in agribusiness but soon found that since I had not been raised on a farm, my experience, not my education was viewed as lacking. I volunteered to work on a dairy farm in hopes of gaining necessary experience and still have the deformed toe given to me by a dairy cow during milking. I soon realized that agriculture was a difficult business to break into. I could not afford to purchase a farm or equipment and with a family, I could not afford to build sufficient work experience to satisfy agribusiness looking for employees. The lesson I learned was that even though you loved farming, unless you grew up on a family farm, you were very unlikely to move into this profession.

Twenty-seven years later as Warden at Beaver Creek Institution I watched with interest, and in silence, the picketing in front of Pittsburgh Institution [Joyceville] after the Conservative Government closed this farm complex. In the three decades since picking up inmates and milk at Frontenac Institution I noticed a number of things. First, very few of the thousands of inmates I have dealt with have been farmers. A few men have been employed as farm hands before incarceration, but I can not recall one inmate whose career aspiration was to return to operation of a family farm or start farming and especially not the exceedingly expensive profession of dairy farming upon release from prison.

What inmates benefited from and enjoyed at the minimum and medium security prisons has been the hobby of gardening, which many of us enjoy. For the past decade Beaver Creek Inmates have grown personal gardens for their own consumption, but also tended a huge communal garden where they grew tons of produce that they donated to the local food bank in Muskoka. Inmates also enjoyed caring for stray cats, squirrels, chipmunks, birds and any other animal that walked into the un-fenced minimum security prison. Caring for small, homeless and injured animals seemed like a positive learning experience where inmates could develop responsibility and skills which could be used when they were released and perhaps had their own pet to care for. Caring for a pet dog or cat, or enjoying the hobby of growing a vegetable garden, are much more likely to be activities that an inmate will occupy himself with as opposed to tending a dairy cow on release.

Work Release programs where minimum security inmates do volunteer work such as fabrication, repairing, construction and yard work alongside volunteers and work supervisors at non profit organizations would be a better use of Correctional resources. Correctional Services with limited resources needs to enhance men's skills that can be used in urban work locations as opposed to animal husbandry skills designed for rural dairy operations, where few men will ever be employed. I would love to go back 30 years, but it is not possible.

Nor do I believe it is possible to re-establish an environmentally friendly, economically sustainable dairy operation which teaches men the skills they need for today's jobs."⁷⁸⁹

Robert Clark: "There appears to be more important issues requiring our recently elected MP's attention than contemplating any reopening of the prison farming complex. Inmates permitted to partake in any agricultural endeavours could be better educated in the trade fields, such as electrical, plumbing, carpentry. Their times incarcerated mastering these "in-demand trades" would only serve to enhance future employment on their release.

Congratulations to Mark Gerretsen on his recent election, but there are more important issues... requiring your attention."⁷⁹⁰

That prison farms are not fit for purpose is reflected in CORCAN's job market and occupation analyses. In a 2016-2018 Canadian market analysis, CORCAN reported that employment in agriculture was down by a significant margin (-4.7%) while employment was increasing in the service sector (+2.0%), accommodation and food services (+2.6%), construction (+2.0%), and wholesale and retail trade (+1.4%).⁷⁹¹ CORCAN's 2020 Business Plan shows that agriculture accounts for the smallest slice in CORCAN's pie chart of occupations in the Canadian labour market. Lumped in with "natural resources" and "related production occupations," agriculture accounts for only 1.7% of the occupational sectors, far less than manufacturing (4.7%), trades, transport and equipment operators (13.7%), and sales and service occupations (24.0%).⁷⁹²

In addition to CSC and CORCAN identifying a lack of employment opportunities associated with the prison farm program, many prisoners also felt that agricultural training was of little relevance or benefit to them. For example, during CSC's public consultation in 2016, the chairman of the Inmate Committee at Bath Institution in Kingston expressed that training in trades and urban job prospects would be better:

"Partaking in any structured work environment would provide similar benefits. However greater benefits are gained when the trade being taught has the potential to provide employment upon release. Thus I believe a trade where an inmate can find employment after his custodial period (i.e. construction, auto, plumbing)

⁷⁸⁹ Stickel, C. (2015, December 3). Letter: Inmates need skills that can be used in urban work locations, not those learned on a prison farm. *Kingston Heritage*. <https://issuu.com/kingstonheritage/docs/kingston120315>.

⁷⁹⁰ Clark, R. (2015, November 3). Letter: MP should focus on main issues. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/2015/11/03/letters-to-the-editor-nov-3>.

⁷⁹¹ CORCAN Business Plan 2016-17 to 2018-19. CSC A-2019-00324.

⁷⁹² CORCAN Business Plan 2018-19 to 2020-21. CSC A-2019-00324.

would be better. A great portion of offenders come from urban areas where agribusiness opportunities are even less available than in rural areas. Even in rural areas jobs are scarce.”⁷⁹³

A few years later, another inmate from Bath Institution published an article in a prisoner-published magazine, expressing frustration at the government’s promotion of generic farm skills and CORCAN’s failure to provide job readiness skills that prisoners need in a modern urban job market:

“Corcan’s generic skills not to be confused with job readiness skills! We fully recognize that any structured employment initiative within CSC is meritorious whether as a farm labourer [or] making cheese... in the development of generic skills, attitudes and behaviours like problem solving, communications and team work. However, these generic skills don’t qualify as job readiness skills on a resume. They are prerequisites of any job applicant in the same way appropriate dress and good personal hygiene are implicitly understood. Corcan’s soft employment and vocational skills include transferable lessons and life-skills including the value of completing an honest day’s work [and] pro-social attitudes and behaviours. While these are skills and attitudes that are valued by employers, they are skills that every employer expects of a job applicant and as such they don’t even merit a time on a job applicant’s resume... What a farce! In the February 28, 2018 Federal Budget, \$4.3M was committed to restore the prison farms at the Joyceville and Collins Bay institutions for the reason(s), ‘to provide federal inmates with training opportunities to acquire new skills while preparing for employment and successful reintegration and rehabilitation into the community.’ *Really, this is laughable!* Especially, when one considers that the local Member of Parliament in the Kingston area where the prison farms are located and the CSC ad hoc prison farm federal advisory group are touting the reactivation of CSC prison farms as a great step forward. What BS!... Really, you can’t make this stuff up!... ‘Preparing for employment and successful reintegration’ in a barnyard... is without either justification or merit. Using a ‘farm’ metaphor, this is ‘hogwash’!... *Time for a reality check!* Corcan’s ‘dumb labour’ employment training for rust belt shattered industry has no place in the 21st Century of artificial intelligence. The farm labour experience does not match the needs of employers on the outside for anything other than being farm labourers. The fact of the matter is that Millennials do not and will never aspire to pick apples or muck stables... *Sanity must prevail* – there needs to be an understanding by all stakeholders that the Canadian Correctional System as we know it is simply not working because there is an overarching failure to turn objectives into results. Correctional Service Canada’s failure to provide 21st Century employment and employability skills is cheating prisoners the opportunity to successfully reintegrate on release.”⁷⁹⁴

⁷⁹³ Response from the Bath Institution Inmate Committee Chairman to CSC’s Institutional Agribusiness Online Public Consultation (2016, August 2). CSC A-2018-00310. Paper copies of the online consultation were made available upon request for those without internet access, including incarcerated persons.

⁷⁹⁴ Fraser, G. (2021). Employability Hurdles for Inmates Reintegrating on Release. *Out of Bounds Prison Magazine*, Winter Season Edition 2021, 13-17.

When asked how many prisoners employed on the prison farms have gone on to obtain employment in the agricultural sector, CSC admitted that it “does not track offenders’ employment.”⁷⁹⁵ That CSC is not tracking the results of such a massive investment into farming as an employability training scheme is stunning, and renders impossible any assessment of the program’s effectiveness.⁷⁹⁶ There are many examples in ATI and public records of officials underscoring the need for the new prison farm program to track employment results, since it is acknowledged that this was never done in the past.⁷⁹⁷ This was emphasized by the Public Safety Minister’s Policy Advisor, Justine Villeneuve, in her 2017 meeting with Evolve. Villeneuve said that there is “a reticence at CSC” to use the term “rehabilitation” in relation to the prison farms because CSC’s research “is peer-reviewed” and “empirically based,” and the claims regarding the prison farms were “anecdotal.”⁷⁹⁸ Villeneuve acknowledged that “CSC was not doing evidence-based research on that link between animals and rehabilitation [so] we actually need to start tracking this... because right now we don’t have that. That is missing.” The fact that CSC and Public Safety are not tracking the results is either a matter of negligence, or an intentional choice given the likelihood that measuring the program’s value would not demonstrate the politically desired results.

While CSC’s Research Branch identified “very little” research into the impact of prison farms generally, and “none” related to animal-based agribusiness in prisons,⁷⁹⁹ CSC researchers did find that “the research on inmate horticultural programs is more substantial and their outcomes results appear promising [and] can be applied to a variety of settings including suburban and urban communities.”⁸⁰⁰ As the anti-closure campaigns focused on the perceived benefits of animal agriculture specifically, ATI records show that CSC sought to “enlarge” the definition of farming by cataloguing CSC’s institutional gardening and horticultural programs nationwide, hoping that this “may help correct the perception that was created that CSC was somehow against farming.”⁸⁰¹ In other words, CSC found no evidence that *animal agriculture* had

⁷⁹⁵ House of Commons (2024, February 22). *Order Paper Question No. Q-2368*. Reply to MP Scott Reid by MP Jennifer O’Connell, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs Dominic LeBlanc.

⁷⁹⁶ To reiterate, Minister Goodale said the \$4.3 million in funding for the pilot project to reopen Kingston’s prison farms came with three conditions: staying within the \$4.3 million budget, being implemented within five years, and demonstrating clear evidence of its value as a vocational training program. It has not stayed within budget, it has not been implemented in five years, and CSC is not tracking its effectiveness as a training program.

⁷⁹⁷ For example, meeting minutes from CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel discuss the metrics for the program: “Community employment tracking will be important for those offenders who do participate” (CSC, 2018, July 19. *Record of Discussion: CORCAN Farm Advisory Panel*. CSC A-2018-00440).

⁷⁹⁸ Notes from Evolve’s meeting with Justine Villeneuve, Policy Advisor, PSC (2017, June 27).

⁷⁹⁹ “I want to reiterate again that there was very little research on this topic in general and none directly relevant to the kind of operation that CSC had in place, so there is likely very little to say except some generalities” (Email from Andrea Moser, Ph.D., C.Psych., Director, Research Branch, CSC. *Subject: RE: RIB 16-11 (Prison Farms)*. CSC A-2018-00310).

⁸⁰⁰ CSC (n.d.). *The Impact of Penitentiary Farms on Correctional Results: A Research Document*. CSC A-2018-00310.

⁸⁰¹ Email from David Molzahn, Manager, Community and Stakeholder Relations, CSC, to all federal correctional institutions (2016, April 29). *Subject: farm consultation question*. CSC A-2018-00310.

rehabilitative or vocational value, yet horticulture and garden programs did have measurable benefits, and these continued to be offered even after the prison farm closures.⁸⁰² All of the publicly cited reasons for reopening the farms, therefore, were contradicted by evidence, and CSC knew it.

5.4. “Not directly connected” || Gardens, Bees & Trees

As delays in livestock acquisition and dairy implementation have dragged on, peripheral activities have become the focus of prison farm promotion. Specifically, beekeeping at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institutions, maple tree tapping at Joyceville Institution, and vegetable gardens at both sites have been highlighted by CSC, CBC, MP Gerretsen, and the Prison Farm Advisory Panel, but Evolve’s research finds that these activities are not part of CORCAN Agribusiness operations. They are pre-existing and independent institutional programs that have been appropriated, or expanded, for prison farm promotion in the absence of other success.

The vegetable gardens and donation of produce to food banks long predated the prison farm program, and CSC media lines underscore that these activities continued even after the former prison farm closures.⁸⁰³ Inmates organize these gardens independently and pay for their own plots and supplies.⁸⁰⁴ When inmates at Joyceville Institution heard that officials were claiming that the gardens and food bank donations were part of CORCAN’s prison farm program, the Joyceville Inmate Committee issued the following statement: “Inmates wish to make it clear that their gardens and food bank donations are in no way connected to the new prison farm program, despite misleading statements from the Correctional Service of Canada.”⁸⁰⁵ When pressed on this point, CSC’s media department conceded that the gardens are not part of the prison farm program:

⁸⁰² After the prison farm closures, CSC’s media lines reassured that “CSC continues to offer other agribusiness and horticulture initiatives including community gardens, institutional gardens, and greenhouses that produce food for internal use, as well as for donation to food banks and other community food programs” (CSC, 2016, August 15. *Media Lines: Penitentiary farm consultation*. PSC A-2018-00451).

⁸⁰³ “CSC continues to offer other agronomy and horticulture initiatives including community gardens, institutional gardens, and greenhouses that produce food for internal use, as well as for donation to food banks and other community food programs. However, these activities are not typically part of employment training programs offered at the institutions” (CSC, 2018, February 28. *Media Lines: Re-opening of CORCAN Farm Operations*. CSC A-2018-00333).

⁸⁰⁴ This was originally reported to Evolve by an inmate at Warkworth Institution. When this was fact-checked with CSC, a spokesperson confirmed that “At Warkworth Institution, each garden plot costs six dollars (\$6)” (Email statement from Marie-Pier Lécuyer, Media relations advisor, CSC, 2021, April 19).

⁸⁰⁵ Neufeld, C. (2021, November 3). The truth about CBC’s ‘Prison Farm’. *Kingstonist*. <https://www.kingstonist.com/culture/opinion/opinion-the-truth-about-cbcs-prison-farm/>.

“Inmates can purchase plants and manure up to 75 dollars and can purchase seeds up to 25 dollars. At Collins Bay Institution and Joyceville Minimum Institution, inmates typically buy seeds for their garden plots. CORCAN is not involved in personal gardens.”⁸⁰⁶

In response to Evolve’s inquiries, CSC admitted that peripheral programs like gardens, horticulture, sugarbush and beekeeping are “not directly connected with CSC farm operations,”⁸⁰⁷ although the reopening of the prison farm program has “expanded” these activities through “collaboration” between CORCAN and institutional staff.⁸⁰⁸ By way of example, CSC mentioned that as a result of CORCAN’s collaboration with the site, “the bee hives have expanded from a few to over 20 hives,” and in 2019-2020, “in collaboration with the Indigenous Initiatives program, additional trees were tapped and a small amount of maple syrup produced.”⁸⁰⁹ Likewise, “through the CORCAN Agriculture program” an extra row was added to prisoners’ personal gardens,⁸¹⁰ which “CORCAN is not involved in,”⁸¹¹ in a promoted partnership with Loving Spoonful.⁸¹² This mixed messaging has been further conflated by an unrelated garden project run by Loving Spoonful on a far corner of CSC’s property at Collins Bay Institution.⁸¹³

⁸⁰⁶ Email statement from Marie-Pier Lécuyer, Media relations advisor, CSC (2021, April 19).

⁸⁰⁷ “While not directly connected with CSC farm operations, some regions provide the opportunity for offenders to learn about beekeeping” (CSC, 2020, April. *Media Lines: Reopening of CORCAN Farm Operations*. CSC A-2020-00407).

⁸⁰⁸ Evolve: “I’d like clarity about the beehives and beekeeping. Is this operated, funded, run by CORCAN? Or by the individual institutions? Same question for the syrup and the horticulture. CSC’s 2018 media lines... state that after the prison farm closures CSC continued to offer agronomy, horticulture, personal gardens, and food bank donations, which were not associated with CORCAN.” CSC: “CORCAN and the operational sites work collaboratively in many areas to deliver training, including for example the certifications associated with bee-keeping... these are now being coordinated and overseen directly by CORCAN or as a collaboration with the operational site... For example, the beekeeping, maple syrup production and gardens have all experienced expanded implementations at both sites since 2018, with CORCAN and the operational sites working together” (Email statement from Marie Pier Lécuyer, Media relations advisor, CSC, 2021, April 19).

⁸⁰⁹ Email statement from Marie-Pier Lécuyer, Media relations advisor, CSC (2021, April 19).

⁸¹⁰ “Through the CORCAN Agriculture program they grow an extra row in these gardens... to contribute to local food banks” (CSC, 2022, May 2. *Media Lines: New cattle barn construction at Joyceville Institution*. CSC A-2022-00099).

⁸¹¹ “CORCAN is not involved in personal gardens” (Email statement from Marie Pier Lécuyer, Media relations advisor, CSC, 2021, April 19).

⁸¹² “Offenders... will also be growing a row in these gardens to contribute to fresh food market stands of the Loving Spoonful’s charitable organization” (CSC, 2019, August 15. *News Release: Penitentiary farms officially relaunched*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/news/2019/08/penitentiary-farms-officially-relaunched.html>).

⁸¹³ Separate from the extra row in prisoners’ personal gardens, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 2022 between CSC/CORCAN, Loving Spoonful, and the City of Kingston, for Loving Spoonful’s Community Training Farm. This was funded by the provincial Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development, not by the federal government. It was not associated with CORCAN Agribusiness, and prisoners were not allowed to participate. CORCAN’s role was merely to “provide the land [and] allow The City of Kingston/Loving Spoonful instructors and trainers on CSC property” (MOU, 2022, June. City of Kingston MFIPPA request). Loving Spoonful has multiple connections with the prison farms and abattoir. Loving Spoonful’s Executive Director Mara Shaw was a Save Our Prison Farms advocate. In 2020, she became Executive Director of the National Farmers Union, one of the most influential organizations behind the pressure to reopen prison farms. When Evolve requested a meeting with Mara Shaw as NFU Executive Director, Shaw declined, expressing that she was “quite angry by the output from your group,” which she called “an insult to everyone” (Email from Mara Shaw, Executive Director, NFU, 2020, March 13). On Loving Spoonful’s Board of Directors was Carey Bidtnes, the City of Kingston staff member who became the Human Resources Manager and “spokesperson” for Feihe’s Canadian operation (McGregor, J., 2021, April 12. *Foreign workers assigned unsafe housing during contracts at Ontario baby formula plant*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/foreign-workers-milk-plant-1.5967593>). Bidtnes left Loving Spoonful and

In another statement to Evolve, when very specifically pressed,⁸¹⁴ CSC put it this way:

“Prior to the re-opening of the farm program, there were vegetable gardens overseen by regular operations at the site, and the farm program is contributing to an expansion of these activities, collaborating with site operations to oversee the vegetable gardens.

CORCAN previously coordinated beekeeping certifications at Joyceville Institution resulting in vocational certifications. However as a result of the re-opening of the farm program, the beekeeping initiative has been expanded to include on-the-job training and additional vocational certification opportunities with hives maintained at Collins Bay Institution and Joyceville Institution.”⁸¹⁵

CSC’s statements reveal a reluctance to admit that the gardens and beekeeping predated the prison farms and are not directly connected to CORCAN’s Agribusiness training line, while still seeking to assume credit for these activities. Additional false and misleading information has been disseminated about these peripheral activities. For example, CSC, CBC, and the Prison Farm Advisory Panel have promoted the impression that honey and syrup produced at the prisons is served to prisoners, when this is not true. In one example from 2023, Panel Chair Dianne Dowling published a letter to the editor of *Frontenac News* claiming that honey and syrup are “sold to CSC kitchens and through CSC canteens.”⁸¹⁶ This is contradicted by ATI records, CSC statements, and letters from inmates. In 2023, a Joyceville inmate wrote that the honey and syrup have “never been made available to the Inmate Population as a Freebie or for Sale.”⁸¹⁷ This was confirmed by CSC in December 2023.⁸¹⁸ ATI records show that when CSC was considering beekeeping as

Feihe Canada Royal Milk in 2023 (Carey Bidtnes CHRL, n.d., *Home* [LinkedIn page]. *LinkedIn*. <https://ca.linkedin.com/in/cbidtnes>). Loving Spoonful was also a distributor of meat from CSC’s abattoir at Joyceville Institution (“Loving Spoonful’s Protein Project,” 2017, December 6. Community Foundation for Kingston & Area. <https://cfka.org/loving-spoonfuls-protein-project/>). For years, Loving Spoonful was the only named partnership in prison farm promotion, creating the impression that the prison farm investment benefited the community, when the donation of produce from prisoners’ gardens was a pre-existing program.

⁸¹⁴ Evolve had to get increasingly specific in the wording of questions to get clear answers. In this case: “Are the vegetable gardens and beehives at Joyceville & Collins Bay run under the CORCAN prison farm operation, or am I right in understanding that these are run under Programs (clarification: Essentially I am seeking clarification, are the gardens at Joyceville/Collins Bay run by CORCAN or are they operated, by whatever term is appropriate, as a program at individual prisons? The reports in media have consistently linked the gardens and beehives with the new CORCAN prison farm program but I believe they are distinct and I would like to report on that point as accurately as possible. I believe those gardens are also pre-existing, i.e. they were already there prior to the return of the prison farm program. Confirmation of that would also be appreciated” (Emails from Calvin Neufeld, 2019, November 4. *Subject: Media questions - prison farms*).

⁸¹⁵ Email statement from Marie-Pier Lécuyer, Media relations advisor, CSC (2021, November 7).

⁸¹⁶ Dowling, D. (2023, December 13). Letter: Re: Prison Farm. *Frontenac News*. <https://www.frontenacnews.ca/letters/item/16960-re-prison-farm>.

⁸¹⁷ Letter from an inmate at Joyceville Institution to Evolve (2023, February 12).

⁸¹⁸ CSC indicated that it is exploring options to sell inmate-produced honey and syrup to inmates in the future: “Currently CORCAN is working with institutional management and the Health and safety committee regarding approvals to sell its

a program in 2016, prior to the decision to reopen prison farms, two concerns were raised by a staff member. The first was that “most of the local bee keepers ... are small family businesses and they may not take kindly to CSC starting up a Bee Keeping and honey making business which could have a negative impact on their business.”⁸¹⁹ The other concern was that honey was not appropriate for use in prisons because the high sugar content can be used to produce alcohol: “How does CSC control the honey productivity to ensure it is not entering the institution for brew?” ATI records also show that CSC’s Farm Instructor Kevin Hansen requested special permission to give just one “small jar of honey” to each of the three workers who participated in the program that year.⁸²⁰ The request was relayed to the Warden, whose answer is not recorded in the ATI release. However, a new release obtained in July 2024 shows that Hansen requested approval to sell the inmate-produced honey to inmates at a cost of \$8.00 for a 500g jar of honey and \$12.00 for a 500ml bottle of syrup, but the final decision was made that CORCAN’s honey and syrup were not approved for sale to inmates.⁸²¹ In response to Evolve’s inquiries as to what is being done with the products, CSC stated that, in 2023, “900 lbs of honey was sold to a wholesale buyer” and “75% of the maple syrup was sold to a wholesale buyer. The remainder was bottled and sold through the CORCAN showroom.”⁸²² CSC has never identified the wholesale buyer(s) purchasing the penitentiary honey and syrup.⁸²³

Another false claim related to the beekeeping program is captured in a CSC-published article (since removed) which states that inmates at Joyceville and Collins Bay “receive vocational training and certifications in the ‘Best management Practices for Honey Bee Health – Introductory to Beekeeping’ course which is offered by Algonquin College in Ottawa.”⁸²⁴ Evolve contacted Algonquin College to confirm, but the College denied having any such partnership with CSC, and they do not even offer beekeeping courses, let alone one by that name.⁸²⁵ When this information was presented to CSC with a

products through the canteens at Joyceville” (Email statement from Chris MacMillan, Senior Communications Advisor, CSC, 2023, December 28).

⁸¹⁹ Email from Dianne Anthony, Regional Coordinator, Citizen Advisory Committee, CSC (2016, October 20). *Subject: RE: Bee Keeping Proposal*. CSC A-2018-00310.

⁸²⁰ Email from Kevin Hansen, Farm Instructor, CORCAN Farms (2021, October 1). CSC A-2021-00381.

⁸²¹ “The items ARE NOT SUPPORTED by the JI Health and Safety Committee for consideration of addition to the offender canteen” (Email from Scott MacPherson, CSC, 2024, January 14. CSC A-2023-00388)

⁸²² Email statement from Chris MacMillan, Senior Communications Advisor, CSC (2023, December 28).

⁸²³ The question has never been answered in Evolve’s media inquiries or ATI records. The honey produced at another prison’s beekeeping program, Stony Mountain Institution in Manitoba, is sold in bulk, blended into commercial streams under the brand BeeMaid Honey, and sold at stores such as Costco, Sobeys, and No Frills (CSC, 2024, May 17. Beekeeping 101. *Let’s Talk*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/lets-talk/read/2024/05-17-beekeeping.html>).

⁸²⁴ CSC, 2019, September 4. “From Offenders to Beekeepers: A First Bee Keeping Initiative in Ontario.” *Let’s Talk Express*. Previously posted at <https://www.lte-ene.ca/en/offenders-beekeepers-first-bee-keeping-initiative-ontario>.

⁸²⁵ “We do not offer any courses related to beekeeping” (Email from AC Online Team, Algonquin College, 2021, October 1). Also: “I am not aware of a certification program with federal inmates and Algonquin College” (Email from Cory Haskins, MBA, Academic Chair, School of Hospitality and Tourism, Algonquin College, 2021, October 12).

request for clarification, CSC responded: “The official title shown on the certificate of achievement⁸²⁶ is ‘Introduction to Bee Keeping’. The longer title appearing in the 2019 Let’s Talk Express article was a descriptor name.”⁸²⁷ The article no longer appears online.

The beekeeping program at Collins Bay and Joyceville was started in 2018 by a student at Carleton University who had received a university grant “to research the potential benefits of beekeeping for prisoners,”⁸²⁸ and who brought her own hives and supplies at no cost to CSC.⁸²⁹ She left after the second year “feeling pretty frustrated,” after which CORCAN purchased its own hives because of how “very successful” the program was.⁸³⁰ Since then, there have been chronic hive failures. In 2020-2021, CSC confirmed the loss of more than half of their hives as only “fifteen out of the 32 hives survived.”⁸³¹ In 2023, a Joyceville inmate reported that “75% or more of the Bees were wiped out by disease or frozen out without enough food to sustain them.”⁸³² CSC’s beekeeping logs obtained by Evolve show that the hives suffered from inadequate monitoring, improper overwintering, mite infestations, hive boxes vandalized and knocked over, overgrowth of grass around the hives, “robber bees” taking over hives, and cow manure being piled up beside the hives.⁸³³ Records show that CSC has continuously purchased new hives to replace the losses.

The student who started the beekeeping program recently reviewed CSC’s beekeeping records obtained by Evolve and described them as “a mess” and “a careless management of an at-risk species.”⁸³⁴ As for her

⁸²⁶ A photograph of one beekeeping “certificate” shown to Evolve read “Statement of Achievement” printed on Algonquin letterhead. It did not even feature the word “certificate.” This was raised in the House of Commons by MP Scott Reid on June 2, 2023: “Corrections Canada tells us that offenders who find jobs in the community are three times less likely to reoffend. This is true, but it is also irrelevant because there is zero statistical correlation between participation in CSC’s job-creating programs and getting post-incarceration work. Here is why: Instead of recognized third party vocational certifications, CSC issues informal statements of achievement that have all the authority of the ribbons issued at a children’s bicycle-decorating contest. Will the government fix this problem?” (Reid, S., 2023, June 2. “Correctional Service of Canada.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard* 205. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-205/hansard>).

⁸²⁷ Email statement from Marie-Pier Lécuyer, Senior Media relations advisor, CSC, 2021, October 12. *Subject: RE: Fact-checking beekeeping.*

⁸²⁸ Pfeffer, A. (2019, September 11). *Prison honey bee program a sweet success.* CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/beekeeping-prison-kingston-collins-bay-joyceville-1.5277109>.

⁸²⁹ Evolve has had numerous interviews and email exchanges with the student, whose name will not be disclosed.

⁸³⁰ CSC (2020, April). *Media Lines: Reopening of CORCAN Farm Operations.* CSC A-2020-00407.

⁸³¹ Email statement from Esther Mailhot, Senior Media Relations Advisor, CSC (2021, December 15).

⁸³² Letter from an inmate at Joyceville Institution to Evolve (2023, February 12).

⁸³³ For example, beekeeping logs from August-December 2021 show mite problems, hives weak, dying, or dead, and a lot of “aggressive” boxes checked. In the month of August there were weekly inspections and relatively detailed notes, but as of September onwards the checkboxes get sloppy and bare with weeks of empty logs for reasons such as “didn’t inspect,” “too cold,” “rain day,” “cancelled,” “did not inspect brood boxes,” “due to weather cancelled to indoor session,” “cancelled due to Prisoners Justice Day,” and cancellation “due to COVID.” Out of this 20 week period, the hives were only inspected six times, with 14 weeks of blank logs. The top cancellation reason was weather (too cold or rainy) (*CORCAN Farms Beekeeping Program 2021: Recordkeeping Journal.* CSC A-2021-00381).

⁸³⁴ Email to Evolve (2023, March 9).

perspective on starting the program and witnessing its promotion by CSC and CBC, she provided her own account to Evolve, shared here with permission:

“The very first year I had my own bees at Collins Bay for the research project I was doing. I never went back to the prison after the second year. I left feeling pretty frustrated. I’m always trying to balance whether what I do is for the greater good or is adding to the continuation of a problematic situation when I work under such circumstances.

I was aware of that CBC article. They made a big show that day, it was after an announcement to the press, of extracting honey. CSC talked to the press about how the inmates would get honey but inmates didn’t get honey.

The CBC film was what I expected working within the parameters of CSC. It was never going to be a true reflection of the realities of the programs. I hate to be the pessimist but pretty much everything is doomed to go sour in prison culture.

I took a quick look at these beekeeping “notes,” they are a mess and show how careless this program is being operated.⁸³⁵ This program, from the moment it was taken out of my hands (and that includes the last year I worked it where I had no control over anything) is an afterthought and a careless management of an at-risk species. I cannot see how this program is bringing any value to anyone or any insect.”⁸³⁶

While the beekeeping is “not directly connected” to CORCAN Agribusiness, it is important to address this subject in this report for three reasons: first, because it has become a central focus in prison farm promotion; second, because it provides insight into the challenge of filtering facts from the fiction projected by officials and the media; and third, because the “careless” management of bees and the chronic hive failures, along with the “animal welfare” issues with the cows and the chronic calf deaths, should raise very serious concerns about CSC’s ability to responsibly manage a farm, let alone a cow dairy research program or a 2,200-goat industrial operation.

CSC and the Prison Farm Advisory Panel have also pointed to the field crops as one of the “achievements” to date.⁸³⁷ The crops were originally intended to provide feed and bedding for the as-yet-unachieved goat

⁸³⁵ She provided detailed explanations of problems that she could identify from the logs, such blank or sloppy record-keeping, log inconsistencies and discrepancies, overharvesting honey, inadequate brood keeping, improper overwintering, and mite infestations apparently being resolved within one week, which is “impossible.”

⁸³⁶ Comments compiled from emails to Evolve (2021-2023).

⁸³⁷ Dowling, D. (2023, December 13). Letter: Re: Prison Farm. *Frontenac News*. <https://www.frontenacnews.ca/letters/item/16960-re-prison-farm>.

dairy.⁸³⁸ In 2020, a former dairy farmer incarcerated at Joyceville Institution called them “crop disasters,” stating that “they only disced one way after last year’s corn, leaving it bumpy as hell, and then they forgot to spray it. The amount of ragweed, I don’t think they can thresh it,” and “they’ve put the page wire on their fences upside down.”⁸³⁹ In 2021, an agricultural journalist wrote to CSC’s media department saying that he “had the soybean crop surveyed – visible from the road – which was a disaster.”⁸⁴⁰ In 2023, a Joyceville inmate wrote that “The crops grown the last two years since Corcan started farming again were disappointing and ridiculous in terms of growth and yield. Definitely some of the worst crops in Ontario!”⁸⁴¹

Finally, CSC and the Prison Farm Advisory Panel have pointed to arborist training and apple trees harvested at Joyceville Institution, and hazelnut trees that have been planted at Collins Bay Institution in a recent research partnership with University of Guelph.⁸⁴² Again, the arborist program pre-existed the prison farms, as did the apple trees which could have been maintained and harvested at any time.⁸⁴³ As for the hazelnut trees, originally proposed by Evolve Our Prison Farms in 2017 (details in footnote),⁸⁴⁴ they were planted in 2022, and “replanted” in 2023,⁸⁴⁵ so to speak of that as an achievement is premature. With the hazelnut tree

⁸³⁸ In a phone meeting between Evolve and CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle on May 23, 2019, Hartle confirmed that the crops would be soy, corn, barley, and hay for livestock feed and bedding.

⁸³⁹ Cumming, I. (2020, October 13). Former dairy farmer watches government at work from his cell: Prisoner is appalled by what he sees as examples of government largesse. *Ontario Farmer*.

⁸⁴⁰ Email from an Ontario Farmer journalist [name redacted] (2021, October 5). CSC A-2021-00381.

⁸⁴¹ Letter from an inmate at Joyceville Institution to Evolve (2023, February 12).

⁸⁴² Dowling, D. (2023, December 13). Letter: Re: Prison Farm. *Frontenac News*.
<https://www.frontenacnews.ca/letters/item/16960-re-prison-farm>.

⁸⁴³ During Evolve’s tour of the Joyceville farm in November 2023, CORCAN’s Detlef Fischer said they only realized that the apple orchard existed on Joyceville property “a couple of years ago,” and CSC’s Farm Supervisor Tiffany Babcock said that they have not been able to harvest much yet as the condition of the fruit was poor and the trees required better maintenance. The orchard, according to CSC, occupies 45 “organic” acres (Email statement from Isabelle Robitaille, Communications Advisor, CSC, 2020, October 28).

⁸⁴⁴ Evolve report submitted to CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle (2017, August 10). *Information Regarding Market Opportunities & Farmland Use, Employment Potential & Community Partnerships, and Green Options Relating to Innovative Plant-Based Agriculture and Sanctuary for Prison Farms in Kingston, Ontario*. Also, in 2019, Evolve prepared a more detailed brief for submission to CORCAN (*Hazelnuts as a potential crop for prison farms*) summarizing the research and market opportunity in hazelnuts: “Ferrero (Nutella, Ferrero Rocher) has built a state-of-the-art facility in Brantford supplying markets in North America and Australia. They would like to see the development of a 20,000-acre hazelnut industry in Ontario, particularly in Southern & Southeastern Ontario. Currently there are only 300 acres of hazelnut trees in Ontario and these do not supply Ferrero. The company currently imports roughly 75% of their hazelnuts from Turkey, some from Oregon. Strong potential to develop regional and provincial economies while reducing environmental impact of hazelnut imports... there is a mirrored opportunity here. In one scenario, a Chinese infant formula factory has been built in the region of the prison farms and created a market gap that the prison farms could supply through environmentally damaging industrial goat farming that would compete with local farmers to produce goods for international export. In the other scenario, a Canadian hazelnut facility has been built in the region of the prison farms and created a market gap that the prison farms could supply through environmentally restorative nut tree farming that would seed local industry and reduce reliance on international imports. These parallel opportunities bear a striking resemblance yet one is a dark mirror of the other. I hope we are not yet past the point of considering alternate possibilities for the new prison farm program” (Email and brief report sent to CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle by Calvin Neufeld, 2019, September 18).

⁸⁴⁵ Atkinson, S. (2023, November 28). Pen farm co-op hopeful cow herd will finally go home. *Ontario Farmer*.

research to be overseen by the University of Guelph, this is also likely “not directly connected” to CORCAN Agribusiness.

The misleading messaging related to these peripheral activities is as concerning as their lack of relevance to post-release employment opportunities. This is not only a matter of “cheating prisoners the opportunity to successfully reintegrate on release,”⁸⁴⁶ but also cheating taxpayers by investing public funds into unproven and “futile” programs, while jeopardizing public safety by failing to invest in programs that effectively contribute to reductions in recidivism.

5.5. “Distance ourselves” || Slaughtering Animals

Although not directly connected to the prison farm program, the abattoir (slaughterhouse) located at Joyceville Institution merits some attention. The abattoir was “constructed in 1958” along with Joyceville Institution.⁸⁴⁷ The prison itself was established with the “primary function” of producing beef for distribution to area institutions.⁸⁴⁸ In 1995, however, the abattoir became commercial when CORCAN entered into a public-private partnership with Wallace Beef Inc., in a profit-sharing relationship that saw the private company taking over operations and CORCAN supplying the inmate labour for “training.”⁸⁴⁹ For decades, Wallace Beef sold the prison-produced meat to farm businesses, grocery stores, and restaurants across Southeastern Ontario.⁸⁵⁰ The meat stopped being served to prison staff and prisoners⁸⁵¹ after the

⁸⁴⁶ Fraser, G. (2021). Employability Hurdles for Inmates Reintegrating on Release. *Out of Bounds Prison Magazine*, Winter Season Edition 2021, 13-17.

⁸⁴⁷ CSC (2023, October 6). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs: Abattoir on Joyceville Institution Property*. PSC A-2023-00592. A statement from CSC’s media department said “The original Slaughterhouse Building was completed in 1960” (Email statement from Marie-Pier Lécuyer, Senior Media relations advisor, CSC, 2021, September 16. *Subject: RE: Inquiry: Prison Abattoirs*).

⁸⁴⁸ CSC (2019, August 15). *News Release: Penitentiary farms officially relaunched. Historical Backgrounder*. CSC A-2019-00323.

⁸⁴⁹ Details in Neufeld, C. (2022, August). *Bloody Bad Business: Report on the Joyceville Institution Abattoir* (2nd ed.). Evolve Our Prison Farms. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/bloody-bad-business-report-on-the-joyceville-institution-abattoir/>. The report displays ATI documents showing that prisoners have been coerced into abattoir work to “meet financial targets”; CSC staff have refused to conduct psychological and medical assessments “due to liability concerns”; wages and working conditions do not meet UN/ILO criteria for commercial uses of prison labour; and there is established research linking slaughter work with increases in crime, substance abuse, unemployment, and domestic violence.

⁸⁵⁰ The Joyceville abattoir slaughtered animals for “about 350 area farmers [and] 150 businesses,” and was said to be “the only abattoir between Toronto and Montreal that wholesales meat into the community” (Testimony from Dave Perry, CSC Agribusiness Instructor for the Abattoir, CORCAN Agribusiness. Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. 2010, March 30. Evidence. 40th Parliament, 3rd session, meeting no. 6. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/40-3/SECU/meeting-6/evidence>). The range of distribution of meat from the prison’s abattoir is unknown, but businesses from Kingston to Ottawa have sold and served Wallace Beef meat, as can be found by internet search, representing a significant share of the local meat consumed in the region.

⁸⁵¹ “We will not serve Wallace Beef in the staff dining room pending investigation results” (Email from Janet Clark, CSC, 2003, October 9. CSC A-2018-00333). Also: “Note our menu is being adjusted in staff mess” (Email from Paul Snyder,

abattoir was temporarily closed in 2003 for investigations into criminal activity and improper slaughter and meat labelling practices,⁸⁵² but commercial sales continued. The 27-year partnership between CSC and Wallace Beef ended September 30, 2022,⁸⁵³ one month after Evolve released the second edition of *Bloody Bad Business: Report on the Joyceville Institution Abattoir*.⁸⁵⁴ The closure of CSC's last abattoir⁸⁵⁵ triggered intense pushback from members of CSC's Prison Farm Advisory Panel,⁸⁵⁶ the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op,⁸⁵⁷ MP Mark Gerretsen,⁸⁵⁸ the City of Kingston,⁸⁵⁹ and livestock industry associations,⁸⁶⁰ all

Warden, Joyceville Institution, CSC, 2003, October 10. CSC A-2018-00333). Also: "CSC has not had an agreement with Wallace Beef to supply the institution (for both staff and inmates) with meat since the early 2000s" (Email statement from Chris MacMillan, Manager, Issues Management and Media Relations, CSC, 2024, July 22).

⁸⁵² "Prison meat packer shut down" (2003, October 8). CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prison-meat-packer-shut-down-1.363853>.

⁸⁵³ Email statement from Esme Bailey, Senior Media Relations Advisor, CSC (2022, October 5).

⁸⁵⁴ Violations exposed through Evolve's ATI requests include contraband smuggling, drug related activity, institutional violations (such as allowing inmates convicted of violent offences to work in the abattoir), inmates working unsupervised, improper disposal of blood, improper slaughtering and meat labelling, operating without a contract, and more (Neufeld, C., 2022, August. *Bloody Bad Business: Report on the Joyceville Institution Abattoir* (2nd ed.). Evolve Our Prison Farms. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/bloody-bad-business-report-on-the-joyceville-institution-abattoir/>).

⁸⁵⁵ All of CSC's other abattoirs closed long ago. Joyceville's was the only one that was commercialized.

⁸⁵⁶ Jeff Peters stated that "there will be a review of the facility and hopefully they (CSC) will ask for some tenders... there's a bureaucracy process" (MacAlpine, I., 2022, October 10. Abattoir at Joyceville Institution now closed. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/news/local-news/abattoir-at-joyceville-institution-now-closed>). Peters published a letter calling Evolve's report on the Joyceville abattoir "biased bull," claiming that the 64-year-old slaughterhouse was "a clean, well-respected and state-of-the-art facility" (Peters, J., 2022, September 5. Letter: Abattoir story misleading. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/opinion/letters/letter-abattoir-story-misleading>).

⁸⁵⁷ Dave Perry, a Pen Farm Herd Co-Op director and CSC employee, is also president of Beef Farmers of Frontenac. On November 28, 2023, Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) issued a letter to Perry stating that BFO had passed a resolution, brought forward by Perry, to lobby Ottawa for "immediate" reopening of the Joyceville abattoir. The resolution states: "Whereas, the advocacy group 'Evolve Our Prison Farms' continues to spread disparaging mistruths about the value and importance of skilled abattoir training for offenders... be it resolved that BFO work with those interested in operating the abattoir to lobby the Federal Government and Minister of Public Safety to take immediate action to successfully reopen the abattoir at Joyceville Institution" (Letter from Jack Chaffe, President, BFO, 2023, November 28. <https://www.ontariobeef.com/media/qbfhnlfo/23-15-joyceville-abattoir.pdf>).

⁸⁵⁸ In the House of Commons, MP Gerretsen warned MP Reid that "there are many farmers in his riding... and indeed in my riding who rely on this abattoir. Disrupting the operation of it will seriously impact their livelihoods" (Gerretsen, M., 2022, May 30. "Correctional Service of Canada." Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard* 077. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-77/hansard>). On five occasions in early 2024, MP Gerretsen presented a petition organized by members of CSC's Prison Farm Advisory Panel in the House of Commons demanding the abattoir's reopening, on March 18, March 21, March 22, April 19, and April 30, 2024. Petition text: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/petitions/en/Petition/Details?Petition=441-02404>. Each time, MP Gerretsen pointed out that the petition was signed by farmers in MP Reid's riding: "[This petition] is actually from constituents in Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston; I am not sure why they have asked me to present it... They used to be able to bring their livestock to this abattoir at the Joyceville Institution... They are asking the government to reopen that abattoir. I do not know why the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston did not present this, but I will do it on behalf of his constituents." The Speaker censured MP Gerretsen for being "very much aware" that he was violating House rules calling out another MP during the presentation of a petition (Gerretsen, M., 2024, April 30. "Agriculture and Agri-Food." Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard* 305. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/documentviewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-305/hansard>).

⁸⁵⁹ The City of Kingston stated: "[Tracey Snow, Rural Economic and Community Development Manager] had a phone call in October 2022, with [CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle], where they discussed options for reopening the Abattoir... Farmers have contacted Ms. Snow by phone as they are stressed because they have lost a processing facility that is integral to their businesses" (Email from Blair Johnson, Corporate Records & Information Officer, City of Kingston, 2023, April 17).

⁸⁶⁰ Lobbyists include Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO), Meat and Poultry Ontario, Frontenac Cattlemen's Association, and Grenville Cattlemen's Association (Letter from Jack Chaffe, President, BFO, 2023, November 28).

demanding the immediate reopening of CSC’s prison-labour-based commercial slaughter service.⁸⁶¹ Even the John Howard Society, whose Executive Director Catherine Latimer sits on CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel, opposed the abattoir’s closure.⁸⁶² As MP Scott Reid questioned the human rights implications of using underpaid prison labour in the commercial prison abattoir,⁸⁶³ Tim Dowling, NFU’s Livestock Action Committee chair, publicly rebuked MP Reid for “the clearly regressive and spiteful nature of his approach to justice.”⁸⁶⁴ These abattoir advocates show a shameless and irresponsible disregard not only for human rights but also for public safety. The research into the impacts of slaughter work is established, peer-reviewed, and unsettling:

“The findings indicate that slaughterhouse employment increases total arrest rates, arrests for violent crimes, arrests for rape, and arrests for other sex offenses [as well as] increased demand for social assistance (due to a number of factors, including the low wages paid by the industry, high injury and illness rates, and the high employee turnover rate), and an increase in crime... The slaughterhouse community studies have documented dramatic increases in crime that have outpaced increases in the population. Increases have been documented

<https://www.ontariobeef.com/media/qbfhnlfo/23-15-joyceville-abattoir.pdf>). CSC’s Panel Chair Dianne Dowling, owner of Doublejay Farms and a representative of the National Farmers Union, also lobbied for the abattoir (NFU Local 316. 2022, October 20. [URGENT] *Testimonials needed to keep Joyceville abattoir running* [Status update]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/nfulocal316/posts/pfbid0d9pqqqtZte2227g5n4wsgYdPqvsvxZJ91jLsslTrLsuz3AJQEEBWhk5mVWcpYjWgjYl>).

⁸⁶¹ According to BFO’s letter, “finding a path to reopen the abattoir at Joyceville Institution” is a high priority. “After meeting with the BFO Advisory Council at our annual general meeting, Senator [Robert] Black sent a letter to the Minister of Public Safety... to find an effective solution and reopen the facility. The BFO Board of Directors and staff met with elected officials [in April 2023] on Parliament Hill and during our annual BBQ in October at Queen’s Park... In addition to our lobby days, a meeting with MP Mark Gerretsen took place with representatives from BFO and Meat and Poultry Ontario (MPO) to discuss reopening the abattoir... We were informed Correctional Service Canada (CSC) has conducted a review of the building condition and it requires minor repairs. Once completed, a request for proposal (RFP) will be publicly posted. They are anticipating this will occur in the spring or early summer of 2024. We are also currently working with MP Gerretsen’s office on a parliamentary petition to help expedite the RFP process” (Letter from Jack Chaffe, President, BFO, 2023, November 28. <https://www.ontariobeef.com/media/qbfhnlfo/23-15-joyceville-abattoir.pdf>).

⁸⁶² The John Howard Society (JHS), whose stated mission is to pursue “effective, just and humane responses to the causes and consequences of crime,” tweeted: “Abattoir at Joyceville Institution now closed: Now even further fewer jobs for prisoners” (Tweet highlighted in an email from Hannah Wilson, Media Relations and Outreach Advisor, CSC, 2022, October 12. *Subject: Abattoir and Farms social media attention*. CSC A-2023-00232). According to the JHS website: “Our money flows from Public Safety [and] most of our front line programs are delivered under contract with Correctional Services of Canada” (John Howard Society of Canada. *Frequently Asked Questions: Who are you and what do you do?* <https://johnhoward.ca/resources/frequently-asked-questions/>).

⁸⁶³ MP Reid was inquiring about the commercial nature of both the new prison farms and the Joyceville abattoir, pointing out that “the issue of it being a for-profit operation has not been dealt with by the government,” and while the government “has talked about all the cuddly activities that take place,” Reid wanted to visit “when there is slaughter activity going on, and I want to make sure I can see what it is like for the inmates to be involved in that.” As to “the importance of inmates getting adequate pay,” Reid concluded with “Yes or no, is there full pay for inmates when they are doing market-related work?” (Reid, S., 2022, May 18. “Labour.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 074*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-74/hansard>).

⁸⁶⁴ Tim Dowling. (2022, May 23). *Scott Reed [sic] seems to imply that the abattoir at Joyceville should be shutdown...* [Video] [Status update]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/tim.dowling.524/posts/pfbid02nwDBWis3NMg2M7bGBLLdy3t4kFDXymvgWHCKRW6nszuGvmR8VM6SeWgiV48vstanl>.

for violent crimes, property crimes, and drug offenses. Most of the increases in violent crime rates have been attributed to increases in domestic violence and child abuse.”⁸⁶⁵

The political and industry pressure to reopen the abattoir are intense, but ATI records show that CSC and CORCAN are opposed. In 2023, CSC’s Chief Financial Officer Tony Matson wrote: “Please note that we do not support the leasing of the abattoir. If actually required by CORCAN, maintaining the abattoir in our portfolio for the training of 2-3 inmates (as was the case in the past), goes against TBS policy and is not appropriate stewardship of government resources.”⁸⁶⁶ Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) policy requires that federal institutions dispose of property that is “underutilized, inefficient or no longer needed for departmental programs,” and “CORCAN has confirmed that they do not need the abattoir to provide vocational training to inmates.”⁸⁶⁷ It was flagged as the “bottom line” that any recommendation to reopen the abattoir may “invite scrutiny by TBS analysts” as it would likely violate policy.⁸⁶⁸ This information was compiled for a briefing note that was being prepared for Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc, but it was omitted from the final version.⁸⁶⁹ Instead, the briefing note presented the opposite information to the Minister, proposing an agreement for a new private industry operator to provide “training for inmates,” and recommending that, “in accordance with the Treasury Board Secretariat Directive,” reopening the abattoir would support “the optimization of the real property portfolio.”⁸⁷⁰ The briefing note downplayed the facility’s condition, mentioning “minor” maintenance taking place in 2022-2023, including clearing debris, repairing refrigeration and freezer units, flushing and cleaning blood and coagulants, replacing plumbing, repairing a ruptured water main, disinfecting, repainting, replacing doors, rebuilding a stairwell retaining wall, and repairing the roof and electrical wiring.

Beyond “minor” maintenance, millions in repairs will be needed to bring the facility to current code before there will be any possibility of obtaining a new operating licence for a new public-private partnership to resume commercial operations out of the prison facility. In November 2023, Evolve visited the empty abattoir and photographed broken doors, cracked and mouldy floors and walls, rusty and broken equipment,

⁸⁶⁵ Fitzgerald, A. J., Kalof L., Dietz T. (2009, June). Slaughterhouses and Increased Crime Rates. *Organization and Environment*, 22(2), 158-184.

⁸⁶⁶ Email from Tony Matson, Chief Financial Officer, CSC (2023, July 25). *Subject: RE: Tasking - BN to the Minister - Abattoir at Joyceville Institution*. CSC A-2023-00232.

⁸⁶⁷ Email from François Sauvé, Senior Director Facilities, CSC (2022, November 15). *Subject: Abattoir - Joyceville*. CSC A-2023-00232.

⁸⁶⁸ Email from Ghislain Sauvé, Director General, Technical Services and Facilities, CSC (2022, November 16). *Subject: Real Property Considerations - Joyceville Abattoir*. A-2023-00212.

⁸⁶⁹ The final version of the briefing note appears to have been prepared by CSC’s Ontario Regional Deputy Commissioner Kevin Snedden.

⁸⁷⁰ CSC (2023, October 6). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs: Abattoir on Joyceville Institution Property*. PSC A-2023-00592.

rat traps and feces, and outdated and ill-maintained equipment and infrastructure, and this was after CSC had already spent approximately half a million on “maintenance.”⁸⁷¹ Despite ample evidence of CSC’s aversion to reopening the abattoir, records show that CSC has already invested hundreds of thousands, and is preparing to invest millions more, into repairs. These costs were summarized in a letter to the editor of *Frontenac News* after the last local abattoir (Quinn’s Meats) burned down in June 2024,⁸⁷² increasing the political pressure to reopen the Joyceville slaughterhouse:

“In 2023, CSC had spent \$435,000 on repairs, with \$500,000 forecasted for repairs in 2024. The cost of keeping the abattoir ‘in a state of good repair’ over the next two years is \$678,401, ‘strictly for building maintenance.’ A Building Condition Report identified the need for \$1,235,070 in additional repairs in the short term (1-5 years) and a further \$1,167,099 in long-term repairs (5-30 years). On top of this, repairs to the connected beef stock barn and paddock would be needed, at a cost of \$1,131,506 in the short term and \$237,462 in the long term.

Adding up these numbers, we are looking at a cost to taxpayers of roughly \$5,384,538, more or less, to reopen the Joyceville abattoir so that consumers can once again be sold meat that was butchered in a prison by incarcerated men being paid \$3 per hour or less.”⁸⁷³

Lest it be assumed that the motivation to invest in reopening the Joyceville abattoir is related to CSC’s prison farm operations, CORCAN made it clear to CSC back in 2018 that “Corcan have no interest in this Abattoir Lease Agreement as associated with the farm properties.”⁸⁷⁴ In fact, ATI records show CORCAN’s CEO Kelly Hartle emphasizing this on numerous occasions, not wanting CORCAN to be associated with the abattoir. For example, in reviewing draft Question Period notes, Hartle commented (emphasis hers): “the Abattoir is NOT part of the CORCAN agriculture program.”⁸⁷⁵ Likewise, CSC Communications staff exhibited the same unease when preparing Question Period notes for Public Safety to respond to

⁸⁷¹ Neufeld, C. (2023, December 6). Prison Farms Fraught with Problems, Delays, Cost Overruns, and Aimlessness. *Frontenac News*. <https://www.frontenacnews.ca/item/16949-prison-farms-fraught-with-problems-delays-cost-overruns-and-aimlessness>.

⁸⁷² Green, J. (2024, July 3). Quinn’s Meats Fire Worsens Crisis For Local Food Industry. *Frontenac News*. <https://www.frontenacnews.ca/south-frontenac-news/item/17376-quinn-s-meats-fire-worsens-crisis-for-local-food-industry>.

⁸⁷³ Neufeld, C. (2024, July 10). Letter Re: Quinn’s Meats. *Frontenac News*. <https://www.frontenacnews.ca/letters/item/17381-re-quinn-s-meats>.

⁸⁷⁴ Email from Rem Burns, Regional Manager, Contracting & Materiel Services, CSC (2018, September 25). *Subject: RE: Abattoir*. CSC A-2018-00333.

⁸⁷⁵ CSC (2022, October 7). *Question Period Note: Penitentiary Agriculture Plan* [draft]. CSC A-2022-00212.

parliamentary questions about the abattoir: “The abattoir... need to make it clear that it is arm’s length... Can we say independently operated somewhere... distance ourselves.”⁸⁷⁶

CSC and CORCAN do not want or need the abattoir, nor do they profit from it, once expenses are factored in. As has been documented in *Bloody Bad Business*, for decades the abattoir has been a significant financial strain on CSC, a drain on institutional resources, and a threat to institutional security as a chronic source of contraband trafficking. In response to a recent Order Paper question, CSC refused to disclose expenses while the abattoir was operational, but did disclose CSC’s revenues from 2011 to 2022, for a cumulative 11-year total of \$899,670.⁸⁷⁷ CSC’s inability or unwillingness to track or disclose expenses while the abattoir was operational makes it impossible to assess whether CSC adhered to its ministerial “requirement to operate the abattoir on a cost-neutral basis to taxpayers.”⁸⁷⁸ ATI records have provided ample evidence of the financial burden borne by CSC while the abattoir was operational, but even if CSC will not disclose past expenses, eleven years of cumulative revenues (\$899,670) do not even cover the costs of maintaining the empty building in 2023-2024 (\$935,000). It is abundantly evident that the only interest in reopening the abattoir is on the part of industry. It remains to be seen whether correctional and federal government policies determine the fate of Joyceville’s shuttered abattoir, or whether they will be trumped once again by industry interests. It presents a lucrative prospect for farmers to see millions in taxpayer funds subsidizing a commercial carceral slaughter enterprise so that they can sell “inexpensive meat” to “unsuspecting consumers,”⁸⁷⁹ and “realize more profitability in their businesses.”⁸⁸⁰ The abattoir’s example makes it

⁸⁷⁶ Emails from Kirstan Gagnon, Assistant Commissioner, Communications and Engagement, CSC (2022, October 7). *Subject: ...QPN - Penitentiary Farms*. CSC A-2022-00212.

⁸⁷⁷ House of Commons (2024, January 29). *Order Paper Question No. Q-1947*. Reply to MP Scott Reid by MP Kevin Lamoureux, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

⁸⁷⁸ CSC (2011, July 19). *Media Lines*. CSC A-2018-00333. As previously noted, the abattoir was slated to close in 2011 along with the prison farms, but Dianne Dowling (representing Save Our Prison Farms, the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op, and the National Farmers Union) and Jeff Peters (representing the same advocacy groups and the Frontenac Cattlemen’s Association) secured a commitment from the Public Safety Minister to keep the abattoir operational “on a neutral operational cost basis... This decision was communicated to the Frontenac Cattlemen’s Association and the local farmers union on May 13, 2009” (CSC, n.d. *Pittsburgh Abattoir: Scenarios to establish License Fee*. CSC A-2018-00333).

⁸⁷⁹ “Wallace Beef is reported to have utilized between twelve to fifteen inmates to staff the plant... Wallace Beef paid approximately \$1.50 per hour toward the wages of the inmates and had four staff other than the prison inmates... the OPP had entered the plant again on October 20, 2003 and the Correctional Services advised that a criminal investigation was underway... the police were investigating allegations that the plant had: sold product containing meat from dead animals; sold uninspected meat; and sold meat as *halal* which had not been slaughtered according to Islamic religious practice... The abattoir conducted custom slaughter for local farmers, sold meat to the public [and] restaurants... *Criminal Code*, *supra* note 4, ss. 445-447 delineate criminal offences involving the mistreatment of animals. Such investigations have been undertaken with respect to Aylmer Meat Packers Inc. and Wallace Beef Inc... Unsuspecting consumers have no idea of the risks they may be taking in the pursuit of inexpensive meat” (The Honourable Roland J. Haines., 2004. *Farm to Fork: A Strategy for Meat Safety in Ontario. Report of the Meat Regulatory and Inspection Review*. Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General).

⁸⁸⁰ Testimony from Dianne Dowling, President, National Farmers Union, Local 316. Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. (2010, March 30). *Evidence*. 40th Parliament, 3rd session, meeting no. 6. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/40-3/SECU/meeting-6/evidence>.

flagrantly obvious that the term “training” for prisoners can be used to justify any cost and any exploitative enterprise regardless of physical risks, psychological impacts, or outcomes for post-release employment and public safety.

5.6. “Manipulative and deceptive behaviour” || Punishing Prisoners

In addition to facing physical risks working in agricultural operations, prisoners also face mechanisms of punishment and control if they are critical of CSC’s prison farms. Evolve has documented three incidents in which prisoners exercised freedom of speech about the prison farms and were then, in a pattern of strikingly similar circumstances, emergency transferred to another prison and reclassified to higher security status. In each of these cases, Evolve has obtained evidence that these transfers may have been, or were, directly connected to CSC’s efforts to control prison farm information and messaging.

Case #1

In 2017, Evolve received permission from CORCAN’s CEO Kelly Hartle to send an “informal feedback form” to Inmate Committees provided that it was not a formal survey, which would require a more complicated approval process.⁸⁸¹ Evolve developed the informal feedback form and sent it to Inmate Committees across Canada to recruit prisoner perspectives on prison farms in general, and to invite them to express their preference between a dairy model and a plant-based model that could incorporate animal-assisted therapy.⁸⁸² A prisoner at Joyceville Institution, who held a position on the Inmate Committee, verified with the institution’s Social Programs Officer that he was permitted to distribute the feedback forms.⁸⁸³ No concerns were raised. However, after sending 138 completed feedback forms to Evolve in

⁸⁸¹ The permission was given during a phone meeting so there is no paper documentation but an ATI release shows CSC staff saying that “the EVOLVE group has surveyed our inmate committees across the country... I talked to Kelly [Hartle] today and she is already aware” (Email from Peter Bennett, Senior Director, Internal Partnerships and Service Relations, to Scott Harris, Regional Deputy Commissioner, CSC, 2018, March 22. *Subject: FW: Evolve Our Prison Farms*. CSC A-2018-00332).

⁸⁸² Over 150 feedback forms were received, although several arrived after Evolve had submitted results to CSC. At the time of submission in March 2018, 143 feedback forms had been received, with 95% voting in favour of reopening prison farms (135 out of 142 who answered that question), with 72% choosing Evolve’s model as their first choice, and 28% choosing dairy as their top preference. In 2017, neither Evolve nor prisoners knew that the prison farms would be commercial dairy operations and would not supply prisons. From the comments offered, it was clear that prisoners expected a return of the former model. Prisoners who supported reopening wrote, for example, “To be able to give back to the prisons,” and “To be able to supply food for prisons at cheaper costs.” Knowledge of altered prison farm model no doubt would have affected the results, as demonstrated in Evolve’s second feedback collection in 2020, in which the support reversed completely, with 95% of respondents (53 out of 56) indicating that the new prison farms do not have the best interests of prisoners in mind, with 85% expressing preference for the farm program to transition to Evolve’s model, and 13% voting for the farm program to shut down completely. Only 5% (3 out of 56) supported the new farm program.

⁸⁸³ The inmate showed Evolve a copy of the memo that he had sent to the Social Programs Officer.

January and February 2018, ATI records show that, in March 2018, CSC staff at Regional and National Headquarters were corresponding about the feedback forms circulating:

“Further information about the Evolve movement... the EVOLVE group has surveyed our inmate committees across the country... some were wondering where the numbers were coming from... I have sent a message to [Joyceville Institution] as they referred to having most come from JI.”⁸⁸⁴

Unaware that CSC was investigating who had distributed Evolve’s feedback forms, Evolve visited this prisoner in April 2018 to discuss prisoner perspectives on the prison farms and the Joyceville Institution abattoir. Shortly after, this individual arranged for another prisoner to send Evolve a testimonial about his experience working in the prison slaughterhouse.⁸⁸⁵ In May 2018, the prisoner assisting Evolve was removed by CSC from his (inmate-elected) position on the Inmate Committee, but he continued to communicate with Evolve. In November 2018, he was pulled out of a Personal Family Visit in the middle of the night, shackled, and emergency transferred out of Joyceville Institution and reclassified to medium security status at a medium security prison several hours away. An emergency involuntary transfer is an exceptional measure reserved for cases in which an inmate “poses an immediate safety risk to the public, staff and/or inmate(s) of the sending institution.”⁸⁸⁶

With the inmate’s signed permission, Evolve obtained his transfer records.⁸⁸⁷ The written reason for his emergency transfer was that traditional Indigenous herbs were discovered in his room during a “random” search triggered by “reports of unknown reliability.” There was “an ice cream container half full of ground Semma [Indigenous ceremonial tobacco, not used for smoking],” a “significant amount of sage” [used in Indigenous spiritual practice], and more Nicorette gum than he was allowed to possess at a time, which he had purchased from the inmate canteen.⁸⁸⁸ As a result, CSC labelled him part of the “tobacco subculture,”

⁸⁸⁴ Email exchanges between Scott Harris, Regional Deputy Commissioner, Anne Kelly, Commissioner, Alain Tousignant, Senior Deputy Commissioner, Peter Bennett, Assistant Deputy Commissioner, and Wayne Buller, Regional Administrator Communications and Executive Services, CSC (2018, March 22). *Subject: Evolve Our Prison Farms*. CSC A-2018-00332.

⁸⁸⁵ “During my incarceration, I have worked with, or within, most of the [former] CORCAN farming operations that functioned in the Kingston region. Many of the responsibilities of the farm were not limited to simple maintenance, but also had heavy involvement in preparing the fields, planting, harvesting, milking assistance, birthing calves, removal of carcasses, egg collection, chicken collection, pest/vermin control. I began working at the abattoir in late November of 2017... I’m not just a number, following people around with a bloody mop bucket and a sweat towel” (Testimonial from a Joyceville abattoir worker, 2018, January 22).

⁸⁸⁶ CSC (2018, November 7). *Commissioner’s Directive 710-2 Transfer of Inmates*. <https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/politiques-et-lois/710-2-cd-en.shtml>.

⁸⁸⁷ To protect the inmate’s identity, this report will not disclose the ATI record number or specific dates of events, but the inmate gave Evolve permission to publish this account.

⁸⁸⁸ The inmate had receipts. According to him, inmates are allowed \$90 worth of canteen items in their room at any given time, but he had \$180 worth of Nicorette gum. He explained that he chews the gum to manage his anxiety, and he always

and justified his emergency transfer and reclassification on this basis.⁸⁸⁹ Semma and sage are grown by inmates at Joyceville Institution for use in ceremonies and prison programming,⁸⁹⁰ but he was not explicitly authorized to have them in his room.

The transfer documents show that prior to this incident, the inmate had a clean record and was classified as following his correctional plan, and he was rated as having high levels of motivation and accountability. The inmate appealed his transfer and reclassification, explaining that he uses the plants as medicine for his daily smudging and for offerings to Elders, but the warden defended the transfer arguing that he had disrespected Indigenous culture: “While stressing that you used the Semma and Sage for Traditional purposes only, you glossed over the fact that you disrespected these sacred medicines by storing them improperly.” Confident that no one would take notice of the transfer, CSC noted that “This increase in [his] security classification and involuntary transfer are unlikely to cause media attention.”⁸⁹¹

These events occurred during a time of particular sensitivity to CSC. The \$4.3 million in federal funding to reopen Kingston’s prison farms has just been announced in February 2018, to the applause of many locals and media, followed by the controversial goat dairy announcement in March 2018, and the subsequent announcement in June 2018 that a small cow dairy program would be added. Media and ministerial events were being hosted at Joyceville Institution, involving senior CSC officials, members of Save Our Prison Farms, politicians such as MP Mark Gerretsen, and Public Safety representatives. It is not possible to conclusively establish a link between what happened to this inmate and the political prison farm sensitivities, but it is clear that CSC was investigating who at Joyceville Institution was assisting Evolve, and there is nothing in the inmate’s transfer records that would justify an emergency involuntary transfer.

kept extra packs because his anxiety heightens when the canteen runs out or there’s a lockdown. It was never a problem prior to this event, and his Nicorette gum was transferred with him.

⁸⁸⁹ The inmate is Black and participates in Indigenous programming as a drummer, singer, and crafter. As noted by House and Rashid in *Solidarity Beyond Bars*, many Black and Indigenous prisoners are classified as part of gangs, rated at higher security levels, and considered higher risks: “Once the label sticks, it is very hard to shake off.” This is consistent with reports from the Correctional Investigator of Canada decrying the systemic racism in the federal penitentiary system, which results in Black prisoners serving longer sentences, at higher security levels, and Black prisoners are also over-represented in involuntary transfers: “I am very disappointed to report that the same systemic concerns and barriers identified nearly a decade ago, including discrimination, stereotyping, racial bias and labeling of Black prisoners, remain as pervasive and persistent as before. In fact, the situation for Black people behind bars in Canada today is as bad, and, in some respects, worse than it was in 2013” (Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2022, November 1. *Media Release: Correctional Investigator says Situation for Black People in Canadian Federal Penitentiaries has not Improved Ten Years After Landmark Investigation*. <https://oci-bec.gc.ca/en/content/correctional-investigator-says-situation-black-people-canadian-federal-penitentiaries-has>).

⁸⁹⁰ The Semma and sage are grown in a greenhouse right beside the Joyceville Institution abattoir, and they were specifically mentioned by CSC’s Scott MacPherson during Evolve’s tour of the Joyceville farm and abattoir in November 2023, with MP Scott Reid in attendance.

⁸⁹¹ All quotes are from the inmate’s transfer records.

As a result of what occurred, Evolve lost an important source of information, and the inmate's progress towards parole was set back by years.⁸⁹²

Case #2

The second case involved a prisoner at Collins Bay Institution who, in November 2019, notified Evolve that a CSC staff member had told him that the goat operation would not be proceeding because of the China-Canada tensions. Evolve posted the unconfirmed information on Facebook, saying it was received from “trusted sources ‘inside,’” noting that “CSC has yet to confirm this” but “if the report is true, this is a victory.”⁸⁹³ Evolve's Facebook post was picked up by *The Kingston Whig-Standard* airing CSC's denial that the goat operation was cancelled.⁸⁹⁴ Shortly afterwards, in January 2020, this inmate at Collins Bay began reporting to Evolve that calves were dying, and over the following months, Evolve submitted media inquiries to confirm the reports of the ongoing deaths. Communications from this inmate continued to reach Evolve, and in June 2020, this inmate informed Evolve that the farm staff were expecting the delivery of the first 200 goats at Collins Bay Institution in a couple of weeks. On June 15, 2020, Evolve submitted a media inquiry to ask when CSC expected the first delivery of goats to arrive. CSC replied with a generic statement:

“The bids are currently being evaluated with anticipated delivery over the next year. They will be housed at CBI until they reach the age for milking at which time they will be moved to a new dairy goat barn that will be constructed at Joyceville Institution.”⁸⁹⁵

⁸⁹² The inmate's records show that he had maintained a clean institutional record, progressed well throughout his sentence, earned a high school diploma, completed numerous programs, maintained institutional employment, participated in voluntary chaplaincy, restorative justice, workshops, social groups, Indigenous programming, and he completed over 100 Escorted Temporary Absences (ETAs) without incident. At Joyceville Minimum, he did daily Community Service at RHQ, worked on the Inmate Committee, was engaged as an Indigenous drummer and Fire Keeper, and was following his Healing Journey. He had attended a Community Residential Facility and participated in the John Howard Society Pre-Release program. He was supported by his Case Management Team to apply for six-month Work Release and he was working toward a conditional release to the community. Then his engagement with Evolve, followed by the “random search,” and his emergency transfer for supposedly threatening the safety of the institution by having herbs in his room. CSC noted in his transfer documents that the “transfer to a medium security facility from a minimum security is a significant setback,” while paradoxically admitting that his motivation “is still viewed as high [and] he has continued to show a high level of accountability.”

⁸⁹³ Evolve Our Prison Farms. (2019, November 7). *VICTORY! We have received word from trusted sources “inside” that the prison goat factory plan has been CANCELLED.* [Status updated]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/EvolveOurPrisonFarms/photos/pb.100064814345725.-2207520000/2592604020833009/?type=3>.

⁸⁹⁴ MacAlpine, I. (2019, November 15). CSC denies group's claim that Joyceville goat operation a no-go. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/news/local-news/csc-denies-groups-claim-that-joyceville-goat-operation-a-no-go>.

⁸⁹⁵ Email statement from Marie-Pier Lécuyer, Communications Advisor, CSC (2020, June 18).

Convinced of the credibility of the incarcerated person who had reported that the goats were to arrive within weeks, Evolve – somewhat reluctantly – pressed the question more specifically to CSC on June 18, 2020:

“To be clear: I have received a report that 200 goats are expected to arrive at Collins Bay Institution in the very near future. Based on your response, it sounds like no such plans are in place. Can you please confirm that no goats are expected in the coming weeks?”⁸⁹⁶

CSC replied four days later, on June 22, repeating “As previously mentioned, the bids are currently being evaluated. Young dairy goats are expected to arrive over the next year.”⁸⁹⁷ Eight days later, on June 30, 2020, the inmate at Collins Bay Institution was subjected to emergency involuntary transfer and reclassified to medium security.

Evolve has interviewed the inmate and, as in the previous case, the circumstances of the transfer were questionable. Evolve has not obtained the transfer records but ATI records do provide more than mere circumstantial evidence in this case. The records establish that, in November 2019, CSC had internally distributed Evolve’s Facebook post and the corresponding *Whig* article about the report that the goat program would not be proceeding, and someone at CSC pulled out one specific line, set in bold and highlighted, that “Evolve Our Prison Farms spokesperson Calvin Neufeld said on Friday the information was given to them by a ‘trusted source’ inside Collins Bay Institution.”⁸⁹⁸ Alone, this might not be convincing evidence of improper exercise of control by correctional staff, but paired with the pattern of the other two known instances, it does raise concern. Furthermore, it is now evident, through Access to Information, that the report of the expected delivery of 200 goats in the summer of 2020 was likely true.

As previously noted, ATI records show that CSC and PSPC had the final Farm Site Visits scheduled for the week of March 12, 2020. This last stage of the goat procurement process was delayed by the onset of the pandemic and federal employee travel restrictions. However, on June 2, 2020, PSPC and CORCAN were discussing completing the Farm Site Visit evaluation virtually:

⁸⁹⁶ Email from Calvin Neufeld (2020, June 18).

⁸⁹⁷ Email statement from Marie-Pier Lécuyer, Communications Advisor, CSC (2020, June 22).

⁸⁹⁸ Email from Melissa Hart, Manager, Communications, CSC (2019, November 18). *Subject: Morning Ops Brief for November 18, 2019.* CSC A-2019-00317.

“Given that we have already seen these farms, a virtual assessment may allow us to complete this procurement process sooner than currently anticipated and CORCAN may be able to receive delivery of some goats this summer.”⁸⁹⁹

The minimum herd size that CSC could accept was 200 goats, and the June 2020 exchange between PSPC and CORCAN show that there was still one valid bidder capable of delivering this. It was in June 2020 that the inmate in this case reported to Evolve that farm staff had said that the first delivery of 200 goats was expected within a few weeks, and it was on June 30, 2020, that the inmate was emergency transferred out of the institution. In another ATI record, dated June 30, 2020, PSPC reported that “The target date for the [goat farm] site visits is mid-July [and] a contract is expected to be awarded shortly thereafter.”⁹⁰⁰ The fact that this inmate, who had no way of knowing the tender specifications, reported that “200 goats” were expected to arrive within weeks at precisely the time that ATI records now show that CSC was expecting the first herd of goats, suggests that the information he had shared was accurate. That this inmate was emergency transferred out of Collins Bay Institution less than two weeks after CSC discovered that Evolve had received that information raises suspicion.

Earlier ATI records show that CSC marked “date is sensitive” (confidential) when the first six dairy cows were scheduled to arrive in June 2019. In May 2019, CSC and Public Safety were monitoring that Evolve was not aware of the date that the first beef cattle were expected to arrive: “Just a heads up – we understand that the first 13 beef cattle will be delivered to Joyceville today. So far we haven’t heard of any potential protest on the part of Evolve.”⁹⁰¹ The arrival of the first 200 goats was the most sensitive “hot issue,”⁹⁰² and Evolve had inadvertently alerted CSC to Evolve’s foreknowledge. Shortly after, and once again, Evolve lost an important source of information, and a prisoner’s progress was set back by years.⁹⁰³

⁸⁹⁹ Email from Judy Holt, Supply Specialist, PSPC, to Kelly Hartle, CEO, CORCAN (2020, June 2). *Subject: 21C41-194751 Goats file update.* PSPC A-2021-00436.

⁹⁰⁰ PSPC (2020, June 30). *Project Briefing: Joyceville Institution Farm - Cow and Goat Barns.* PSPC A-2021-00436.

⁹⁰¹ Email from David Showell, Associate Assistant Commissioner, Communications & Engagement, CSC, to Michael Milech, Parliamentary Assistant, and Scott Bardsley, Senior Advisor for Communications, PSC (2019, May 15). *Subject: Cattle arriving at Joyceville.* CSC A-2019-00126.

⁹⁰² “Corcan farm requests (construction requests and livestock) could be a potential hot issue because these files are very political, a lot of media attention and ATIPs. The Dairy Goats RFP is presently closed and Corcan is evaluating proposals” (Email from Estelle Carrière, National Manager, NHQ Contracting Operations, CSC, 2020, February 20. CSC A-2020-00131). Also: “The goats are a hot issue” (Email from Erin Kippen, Regional Manager, Communications, to Graham Holt, Communications Advisor, PSPC, 2019, May 27. PSPC A-2019-00259).

⁹⁰³ To determine whether Evolve’s media inquiry was connected to the transfer of this inmate out of CBI, Evolve filed an ATI request for internal correspondence over the two week period between Evolve’s inquiry and the inmate’s transfer. This prompted a strong reaction from CSC’s ATIP Team Leader in the form of an intimidating phone call threatening to block Evolve’s ATI requests, followed by formal Notice of Application to Decline to Act on Evolve’s ATI requests. Evolve successfully challenged this and CSC was compelled by the Information Commissioner to withdraw the Notices and process Evolve’s requests. CSC’s ATIP Team Leader then issued a 60-day time extension on this request. Immediately, Evolve filed a complaint against the time extension, and surprisingly, the records were released the following day. This

It is striking to discover in ATI records how closely CSC was monitoring these activities and investigating Evolve's sources of information. It is more striking still to contemplate the consequences that prisoners could face for exercising freedom of speech if CSC deems it "politically sensitive," and the methods by which power and control may be improperly exercised. Presciently, the inmate's partner in this case had read Evolve's Facebook post about having a 'trusted source' inside Collins Bay Institution, and sent an email to Neufeld in February 2020:

"I am concerned about 'inside sources' may lead them to [this inmate]. I think he is the only inmate with you on his visitors list. Not sure what they can do to him that they have not already done. Do you have any concerns?"⁹⁰⁴

CSC monitors phone calls and letters to and from prisoners, so if they wanted to identify (and potentially remove) sources of information, it would be relatively easy to do so, especially in cases where CSC believes that an inmate's involuntary transfer is "unlikely to cause media attention."⁹⁰⁵

Case #3

The third case requires no interpretation. A prisoner at Joyceville Institution was emergency transferred in October 2020 and reclassified to medium security status after speaking critically about the prison farms to a reporter. With the inmate's signed permission, Evolve obtained his transfer records through Access to Information in October 2021. The records confirmed that the Reason for Transfer was the "recently published article by media that contains a very critical view of CSC, particularly the JI Minimum farming operation."⁹⁰⁶ It was noted that the inmate "is quoted making very specific and critical observations of the JI Minimum farming operation" and this "behaviour suggests [that] a recommendation to raise his security classification to Medium and approve an emergency involuntary transfer to medium security is warranted." The tone of the transfer records is acrimonious:

reveals that CSC had the records ready for release yet attempted first to block the release, then attempted an unjustified delay. The records show that Evolve's media inquiry had been passed to senior CSC officials including CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle, Chief Financial Officer Tony Matson, Assistant Commissioner of Correctional Operations and Programs France Gratton, and others. The CORCAN CEO's comments were redacted.

⁹⁰⁴ Email from this inmate's partner (2020, February 3). Quoted with permission.

⁹⁰⁵ As noted in the first Joyceville inmate's involuntary transfer records.

⁹⁰⁶ Again, to protect the inmate's identity, this report will not disclose the name, ATI number, or specific dates and details.

“he wanted to attempt to discredit the farm operations. This undermining behaviour is not conducive to being willing to work with CSC staff in an open, honest and cooperative manner, which is critical especially in a minimum security environment.”⁹⁰⁷

In the transfer records, the Warden at Joyceville Institution accused the inmate of having participated in the interview in a “deceptive manner... without CSC’s approval.”⁹⁰⁸ On the day that the inmate’s transfer records were released to Evolve, nearly a year after the emergency transfer occurred, the inmate was emergency transferred back to Joyceville Minimum without advance notice. After receiving the transfer documents, Evolve informed the journalist who had conducted the interview, which had, in fact, been approved by CSC. What happened next is chronicled in ATI records. The journalist challenged CSC in no uncertain terms, stating that he had seen the transfer records in which “CSC has told an absolute pathological internal lie in writing,”⁹⁰⁹ referring to the Warden’s claim that the interview had not been approved and therefore the inmate had engaged in “manipulative and deceptive behaviour.” The reporter insisted that:

“a recording of the conversation I had with the CSC lady who called me prior to the phone interview will prove that. There is also nothing else at all in the other hundred plus documents on this matter which even hints at any other reason for the transfer to a harsher facility.”⁹¹⁰

When CSC media relations said they would respond to the journalist shortly, he replied (quoted as written):

“If the person who wrote the ‘reason for Transfer’ want to call why he / she stated what they did, then give me a phone call... As far as media relations answering... I’ve gone through hundreds of emails obtained through Access to information from your department in several articles and I really want to spare you folks

⁹⁰⁷ All quotes are from the inmate’s transfer records.

⁹⁰⁸ Not only are there records confirming that the media interview had been approved, but an inmate is unable to make a phone call outside of the institution without approval by CSC. CSC must obtain the consent of the individual to be contacted by the inmate before the number can be added to the inmate’s authorized call list (CSC, n.d. *Inmate phone calls*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/services/you-csc/visits-communications/inmate-phone-calls.html>). As noted in the inmate’s transfer records: “[The inmate] provided that, since CSC had approved the reporter’s telephone number on his PIN list, this amounted to approval. [He] was asked why if he was so interested in trying to get employment with the farm would he be willing to make such critical comments of the farm operations, especially in a public forum. [He] provided that he knew he was never going to get a job on the farm so he was going to express his opinion. This behaviour seems to indicate that, since [he] did not get his way in getting a job on the farm, he wanted to attempt to discredit the farm operations.”

⁹⁰⁹ Email from Michael Schrider, Regional Communications Manager, CSC (2021, October 5). *Subject: *RDC Approval Required* Media Question - Concerns about Inmate Interview Process and Security Classification Reviews*. CSC A-2021-00381.

⁹¹⁰ Email from the journalist [name withheld] to CSC Media (2021, October 5). CSC A-2021-00381.

the pain of trying to twist words. So, no, I don't want to hear from media relations. I just want the above person who wrote what they did to call me.”⁹¹¹

Internally, CSC staff expressed concern that “the reporter intends to go public with his allegations if he does not hear back from CSC today... since we cannot specifically address the offender's file... we can therefore expect that the story could still be released publicly.”⁹¹² Before sending it, CSC had the proposed response reviewed by CSC Legal Services.⁹¹³ The draft response was:

“While Correctional Service Canada (CSC) cannot provide details specific to an offender's file in accordance with the Privacy Act, we take the allegations you have raised seriously and will be reviewing the details that led to the transfer decision you mention in your email. CSC respects offenders' rights to speak with media... Once again, we take the allegations in this case seriously and will be conducting a review of the offender's file.”

Three months later, the prisoner in this case was released on full parole.⁹¹⁴

These three cases, similar in circumstance, timing, and location, and each bearing direct connections to the prison farms at a time of “political sensitivity,” collectively speak to a troubling pattern in which control can be exerted over prisoners' ability to express their views. Given the potential consequences for prisoners who share information or exercise freedom of speech on matters of political sensitivity, Evolve no longer recruits prisoner perspectives on the prison farms. Prior to arriving at that determination, however, Evolve circulated another informal feedback form to Inmate Committees across Canada in 2020 to invite prisoners' perspectives on the prison farms.

⁹¹¹ Email from the journalist [name withheld] to CSC Media (2021, October 5). CSC A-2021-00381.

⁹¹² Email from Isabelle Robitaille, Senior Communications Advisor, CSC, to CSC Legal Services (2021, October 6). CSC A-2021-00381.

⁹¹³ Email from Isabelle Robitaille, Senior Communications Advisor, CSC, to CSC Legal Services (2021, October 6). CSC A-2021-00381.

⁹¹⁴ This is unusual for an inmate serving a life sentence who had only cascaded down from medium security three months earlier. According to inmates, a “lifer” who has been sent back to medium security would typically be required to serve at least six months before earning a security classification review. If approval is granted to lower the inmate's institutional adjustment score, it can take another three months for reports to be written and possibly longer for the Warden to sign the transfer back to minimum. Once in minimum, the inmate would be expected to take six months to “get to know” their new parole officer: “Nothing happens the first six months” back in minimum. After six months to a year in minimum, incident-free, the inmate might have opportunity to face the Parole Board. If supported for parole, the process would generally involve months or years of gradual steps such as completing a series of Temporary Absences (i.e. to a “halfway house” Community Residential Facility and/or Work Release) without incident. This may be followed by Day Parole at a halfway house for months or even years. Such a process would normally be expected before an inmate serving an indeterminate life sentence would be granted Full Parole.

5.7. “Federally sponsored slavery” || Prisoner Perspectives

In 2020, Evolve sent a second informal feedback form to Inmate Committees at federal penitentiaries across Canada. This time, the two-question form was based on the knowledge that the new prison farm model was commercial in nature, industrial in scale, and not feeding prisons as in the past. Inmates were asked whether CORCAN’s new prison farms are in their best interests,⁹¹⁵ and they were invited to provide comments. Distribution was limited due to pandemic restrictions on prisoner movement, but 56 forms were returned to Evolve from 12 institutions.⁹¹⁶ In response to the main question, 53 (94.6%) answered “no,” the prison farms were not in their best interests.⁹¹⁷ Comments were overwhelmingly critical of the program (all quoted as written):

“This proposed agribusiness is nothing more than further exploitation of prisoner labour by CORCAN and the industrial prison complex.” (Inmate #1 at Federal Training Centre, QC)

“I don’t believe that CORCAN Industries per se has the best interests of inmates in mind. It is nothing more than slave labor. Shutting down Corcan will also shut down federally sponsored slavery!!” (Inmate #2 at Federal Training Centre, QC)

“As they presently are – slave labor for one company or another – nothing to do with caring or rehabilitation. Simply want us to be used as work animals – with overhead threats – tow the line or be sent to higher security. Cheap forced labour.” (Inmate #3 at Federal Training Centre, QC)

“Private businesses shouldn’t benefit from inmates labour. These kind of things will only lead to the privatizing of prison for profits; where inmates would be forced to work in unsuitable conditions instead of truly getting a chance to rehabilitate.” (Inmate #4 at Federal Training Centre, QC)

“They are also making profits off sweat labour, backs of prisoner who are doing the work for free and not getting paid for it.” (Inmate at Cowansville Institution, QC)

“Just because the supreme court says that we prisoners are not employees, does not mean that we should be treated as ‘Slaves.’ Or am I wrong?” (Inmate #1 at Joyceville Institution, ON)

⁹¹⁵ “Question 1: Do you believe CORCAN’s new prison farms have the best interests of inmates in mind? Question 2: Would you rather see the prison farms A) Proceed as they are, B) Shut down, C) Transition to a non-profit purpose.”

⁹¹⁶ Atlantic Institution (NB), Cowansville Institution (QC), Federal Training Centre (QC), Joliette Institution for Women (QC), La Macaza Institution (QC), Beaver Creek Institution (ON), Joyceville Institution (ON), Warkworth Institution (ON), Saskatchewan Penitentiary (SK), Grande Cache Institution (AB), Matsqui Institution (BC), Pacific Institution (BC).

⁹¹⁷ “Prison Farms Prisoner Feedback 2021.” Evolve Our Prison Farms. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/prisoner/#survey>.

“I work on the farm here at JI Min [Joyceville Institution Minimum]. While I have been able to acquire and sharpen employment skills, I can’t help but notice wasted opportunities to further enhance the rehabilitative value of this kind of results-driven hard work because of the looming CORCAN CSC oversights and rigid way of operating.” (Inmate #2 at Joyceville Institution, ON)

“We have frames for greenhouses here that are NOT used. They should be used to grow food for here and needy in local community. Apple orchard is NOT harvested. A lot COULD be done for local community IF this place chose to.” (Inmate #3 at Joyceville Institution, ON)

“CSC too slow in getting farm projects up & running. Current staff lack skills & initiative to be farm managers (nepotism). Focus on feeding prisoners & food banks. Goat project??? Not enough info. CSC keeps prisoners in the dark. Poor communication.” (Inmate #4 at Joyceville Institution, ON)

“It’s an industrial operation with little benefit to anyone especially the inmate population.” (Inmate #5 at Joyceville Institution, ON)

“This is just another example of the Government putting money over human life. Prisoners may not be employees BUT WE ARE NOT SLAVES! Thank you for Caring!” (Inmate at Warkworth Institution, ON)

Of the three inmates who expressed support for the new farms, two provided comments:

“The rehabilitative value of an inmate going to work everyday must not be undervalued. When I left Sask Pen in 2002 after working the dairy farm I got a job right away at the livestock exchange. I could easily have called any dairy farm and gotten hired based on that experience.” (Inmate at Matsqui Institution, BC)

“The project is good for the inmates. And for me the inmate who work there, are employees.” (Inmate at Cowansville Institution, QC)

Others felt that their health and safety were being undervalued:

“If the prisoners were paid minimum wage for risking their lives for others gain maybe it would be in their best interests.” (Inmate at Joliette Women’s Institution, QC)

“Under present pay system (no Corcan wages) I would not work for Corcan/CSC – slave wages. Also concerned about health issues as goats stink & air might be hazardous to my health. Too many questions re: health & safety. Typical CSC – not well thought out / planned.” (Inmate at Joliette Women’s Institution, QC)

« [Les personnes incarcérées] valent mieux que les exploiter et mettent leur santé en péril. »⁹¹⁸ (Inmate at Joliette Women’s Institution, QC)

It is clear to see, then, that prisoner acceptance of the prison farm program has been far from “glowing.”⁹¹⁹ Many incarcerated persons have been vocal in their opposition to the re-establishment of the prison farm program, particularly under the altered model serving commercial interests. In May 2022, MP Scott Reid raised prisoners’ comments in the House of Commons and asked the government to take the for-profit prison farm model off the table. In response, MP Mark Gerretsen dismissed the voices of the inmates and replaced them with his own, stating:

“If the member [Reid] cherry-picks his data and just goes after one survey response or another survey response, I am pretty sure he can get any answer that he wants. However, if he looks at those survey responses in their totality, he will see that, overwhelmingly, the program has demonstrated that it serves inmates well.”⁹²⁰

MP Gerretsen provided no evidence to support his claim that the program serves inmates well. Instead, he proceeded to perpetuate false claims regarding the “rehabilitative effects” and employability outcomes of the prison farm program:

“This evening, I wish to address a few points that have been made recently in the House pertaining to the penitentiary agricultural program, commonly known as the prison farms... Research undertaken by Correctional Service Canada, dating back to at least 2014, demonstrated rehabilitative effects and positive reintegration outcomes for offenders who participated in these programs, as they were able to develop meaningful skill sets. These findings also noted that offenders who were able to find employment in the community were less likely to reoffend. The statistics are very clear. In fact, offenders who find jobs in the community are three times less likely to return to custody for a new offence.”

⁹¹⁸ “[Incarcerated persons] are worth more than being exploited and putting their health at risk.”

⁹¹⁹ In his testimony to the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, the Director of the Prison Law Clinic at Queen’s University, Sean Ellacott, testified in support of the prison farms, stating: “I’m not an expert on the farm issue [but] I never heard anything that wasn’t glowing” (RIDR - Standing Committee, 2017, May 15. *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights: Issue No. 18 - Evidence - May 15, 2017*. Senate of Canada. <https://sencanada.ca/en/Content/SEN/Committee/421/ridr/18ev-53322-e>).

⁹²⁰ Gerretsen, M. (2022, May 30). “Correctional Service of Canada.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 077*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-77/hansard>.

In fact, the research that MP Gerretsen was citing draws the *opposite* conclusion to the one he was inferring. CSC's research is indeed "very clear" that there is no research or evidence to support claims that prison farms enhance post-release outcomes. Furthermore, the specific 2014 research that MP Gerretsen was improperly interpreting found that people who are employed post-release "*regardless of institutional employment participation*" are three times less likely to reoffend.⁹²¹ This research found that "involvement in CORCAN employment was not found to have a significant impact" on post-release employment, and "there was no overall association between CORCAN participation and direct reductions in recidivism." The "three times less likely" erroneous interpretation of CSC's research was used to justify the prison farm program by Marco Mendicino as Public Safety Minister (April 8, 2022);⁹²² Pam Damoff as Parliamentary Secretary to Public Safety Minister (May 5, 2022);⁹²³ Gary Anandasangaree as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice (June 9, 2022);⁹²⁴ and by Jennifer O'Connell as Parliamentary Secretary to the Public Safety Minister (June 13, 2024).⁹²⁵ In Reid's exchange with Anandasangaree, MP Reid brought the discussion to a pointed conclusion:

"I thank my colleague for his comments. It was very strange hearing him reciting back to me the same statistics I had just given to him. I pointed out that they had been decontextualized by the minister. He simply repeated them. He repeated the same claim about being three times less likely to offend when one has been in a CORCAN program, which is just not true... The training is simply ineffective at its intended purpose. He should know that, and I hope that his boss gets the message."⁹²⁶

Not only is the prison farm program not achieving employability goals, but it exposes prisoners to elevated levels of safety and health risks, which is a human rights concern,⁹²⁷ while the program's commercialization will associate underpaid prison labour with private industry, which is a human rights violation under standards set by the United Nations International Labour Organization.

⁹²¹ Nolan, A., Wilton, G., Cousineau, C., & Stewart, L. (2014, January). *Outcomes for offender employment programs: Assessment of CORCAN participation*. Research Report R-283. CSC. <https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/corporate/library/research/glance/283.html>.

⁹²² Mendicino, M. (2022, April 8). "Labour." Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 056*. 44th parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-56/hansard>.

⁹²³ Damoff, P. (2022, May 5). "Labour." Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 065*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-65/hansard>.

⁹²⁴ Anandasangaree, G. (2022, June 9). "Public Safety." Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 085*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-85/hansard>.

⁹²⁵ O'Connell, J. (2024, June 13). "Correctional Service of Canada." Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 331*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/documentviewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-331/hansard>.

⁹²⁶ Reid, S. (2022, June 9). "Public Safety." Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 085*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-85/hansard>.

⁹²⁷ See *Solidarity Beyond Bars: Unionizing Prison Labour* for a summary of serious and debilitating accidents that occurred on the former prison farms, many of which resulted in litigation against CSC (House, J. & Rashid, A., 2022. *Solidarity Beyond Bars: Unionizing Prison Labour*. Fernwood Publishing).

5.8. “Breaking international law” || Violating Human Rights for Profit

A legal review conducted for Evolve by the Queen’s Business Law Clinic in 2020 determined that, according to the UN International Labour Organization (ILO), it is a violation of human rights to associate prison labour with the private sector unless wages and working conditions are comparable to free workers. Since these and other conditions (such as freedom from coercion) are not met in Canada, the review concluded that:

“a plausible argument can be made that the labour used is forced labour and as such constitutes a criminal offence and violates fundamental human rights under ILO. To stop the use of prison farms in Kingston to supply milk for the manufacture of baby formula, it is possible to raise these factors as an issue [and] the stronger points would be voluntariness and benefits/wages.”⁹²⁸

There is, however, an exception to the ILO rule: “Prisoners may work with a private entity as part of an educational or training scheme.”⁹²⁹ This exception appears to be the justification for the prison farm scheme, since the cited purpose of the program is vocational training. Even so, the internationally recognized *Mandela Rules* stipulate that “the interests of the prisoners and of their vocational training, however, must not be subordinated to the purpose of making a financial profit from an industry in the prison (Rule 99).”⁹³⁰

MP Scott Reid has raised the human rights implications of the new prison farms numerous times in the House of Commons since 2022 (Appendix 3: “Slow Motion Sparring”). It is worthwhile to provide a summary of some of these exchanges, to demonstrate how the human rights implications of the new prison farm model have repeatedly been dismissed by the federal government, how sentiment and falsely interpreted research have been the government’s only defence of the program, and how the government refuses to say whether the goat operation will proceed:⁹³¹

⁹²⁸ Sahar, A. & Adebiyi, T. (2020, April 6). *Memo Re: Prison labour goods exported*. Queen’s Business Law Clinic. To rectify the potential legal issues, the Queen’s Business Law Clinic concluded that CSC “would have to improve conditions for prisoners and re-think the new prison farm model.”

⁹²⁹ Summary “Legal Issues Arising from the Export of Prison-Sourced Infant Formula” available at <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/exporting-prison-produced-goods/>.

⁹³⁰ *United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules)* (2015, December 17). United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Nelson_Mandela_Rules-E-ebook.pdf.

⁹³¹ Excerpts have been edited for length and clarity. Full transcripts are available at the footnoted links and in Appendix 3.

March 22, 2022⁹³²

Scott Reid (Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston, ON): Canada is a signatory to the conventions of the International Labour Organization, which prohibit international commerce in prison-made goods, unless the prisoners are paid market wages. This leaves me wondering how Corrections Canada justifies its plan to open a factory farm at Joyceville Penitentiary, where prisoners would milk 2,200 goats to produce infant formula for export to China while being paid only a fraction of the minimum wage. Doesn't this plan violate our international commitments?

Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Public Safety Minister): The prison farm at Collins Bay, I know what a tremendous organization is happening there. I will check into that matter for the Honourable Member.

April 8, 2022⁹³³

Scott Reid (Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston, ON): Even though no contract has yet been signed to use the milk from its proposed 2,200-goat prison farm, the government continues to build dairy facilities at the Joyceville and Collins Bay institutions. Given the absence of a contract, it is strange the government continues to act and to spend as if it still plans to use prison labour to produce goat milk for export. Will the government promise to never sign any contract that involves the use of prison labour for export products?

Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety): The penitentiary agricultural program helps federal inmates gain the employment skills that are required for them to find meaningful employment in the community, which enhances their integration. In fact, we know offenders who participate in these programs are three times less likely to reoffend and find themselves back in custody. Of course, we will make sure that this contract complies with all of Canada's international obligations.

Scott Reid (Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston, ON): For it to comply with all of our international agreements, we would have to pay prison labour market wages. We would have to ensure that the workers have all the benefits that are provided to free labour. Has the government guaranteed that prisoners will be paid market wages? Alternatively, has it guaranteed that none of this will be used for export to China? It must be one or the other, or else we are breaking international law.

Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety): Of course, we want to treat inmates fairly and we want to compensate them fairly. We are going to make sure that those inmates are getting the skills and the experience

⁹³² Reid, S. & Damoff, P. (2022, March 22). "Labour." Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 043*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-43/hansard>.

⁹³³ Reid, S. & Mendicino, M. (2022, April 8). "Labour." Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 056*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-56/hansard>.

they require to become positive, contributing members to society, and we will make sure that this experience and the training are done in accordance with all of Canada's international obligations.

May 5, 2022⁹³⁴

Scott Reid (Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston, ON): I doubt that it is possible in practice to have an industrial farm producing an export product with prison labour that successfully conforms to the strict requirements of international law. It is certainly impossible to do so while actually producing a positive revenue stream or profit from that facility. What is needed is a clear policy statement from cabinet or an order from the minister... that the industrial goat operation is officially and permanently dead.

Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Public Safety Minister): By investing in the penitentiary agriculture program, we are helping offenders gain and develop the appropriate skill sets to find meaningful employment. We have the statistics. Offenders who find jobs are three times less likely to return to custody for a new offence.

I had the privilege of visiting the dairy farm at Collins Bay in November. These men were naming baby calves and bottle-feeding them and were well on their way to transitioning to a life free from crime.

I want to clarify that the Correctional Service of Canada currently does not have any goats within its program and does not have any agreements with third parties, either domestic or international, for the sale of goat milk. Simply put, there are no contracts because there are no goats.

As a founding and active member of the International Labour Organization, the Government of Canada takes its international obligations very seriously. We have ratified all of the ILO's fundamental standards that pertain to prison labour, and we continuously work to meet its strict conditions.

I would be delighted to return to Collins Bay with the hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston so that he can see how powerful an effective correctional program is. I can promise him that he will meet not only a herd of friendly dairy cows, but the offenders who love them.

Scott Reid (Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston, ON): I may very well take the parliamentary secretary up on that very kind offer, which she has also made to me privately.

⁹³⁴ Reid, S. & Damoff, P. (2022, May 5). "Labour." Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 065*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-65/hansard>.

I do want to say, however, that... all of the conditional language about having no plans right now, owning no goats right now and so on is unsatisfying. What would be satisfying is a clear policy statement that we will not have any goat operation in the future.

Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Public Safety Minister): I will repeat that there are no goats and therefore no contracts.

I am a little confused about what the hon. member has an issue with. Is it the goats?

I will reiterate that there are no goats and no contracts.

June 22, 2022⁹³⁵

Scott Reid (Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston, ON): A strange sort of slow-motion sparring match has been taking place in the Commons since March 22, when I first rose to ask the Minister of Public Safety about the government's plans for a potential goat farm at Joyceville Institution. I have asked questions over and over again on a very specific matter: Will the government guarantee that it will not permit CORCAN, the profit-making prison industry arm of the Correctional Services Canada, to establish a goat farm?

Various spokesmen for the government, sometimes the minister, sometimes the parliamentary secretary and on one occasion the member for Kingston and the Islands, have answered that there is at present no goat farm and no contract to start building one.

Now, I do not doubt that this is true, but what I want is something different: a commitment from the government that it will absolutely, permanently close off the option of starting a goat operation.

It is abundantly clear that Correctional Service Canada remains very much committed to creating a commercial goat farm. Every time we get a definitive-sounding answer in the House of Commons, we get the opposite from correctional services. For example, two days after I was told that there are no goats and there is no contract, CSC restated to the media that while at present there are no plans for dairy goat operations, it would "reassess at a later date," which means that a goat farm employing convict labour at below-market rates appears to still be on the table.

⁹³⁵ Reid, S. & Gerretsen, M. (2022, June 22). "Correctional Service of Canada." Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 094*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-94/hansard>.

Meanwhile, a \$10-million contract has been issued for the construction of a dairy cow barn at Joyceville. Of course, there is this important detail: The site plan embedded in the \$10-million contract contains something labelled “Future Goat Barn. Not in Contract”, and something called “Future Septic System for Goat Barn”. The part of the contract labelled “project description” could hardly be less ambiguous on this point: “It is the intent of Correctional Services Canada to construct two livestock barns, one for Cattle and one for Goats at the Joyceville Institution. The proposed Goat barn will have an approximate footprint of 6500 square meters.” It is abundantly clear that this contract is simply stage one of a two-stage construction project for a commercial goat farm.

While I am confident that Corrections Canada still does not own any goats and still does not have any contract for the sale of goat milk, I ask this once again: Will the government order Correctional Services Canada to end the possibility of any future reassessment of the goat farm, and will the government stop spending millions on the infrastructure for that goat farm, the one that it claims it does not want? Specifically, will the government commit to instructing Correctional Services Canada that no second Joyceville construction contract will be issued?

Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): I will start by reiterating that Corrections Canada does not currently possess any goats for use in a penitentiary agricultural program. It also does not have any contracts or agreements with any third parties, either domestic or international, for the sale of goat milk.

I will remind the member opposite that the operations at the Joyceville and Collins Bay institutions, at this time, are currently focused on full implementation of dairy cow operations.

I obviously do not have a direct answer to the member’s question. I do not think that it is indicative of the government in any regard to say that it can guarantee one way or another that it will do one thing or another.

These Liberal politicians are not the only parliamentarians to have disregarded the human rights violations of the new commercial prison farms. Senators have likewise dismissed these concerns and promoted the “heartfelt beliefs” about the prison farm program. In 2019, the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights produced an interim report for their multi-year study on the human rights of federally sentenced persons, casting light on human rights violations throughout the federal penitentiary system.⁹³⁶ As one of

⁹³⁶ Government of Canada: Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights (2019, February). *Interim Report - Study on The Human Rights of Federally-Sentenced Persons*. Senate of Canada. https://sencanada.ca/content/sen/committee/421/RIDR/reports/RIDR_Report_Prisioners_e.pdf.

many examples, the report decried CSC’s “delays in providing health services.”⁹³⁷ One incarcerated witness to the Senate Committee reported that dental care was “a complete joke... We’re seeing waits of eight, nine months for adequate dental care, and then when they see the dentist, they’re getting entire mouths full of teeth pulled. That’s their solution.”

Stories like this are familiar to Evolve. One incarcerated person known to Evolve had all of his teeth pulled after years of suffering from untreated abscessing infections; today, he wears an ill-fitting denture that causes painful sores. Another inmate, Josiah Gottlieb-Rosenwasser,⁹³⁸ who authorized the use of his name, shared one of his own recent dental “care” experiences with Evolve (quoted as written):

“There is egregious and continued wilful negligence by CSC of inmate’s welfare and safety. There was the time... when I was at Grande Cache Institution, and I needed to see the dentist. There was no dentist for more than a year. Surprisingly, I had to remove two of my own teeth, I was in so much pain. I visited ‘Health Care’ before then, to see the nurse. She told me to ‘do what I needed to do’ and left it at that. I didn’t need to be a rocket-scientist to figure out what she meant, and that I was on my own. I decided on my course of action (I won’t go into too much detail) and I removed my own two-teeth... I thought to myself, I hope they don’t expect me to do my own frontal-lobotomy.”⁹³⁹

After noticing that the Senate Committee’s Interim Report made no mention of the new commercial prison farms or the commercial prison abattoir, Evolve arranged meetings in 2019 with two members of the Senate Committee, Senator Kim Pate⁹⁴⁰ and Senator Yvonne Boyer,⁹⁴¹ to bring these issues to their attention. Following these meetings, Evolve submitted a written request to be included in the slate of witness

⁹³⁷ Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights (2021, June 16). *Report on The Human Rights of Federally-Sentenced Persons*. Senate of Canada. https://sencanada.ca/content/sen/committee/432/RIDR/reports/2021-06-16_FederallySentenced_e.pdf.

⁹³⁸ Gottlieb-Rosenwasser worked for four years as the editor of *Out of Bounds Prison Magazine*. In a letter dated November 17, 2023, he informed Evolve that he had been suspended from the position by CSC management on October 26, 2023, over a “censorship issue” and concerns “about the Editorial direction / trajectory of the magazine.” It is unknown whether publishing regular updates and articles from Evolve about the prison farms and the Joyceville abattoir contributed to CSC’s decision. However, Gottlieb-Rosenwasser indicated that “I was prepared to put articles from you [Calvin Neufeld] in the OBM... winter edition, and the spring / afterward but due to the censorship issue [and] my dismissal.... I won’t work anymore for CSC or in CSC.” Earlier, Gottlieb-Rosenwasser had encouraged Evolve to place an ad in the magazine, and provided the contact information for the CSC Social Programs Officer who handles advertising, Matthew Rossander. Evolve contacted Rossander by email on two occasions, January 13 and May 5, 2023, with a request to place an ad. No response was received. In his November 2023 letter to Evolve, Gottlieb-Rosenwasser noted that the Winter 2023 edition of the magazine was never published, “although I was nearly finished with it before my suspension.”

⁹³⁹ Letter from Josiah Gottlieb-Rosenwasser to Evolve (2024, February 9).

⁹⁴⁰ Ottawa, Ontario (2019, November 14).

⁹⁴¹ Merrickville, Ontario (2019, May 8).

testimonies,⁹⁴² but received no response. Following the meetings with Evolve, however, the Senate Committee did invite two witnesses to provide testimony on the subject of the prison farms and abattoir. One was CSC’s Commissioner Anne Kelly, who recited CSC’s media lines.⁹⁴³ The other was the newly appointed Director of the Queen’s Prison Law Clinic, Sean Ellacott, who prefaced his statements with the disclaimer that he is “not an expert on the farm issue.”⁹⁴⁴ This did not matter to the Senate Committee Chair, Senator Jim Munson,⁹⁴⁵ who stated in his opening remarks that “From my perspective, there’s not much to look at. Just get on with, get back to it, because I think it’s an incredible tool to enhance a prisoner’s life and human right to work.” The non-expert witness agreed, sentimentally citing the “intrinsic benefits” of the former farms and summarily stating, anecdotally, that “I never heard anything [about the prison farms] that wasn’t glowing.”⁹⁴⁶ Based on these two testimonies, the final report published by the Senate Committee in 2021 recommended the *expansion* of the prison farm program.⁹⁴⁷ The abattoir also entered the final report, with CSC’s Commissioner Anne Kelly quoted as testifying that “CSC does not slaughter animals.”⁹⁴⁸

⁹⁴² “As the Senators regroup to prepare your final report with recommendations, I would be very interested and eager to be consulted or interviewed to speak to this issue. If that is not possible, I hope I may have an opportunity to contribute a written submission for consideration” (Email from Calvin Neufeld to Senators Pate and Boyer, 2019, November 15).

⁹⁴³ RIDR - Standing Committee (n.d.). *Follow-Up Response: The Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights (RIDR) Regarding Human Rights of Federally-Sentenced Persons in the Correctional System*. Senate of Canada. https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fsencanada.ca%2Fcontent%2Fcommittee%2F421%2FRIDR%2FBriefs%2FRIDR_PrisonFarmFollow-up_CSC_e.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK.

⁹⁴⁴ RIDR - Standing Committee (2017, May 15). *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights: Issue No. 18 - Evidence - May 15, 2017*. Senate of Canada. <https://sencanada.ca/en/Content/SEN/Committee/421/ridr/18ev-53322-e>.

⁹⁴⁵ ATI records show that Senator Munson was copied on correspondence from Save Our Prison Farms in 2016, along with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale, Agriculture Minister Lawrence MacAulay, and MPs Mark Gerretsen and Mark Holland (PSC A-2018-00451).

⁹⁴⁶ No other portion of the Senate report *praised* anything that CSC is doing except the section on the prison farms. Given the seriousness of the issues that Evolve had raised to committee members, Evolve’s response to the Senate Committee in 2021 questioned why the final report cast a “fictional and favourable light” on the prison farms and abattoir, and why these were mentioned at all in a report on human rights violations in the penitentiary system if not to critique them (Neufeld, C., 2021, June 30. *Letter to Senate Committee on Human Rights*. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/senate-committee-on-human-rights/>). Tragically and inexplicably, Evolve’s efforts to bring these issues to their attention only resulted in the Senate Committee on Human Rights *endorsing* the violation of human rights.

⁹⁴⁷ Recommendation 42: “That the Correctional Service of Canada work with CORCAN, local businesses, community partners and other stakeholders to reopen and expand penitentiary farms in federal correctional facilities across the country” (Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, 2021, June. *Report on The Human Rights of Federally Sentenced Persons*. Senate of Canada. https://sencanada.ca/content/sen/committee/432/RIDR/reports/2021-06-16_FederallySentenced_e.pdf).

⁹⁴⁸ CSC’s abattoir at Joyceville Institution was operating at the time, and had been since 1960. The fact that CSC had entered into a Public-Private Partnership with Wallace Beef Inc. in 1995 to operate the abattoir and provide “training” to inmates in a profit-sharing contractual relationship with CORCAN and CSC does not justify the Commissioner’s claim that “CSC does not slaughter animals.” In 2023, Senator Robert Black lobbied along with industry for the immediate reopening of the Joyceville Institution abattoir, citing “the desperate need for more butchering”: “On September 30, 2022, a long-term public-private partnership to run the abattoir in a profit-sharing venture between Correctional Service Canada, and Wallace Beef Inc. ended... The end of this partnership is affecting local agriculture, the economy, and local businesses that depended on it” (Letter from Senator Robert Black to Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino, with a copy to Senator Kim Pate, 2023, March 14. PSC A-2023-00592).

In a written response to the Senate Committee’s final report, Evolve critiqued the shortcomings of the Committee’s limited, biased, and underinformed slate of witness testimonies on the subject of the prison farms and abattoir, and expressed concern over the Committee’s resulting recommendation for prison farm expansion.⁹⁴⁹ In addition to the Committee’s failure to recognize the human rights implications of the altered commercial farm model, Evolve pointed out that the accounts of former prison farm workers and former correctional staff are not exclusively positive or “glowing,” as documented throughout this report. Evolve’s letter received no response from the Committee, however Senator Kim Pate did reply personally, thanking Evolve for “much appreciated advocacy” and expressing the need “to remain constantly vigilant for the obfuscation that comes from corrections.”⁹⁵⁰ Unfortunately, the damage was done, as CSC developed a formal Action Plan to address the Senate Committee’s recommendations, including Recommendation #42 to “expand penitentiary farms.”⁹⁵¹

While CSC’s failure to address human rights deficiencies in prisons is well recognized, what has not been adequately acknowledged in the fanfare over the prison farms’ “return” is how the vast sums of money spent on commercial carceral dairy operations could have been better allocated. After hearing the news that CSC was investing in goats – and thinking he had dreamed it – lawyer Jeffrey Hartman published an article in 2021 lambasting CSC for sinking funds into livestock when the far greater priorities are “Actual health care. Actual mental health care. Actual skills development. Actual dignity. Actual respect. You see, it’s not a goat farm that’s missing.”⁹⁵²

This chapter has charted some of the serious errors in judgement involved in tasking correctional staff and incarcerated persons with hazardous work for the sake of political and industry gain, while spending copious amounts of money on a farm experience when there are far more pressing needs within the prison system. While there may be potential therapeutic benefits to activities such as horticulture or beekeeping, CORCAN and CSC have demonstrated that they are ill-equipped to manage even these endeavours, at least in conjunction with the mandate to deliver complex animal agriculture operations. When one looks into the serious injuries that have occurred in the abattoir and on the prison farms, what the future holds for CSC’s cow and goat dairy operations is concerning, as are the efforts to keep accident records, and prisoners’

⁹⁴⁹ Neufeld, C. (2021, June 30). *Letter to Senate Committee on Human Rights*. Evolve Our Prison Farms. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/senate-committee-on-human-rights/>.

⁹⁵⁰ Email from Senator Kim Pate (2021, June 30). *Subject: Re: Prison farms: Letter to the RIDR Senate Committee*.

⁹⁵¹ CSC (2021, August 25). *Action Plan to address the recommendations of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights: Human Rights of Federally-Sentenced Persons*. CSC A-2021-00213.

⁹⁵² Hartman, J. (2021, February 25). Corrections Canada building goat farm for the prisoners it’s torturing. *The Lawyer’s Daily*. <https://www.law360.ca/ca/articles/1754136>.

voices, out of sight and hearing. Finally, there are questions about the judgement, ethics, and legality of pairing prison farm enterprises with private commercial entities. To understand how matters of such significant national importance are not already being discussed more publicly in Canada, it is necessary to focus a lens on how the sustained and concerted efforts of critics have been thwarted.

6. “UNWANTED” || KEEPING EVOLVE OUT

It is clear that there are major questions involved in the reopening of CSC’s prison farms in Kingston. There are questions related to the business model; the relationship between the federal government, CSC, and Feihe; the logistics of introducing goats and cows; problems of animal welfare and unexplained deaths; commercial uses of underpaid prison labour; excessive delays, blown budgets and undisclosed costs; and no evidence to support the sentiment that prison farms facilitate rehabilitation and reintegration. These questions of national importance have been under-reported or unreported, and conversations relating to them have been actively stifled. Because of their national import, the information and questions raised in this report should have been given due consideration regardless of the personal opinions of individual politicians or journalists. Their failure to do so is a failure of Canadian journalism and democracy more broadly.

This chapter highlights how the efforts of Evolve, whose research and advocacy have attempted to raise awareness and bring transparency to the prison farm program, have been suppressed, and its members subjected to silencing, hostility, and misrepresentation by politicians and media. To understand how the material presented in this report has not entered into public awareness, it is important to discuss some of the ways in which media and politics have been used as tools of misdirection, obfuscation, and obstruction regarding the prison farms and criticisms levelled at them. This includes CBC censors blocking Evolve’s comments about the prison farms, the manipulated orchestration of a CBC “documentary,” the political smokescreens and interventions of the Public Safety Minister’s Office and the Privy Council Office, as well as the opposition and open ridicule of Evolve by MP Mark Gerretsen.

6.1. “The government isn’t going to listen to you” || MP Mark Gerretsen

From the onset of the prison farm “restoration” process, MP Gerretsen has publicly allied himself with Save Our Prison Farms. In his first meeting with Evolve in February 2018, he insisted that unless Evolve’s proposal is endorsed by Save Our Prison Farms, “the government isn’t going to listen to you.”⁹⁵³ This stands in contrast to Minister Goodale’s statements at the 2016 Kingston Town Hall public consultation, that “Mr. Trudeau wants this to be a hallmark of his government, committed to listening to Canadians.”⁹⁵⁴

⁹⁵³ Meeting with MP Gerretsen (2018, February 28). Evolve’s co-founders were present and can attest to this.

⁹⁵⁴ PSC (2016, August 17). *Transcript: Town Hall regarding re-establishing prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions*. CSC A-2018-00310.

MP Gerretsen has been consistently dismissive of concerns, and antagonistic towards critics of the prison farm program, including his peer and neighbouring MP Scott Reid. When MP Reid began raising questions in the House of Commons about the human rights implications of using prison labour in commercial goat milk production, Gerretsen posted the parliamentary video to social media and urged his 28,000 Facebook followers to harass Reid over his “relentless crusade to oppose the recently re-opened prison farms.”⁹⁵⁵ Despite early open acknowledgement that the “major livestock enterprise” of the prison farm program (originally the only enterprise) was commercial goat milk production for export markets,⁹⁵⁶ as controversy grew through Evolve’s advocacy, so did the silence and attempted denials. The official position from CSC has been consistent: the market for the goat milk is undetermined⁹⁵⁷ and any reporting on the Feihe connection is “speculation” that is “not grounded in fact.”⁹⁵⁸ Using these same terms, MP Gerretsen has insisted to Evolve – in a complete reversal of his repeated statements to media and locals that the prison farms will supply Feihe – that any connection between the prison farms and Feihe was mere “speculation,”⁹⁵⁹ and he strongly objected to Evolve’s statement that the government had “co-opted the prison farm program to support a deal with foreign economic interests.”⁹⁶⁰

⁹⁵⁵ Mark Gerretsen. (2022, May 31). *Scott Reid is the Conservative MP for Kingston north of the 401. In recent months he has been on a relentless crusade to oppose the recently re-opened prison farms in the Kingston area...* [Video] [Status update]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/markgerretsen/videos/389200449801834/>.

⁹⁵⁶ As previously detailed in this report, CSC’s Prison Farm Advisory Panel members openly told the media that the goat operation was to supply Feihe, as did MP Mark Gerretsen in radio interviews and statements appearing in print. Even before the goat program was announced by CSC in March 2018, Gerretsen had explained and defended the plan to the Pen Farm Herd Co-Op in 2017. CORCAN’s farm operations manager Chris Staley was also cited in an *Ontario Farmer* article that names Feihe as the intended market: “Staley said that milk from the farm’s goats will be the major livestock enterprise at the farm. The milk is destined for the Feihe infant formula factory currently under construction here” (Atkinson, S., 2019, March 26. New prison farm structure is taking shape. *Ontario Farmer*).

⁹⁵⁷ CSC’s media lines, for example, include “Q19 Will the products be sold to the Chinese baby food processing plant?” CSC’s recommended response is “The use of products produced through the farm program, including from the dairy herds will be determined as the implementation plan progresses” (CSC, 2020, April. *Media Lines: Reopening of CORCAN Farm Operations*. CSC A-2020-00407).

⁹⁵⁸ Robitaille, I. (2021, March 17). Clarity needed on prison farm program, says CSC. *Hill Times*. <https://www.hilltimes.com/story/2021/03/17/clarity-needed-on-prison-farm-program-says-csc/272156/>.

⁹⁵⁹ Meeting with MP Gerretsen (2018, April 13).

⁹⁶⁰ In a 2018 letter to MP Mark Gerretsen, Evolve requested a meeting to discuss “the blatantly undemocratic process by which the government has co-opted the prison farm program to support a deal with foreign economic interests, passing it off as a feel-good public relations move. If I may say so, Mr. Gerretsen, the restoration of the prison farm program may not have been the result of your sustained efforts, or the result of a community working together for a common objective, as you suggest. It now seems entirely possible that the government saw a business deal, shook hands on it, so to speak, and launched a public consultation process to maintain the appearance of a ‘democratic system’” (Letter from Calvin Neufeld to MP Gerretsen, 2018, April 11). What happened in the resulting meeting is captured in a Facebook post by Evolve that was shared internally by CSC staff with the comment “Interesting read.....” (CSC A-2018-00332): “Mark enters, we shake hands, he sits down and tells us ‘I’ve read your letter, I disagree with you, but go ahead.’ I’m taken aback by his on-the-offensive greeting. I ask him what he disagrees with. He points to my suggestion that the government may have been motivated by a business deal rather than what was best for prisoner rehabilitation. He says we don’t know that. I agree, it was speculation, and I point to my wording, ‘it seems entirely possible’ – clearly, speculation. Then I point him to nuggets of evidence in the news since 2016 that lead me to speculate. He objects to my description of this as a ‘deal with foreign economic interests.’ I explain: the government decides to establish a prison goat dairy operation, the milk will be sold to

As an example of MP Gerretsen's mixed messaging on the Feihe connection, when Evolve began holding weekly vigils in front of Collins Bay Institution in 2019 to raise awareness of the problems with the prison farm plan, MP Gerretsen openly defended CSC's plan to produce goat milk for Feihe, stating to media that the new prison farm model provided "an opportunity for the correctional institution to play a role" in Feihe's operations, and Gerretsen insisted that it would not be "exploiting goats or exploiting prison labour to support that."⁹⁶¹ Shortly after the article was published, MP Gerretsen posted a video on his official Facebook account celebrating the return of dairy cows to Kingston's prison farms.⁹⁶² Evolve posted a comment pointing out that there was no mention of the goats and the Chinese infant formula connection. MP Gerretsen replied personally with the comment: "Evolve Our Prison Farms, I'm sorry, but you are way off on some random conspiracy theory." He went on in a series of comments mocking Evolve,⁹⁶³ encouraging others who did the same, accusing Evolve of trying to "twist what people say," and denying any connection between the prison farms and Feihe, contradicting his prior on-the-record comments:

"I'm on the record as having said that [the Feihe connection] is a wild theory substantiated by no factual evidence whatsoever... The farms were reopened because the people of Kingston fought for nearly 10 years to undo another ill informed Conservative decision. And they won."

MP Gerretsen's Facebook followers joined in, mocking and misrepresenting Evolve's position, labelling it a "vegan agenda," telling Evolve to "Go away," and accusing Evolve of being "misguided" and having "screwed up" priorities.⁹⁶⁴ At the end of the thread, one person commented to Evolve:

the Feihe infant formula factory, currently under construction in Kingston, where it will be processed and shipped to China. So, yes, what else do you call it?" (Evolve Our Prison Farms. 2018, April 13. *Here is an account of yesterday's meeting with Kingston MP Mark Gerretsen...* [Status update]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/EvolveOurPrisonFarms/photos/pb.100064814345725.-2207520000/1675351472558273/?type=3>).

⁹⁶¹ Gerretsen was specific about the percentage of Feihe's milk that would come from CSC: "Feihe needs approximately 140,000 or 150,000 goats to make their plant operate, so less than 1 per cent of the goat milk would be coming from Corrections Canada" (Allan, M., 2019, June 11. Vigils for ethical prison farms to be held outside Collins Bay Institution. *Kingstonist*. <https://www.kingstonist.com/news/vigils-for-ethical-prison-farms-to-be-held-outside-collins-bay-institution/>).

⁹⁶² Mark Gerretsen. (2019, September 11). *Mark Gerretsen for Kingston and the Islands. On October 21st I am asking for your vote. #ChooseForward*. [Video] [Status update]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/markgerretsen/videos/2503023546594096>.

⁹⁶³ "The inmates are also growing produce that will be going to the local food bank. By your definition, that is exploited labour as well. Why don't you highlight that too?"

⁹⁶⁴ For years, Evolve's social media posts were subjected to harassment from Save Our Prison Farms supporters, with comments such as "keep out," "shut up," "BS!" "I hope you know how nutz you sound!" "stop looking so foolish," "get the facts!" "Disgusting rhetoric," "Shame on you!" and worse.

“I was ignorant and uninterested in your cause before, but now I will actually actively oppose it... You [Evolve] are actively trying to undermine Feihe’s efforts to bring safe baby formula to China by disrupting the flow of milk into the plant. Your priorities are pretty screwed up if you are against inmates being productive members of society and you would rather see inmates petting animals than actually supporting an industry that feeds babies.”

Immediately following this, MP Gerretsen brought the exchange to a dramatic conclusion with a Barack Obama mic drop gif.

While MP Gerretsen’s behaviour and dismissal of criticism levelled at the prison farms is concerning, more concerning is the lack of media reporting on his behaviour, or investigation into the prison farm program. Especially startling is the poor coverage of the matter by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), the country’s leading public broadcaster and a Crown corporation.

6.2. “Absolutely not allow” || CBC & Media Censorship

Canada’s government-funded public broadcaster, the CBC, has not only failed to report on criticisms of the prison farm program, but it has actively helped to tailor the politically desired discourse. In addition to a sequence of CBC articles leading up to and following the return of dairy cows to prison farms in Kingston (absent any discussion of the goats), the federal government green-lit the production of a CBC documentary to exclusively feature the Pen Farm Herd cows.⁹⁶⁵ ATI records pertaining to CBC’s planning and funding of the film are redacted almost in their entirety,⁹⁶⁶ but they reveal that the film’s concept was defined from the outset: “Prison Farm follows a group of inmates as they begin a new farming project within their prison, watching as their efforts with livestock and crops contribute to remarkable rehabilitation.”⁹⁶⁷ The film had

⁹⁶⁵ “After years of lobbying, agricultural activists successfully campaigned to bring the prison farms back to Collins Bay and Joyceville Institutions in Kingston, Ont., where farmland surrounds the prison grounds. The facilities and equipment are state-of-the-art, and the offspring of the original Pen Farm herd have been brought back... *Prison Farm* follows four inmates [whose] work with livestock and crops helps them process their crimes and remain accountable, which contributes to their rehabilitation... Bottle-feeding the baby cows allows [them] to care for something... [*Prison Farm*] captures how these offenders have been transformed through this unique rehabilitation process” (CBC Docs POV, n.d. *Prison Farm*. <https://www.cbc.ca/cbcdocspov/episodes/prison-farm>).

⁹⁶⁶ Only a few generic sentences were left unredacted out of over 300 pages released. The rest consists of Evolve’s emails to CBC reporters with documents on CSC’s goat plans, but this never entered CBC’s articles hailing the “return” of the prison farms and dairy cows.

⁹⁶⁷ Email from Christian Hamilton, Development Manager, CBC (2019, September 19). *Subject: UNSCRIPTED CONTENT UPDATE: CBC Docs POV*. CBC A-2020-00114.

been planned long before any animals had even arrived on the prison farms,⁹⁶⁸ raising questions as to how the benefits of a program can be “documented” before the program has even been established, let alone time-tested and proven.

CSC’s approval of CBC’s film project was contingent on it being “a good news story.”⁹⁶⁹ Film production began in 2019 but experienced delays during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁹⁷⁰ Prior to the film’s airing on *CBC Gem* in September 2021 (two days before the federal election), it was reviewed by CSC.⁹⁷¹ CSC requested changes to “a few quotes and topics that could garner some criticism/interest,”⁹⁷² and requested that the film “adjust language regarding [the former prison farms] closing.”⁹⁷³ This reflected CSC’s ongoing struggle to defend the rationale for reopening prison farms without contradicting their previously established rationale for closing them.⁹⁷⁴ Public Safety and the Privy Council Office were sent a preview link so that they could provide input prior to the film’s release, and following “due diligence” alterations, CSC was satisfied that “our mandate comes through quite clearly”⁹⁷⁵ and “it is heart warming.”⁹⁷⁶

⁹⁶⁸ “As you know, the documentary filmmaker visited Joyceville and CBI in the fall 2018. She is now seeking CSC’s formal approval for her project since funding for her project is contingent on approval of her project. She is working with CBC.... The goal of the documentary is to showcase the many different aspects of the penitentiary farm program and to highlight the benefits... as well as to emphasize the importance of agriculture in a modern society. This is a great opportunity to highlight the benefits of the penitentiary farms program” (Email from Esther Mailhot, Communications Advisor, CSC, 2019, April 1. *Subject: FOR APPROVAL... documentary on penitentiary farms.* CSC A-2019-00030). The first animals didn’t arrive on the farms until May 2019 (17 beef cattle) and June 2019 (six dairy cows). The final budget for the film was approved in July 2019, one month after the first six dairy cows were delivered (Email from Margaret Kong, CBC, 2019, July 25. *Subject: Prison Farm (P1) Fin EAS & Budget – Approved July 25, 2019 (POV).* CBC A-2020-00114).

⁹⁶⁹ “Is the filming request part of a good news story?” (Email from Kerry Gatien, Media Relations and Outreach Advisor, CSC, 2020, September 21. *Subject: *Approval Required* Inmate Interview Request - CBC Prison Farm Documentary.* CSC A-2020-00407). Other conditions listed to obtain CSC’s approval included: “Does it support CSC’s Mission, Priorities and/or Mandate? Will [it] significantly disrupt operations? Will it compromise the safety of the public... staff, offenders, or the institution? Will it place an unmanageable staffing burden on the institution/facility that outweighs the value gained by CSC? Will it place an unmanageable financial burden (eg. For overtime, labour, etc) for the institution, facility, or region that outweighs the value gained by CSC?” Ironically, had these conditions been weighed against the prison farm program itself, it would never have been approved.

⁹⁷⁰ Email from Criss Hajek, Manager CBC Business & Rights, CBC (2020, August 13). *Subject: Prison Farm - updated Covid Plan.* CBC A-2020-00114.

⁹⁷¹ The film was accompanied by an “advertising article” on CBC’s website. Email from Kerry Gatien, Media Relations and Outreach Advisor, CSC (2021, September 17). *Subject: Advertising Article on Prison Farm - Public.* CSC A-2021-00381.

⁹⁷² Email from Colette Cibula, Associate Assistant Commissioner, Communications & Engagement, CSC (2021, August 26). *Subject: For Review: Prison Farm CBC - Preview of 1 hour TV episode.* CSC A-2021-00381.

⁹⁷³ Email from Colette Cibula, Associate Assistant Commissioner, Communications & Engagement, CSC (2021, August 30). CSC A-2021-00381.

⁹⁷⁴ CSC did not want “to release anything that will conflict with the information we’ve already released” on why the farms closed a few years earlier due to financial unsustainability and lack of relevance to vocational training (Email from Sara Parkes, Communications Advisor, CSC, 2016, July 7. *Subject: Urgent request for farms information.* CSC A-2018-00310).

⁹⁷⁵ “We have done our due diligence. Please do brief MO [Minister’s Office] and PCO [Privy Council Office] both via sending the link and via phone. I like that our mandate comes through quite clearly. We should have a few lines on the [remainder redacted]” (Email from Kirstan Gagnon, Assistant Commissioner, Communications and Engagement, CSC, 2021, September 8. *Subject: RE: For Review: Prison Farm CBC - Preview of 1 hour TV episode.* CSC A-2021-00381).

⁹⁷⁶ Email from Colette Cibula, Associate Assistant Commissioner, Communications & Engagement, CSC (2021, August 26). *Subject: For Review: Prison Farm CBC - Preview of 1 hour TV episode.* CSC A-2021-00381.

The “due diligence” exercised in crafting the film’s focus and content was not limited to a few quotes. The original cut of the film submitted to CBC by the filmmaker (Tess Girard, Fifth Town Films) included scenes of an Evolve demonstration and interviews with Calvin Neufeld and Shaun Shannon (former prison farm worker and former Save Our Prison Farms spokesperson). These scenes were removed from the final cut.⁹⁷⁷ The description of the film was also altered. It originally stated that the film would “give focus to criticism of the program in an effort to give a balanced argument” (see below) but this was removed. The revised synopsis focused on highlighting the “unique rehabilitation process” of inmates “bottle feeding the baby calves.”⁹⁷⁸ For a brief period, the altered synopsis mentioned that there would also be “baby goats,”⁹⁷⁹ but this was also removed. Explaining the changes, filmmaker Tess Girard wrote:

“CBC is allowing us to explore the project as we wish at this point, but I will disclose that they have control of the final cut... That website blurb was written before we were in development of the film, before I met you and heard your heartfelt words... What [the film synopsis] is also missing is the following paragraph that I removed temporarily just a couple days ago because my access to the farm has come under question and I did not want CSC to question my motives. I’ve been on very good terms with them and have worked tirelessly to gain access to the farms in the trusting form that they have given me. I’ve developed really close relationships, and as you can understand, any amount of questioning could jeopardize this while I renegotiate my access. The [removed] paragraph is as follows:

It is important to note that this documentary is not intended to be a promotional documentary of prison farms and prison labour. By following inmates closely and witnessing their personal changes, the film will make an argument for the importance of offender rehabilitation. The film will touch on the challenges of this scenario, focus on some of the ethical issues, and even give focus to criticism of the program in an effort to give a balanced argument. But the overall intent of the film is to focus on the belief that people can change if we give them the skills, platform, and safe space to do so.

As of right now, our proposals to CBC have proposed scenes with the Evolve group in it... I commend you for the hard work you’re doing and am grateful groups like yours exist.”⁹⁸⁰

⁹⁷⁷ Email from Tess Girard, Fifth Town Films (2020, January 21). Despite being cut from CBC’s film, Calvin Neufeld, Shaun Shannon, and Evolve Our Prison Farms were left in the credits, as if endorsing the program.

⁹⁷⁸ Fifth Town Films. *Prison Farm*. <https://www.fifthtownfilms.com/prison-farm>.

⁹⁷⁹ Fifth Town Films. *Prison Farm*. Webpage archived by Wayback Machine (2021, June 5). <https://web.archive.org/web/20210605005401/https://www.fifthtownfilms.com/prison-farm>.

⁹⁸⁰ Emails from Tess Girard, Fifth Town Films (2020, January 21 and 2020, January 22).

The production of a “documentary” featuring the “remarkable rehabilitation” of a program that was still unestablished, unproven, and enshrouded in suppressed controversy, and the pressure exerted on the filmmaker to censor any content that did not fit the desired political narrative, brings into question the objectivity of the film and the motives behind its production. When the film was made, no dairy barns had yet been constructed, no dairy operations had begun, the cows were being kept in substandard temporary housing (which CBC described as “state-of-the art” facilities⁹⁸¹) and there was no evidence, past or present, that working with livestock contributes to prisoner rehabilitation.

This film is not the only evidence of CBC’s calculated promotion of the prison farms and censorship of critics. The CBC’s complete lack of reporting on the goats and the Feihe connection, and CBC’s choice to render critics invisible, points to political manipulation. It is implausible that the omission of Evolve from all CBC coverage of the prison farm program was simply a matter of journalistic oversight.

Evolve’s regular submission of ATI documents to CBC journalists covering the prison farm story received little or no response. Evolve demonstrators outside prison farm media events saw CBC vans driving past without stopping.⁹⁸² Evolve has submitted nine petitions to the government, filed two conflict of interest complaints with the federal Ethics and Conflict of Interest Commissioner, held years of weekly vigils and peaceful demonstrations,⁹⁸³ collected years of prisoner feedback, published articles in magazines and

⁹⁸¹ “The facilities and equipment are state-of-the-art, and the offspring of the original Pen Farm herd have been brought back.” CBC Docs POV (n.d.). *Prison Farm*. <https://www.cbc.ca/cbcdocspov/episodes/prison-farm>.

⁹⁸² While CBC never stopped to interview (or even mention) Evolve demonstrators at prison farm media events, a couple of other reporters did. Each time, ATI records show that it was monitored and reported internally by CSC. For example, when a reporter from the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), Todd Lamirande, interviewed Evolve outside the August 2019 ministerial media event for the prison farm launch, it was flagged in real time by CSC staff: “APTN is doing an interview with Evolve our prison farms members” (Email from Marie-Pier Léculyer, Communications Advisor, CSC, 2019, August 15. *Subject: EoPF interview*. CSC A-2019-00319). The APTN interview was mentioned again in CSC debriefing materials from the ministerial event: “The event went well with no issues flagged... Questions were asked about the goat MERX, inmates drinking milk, exploitation of cheap labour and old farming operations compared to new farming operations... APTN and CBC also interviewed Evolve our Prison Farms” [CBC did not interview Evolve, but Calvin Neufeld intercepted CBC journalist Amanda Pfeffer as she left the event, and she asked Neufeld where the infant formula facility was located. The interaction lasted no more than a minute but did not escape CSC’s notice] (Email from Colette Cibula, Associate Assistant Commissioner, Communications & Engagement, CSC, 2019, August 15. *Subject: FW: Update on announcement*. CSC A-2019-00319). Also: Lamirande, T. & Brake, J. (2019, August 17). Liberals to re-open Kingston prison farms that critics say will exploit inmate labour. *APTN News*. <https://www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/liberals-to-re-open-kingston-prison-farms-that-critics-say-will-exploit-inmate-labour/>.

⁹⁸³ Including one in front of the Feihe infant formula factory on Prisoner Justice Day, August 10, 2019 (Balogh, M., 2019, August 12. ‘The animals set me right’. *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. <https://www.thewhig.com/news/local-news/the-animals-set-me-right>).

newspapers,⁹⁸⁴ gathered expert perspectives,⁹⁸⁵ produced reports,⁹⁸⁶ issued media releases,⁹⁸⁷ submitted proposals for alternative models and opportunities for the prison farm program to change course,⁹⁸⁸ filed over 130 Access to Information requests, organized a nationwide postcard campaign to the Public Safety Minister,⁹⁸⁹ and aired an interview with David Suzuki.⁹⁹⁰ None of this broke through the barrier of CBC's reporting on the prison farms (or virtually any other media), nor did the 14 times MP Reid rose in the House of Commons to question the prison farms from 2022 to 2024 (Appendix 3: "Slow Motion Sparring").

Even the critique of such a prominent figure as Margaret Atwood did not make waves. In 2018, Evolve sent records and information about the prison farms to Margaret Atwood's office, after which Atwood tweeted: "What's wrong with this proposed prison farm return? Feed prisoners + local communities, not international markets!"⁹⁹¹ Unabashedly, CSC and Public Safety used Atwood's previous endorsement of the program in their promotion of the new program, as CSC's media materials highlight:

⁹⁸⁴ Evolve Our Prison Farms. *In the News*. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/in-the-news/>.

⁹⁸⁵ Evolve Our Prison Farms. *Expert Perspectives*. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/expert/>.

⁹⁸⁶ For example, in January 2021, a criminologist at the University of Windsor, Dr. Amy Fitzgerald, produced a report for Evolve detailing the potential harmful impacts that the prison farms will have on prisoners, correctional staff, and the broader community; in the same report, sociologist and food systems specialist Dr. Amanda Wilson of St. Paul University outlined evidence-based and achievable alternatives. In March 2021, CSC announced that it would "temporarily pause" the goat program, but neither the report nor the subsequent announcement were covered by the CBC.

⁹⁸⁷ For example: Evolve Our Prison Farms (2019, April 10). *News Release: David Suzuki and Margaret Atwood Want Prison Farms to Evolve*. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/david-suzuki-margaret-atwood/>.

⁹⁸⁸ For example, in 2020, as the pandemic threatened local food security and exposed prisoners to even greater risk than the general population, Evolve submitted a proposal to the federal government to change course on the prison farm plan and instead take the opportunity presented by the pandemic to convert Kingston's prison farmland into a federally funded food bank project (Evolve Our Prison Farms, 2020, April 6. *Prison Farms & COVID-19 Proposal*. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/prison-farms-covid-19-proposal/>).

"Such a project," wrote *Kingstonist* reporter Jeannie Prinsen, "would increase food security during the pandemic and beyond, lessen the likelihood of virus outbreaks in prisons (as inmates working on the farm would alleviate overcrowding), and give inmates the opportunity for meaningful, rehabilitative, ethically sound volunteer work" (Prinsen, J., 2020, May 26. Prison farms in a time of global crisis: Thinking big, starting small. *Kingstonist*. <https://www.kingstonist.com/culture/opinion/prison-farms-in-a-time-of-global-crisis-thinking-big-starting-small/>). The proposal was endorsed by Senator Kim Pate and NDP MP Jack Harris (St. John's East, N.L.) but CSC maintained that it was proceeding with dairy facility construction despite the pandemic (Wright Allen, S., 2020, April 22. Prison farm program should be broadened to increase prisoner distancing amid COVID-19, advocate argues. *The Hill Times*. <https://www.hilltimes.com/story/2020/04/22/prison-farm-program-should-be-broadened-to-increase-prisoner-distancing-amid-covid-19-advocate-argues/228358/>).

⁹⁸⁹ Evolve supporters mailed 23,000 postcards to the Public Safety Minister in 2019-2020 calling for prison farms to evolve.

⁹⁹⁰ Evolve Our Prison Farms. (2019, March 28). *David Suzuki & Evolve Our Prison Farms* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=aMycz95kFHw>.

⁹⁹¹ Atwood, M. E. [@MargaretAtwood]. (2018, December 14). *What's wrong with this proposed prison farm return? Feed prisoners + local communities, not international markets!* www.evolveourprisonfarms.ca [www.facebook.com/EvolveOurPrisonFarms #climatechange #justice #prisonfarms](https://www.facebook.com/EvolveOurPrisonFarms/#climatechange/#justice/#prisonfarms) [Tweet]. Twitter. Archived at <https://web.archive.org/web/20181215185252/https://twitter.com/MargaretAtwood>.

“Since CSC announced the gradual phasing out of the farms in 2009... a group in Kingston, mostly from the farming community, formed the Save Our Prison Farms campaign... and author Margaret Atwood supported the campaign.”⁹⁹²

In 2018, CSC and Public Safety wanted Atwood to attend the prison farm media event featuring “a dairy cow and a goat,”⁹⁹³ but, internally, the Privy Council Office mocked Atwood’s support for the prison farms. On the day of the 2018 prison farm media event, a Senior Analyst for the PCO, Christine O’Nions, wrote to a colleague:

“Not as funny as the Corrections event today featuring the cows and goats that inmates will use to make infant formula for Chinese babies... Supply management/Chinese/NAFTA/untainted-because-it’s-made-in-Canada baby formula. Oh and Conrad Black and Margaret Atwood each adopted a cow when the penitentiary farms closed. Public safety – fun and games even after someone loses an eye...”⁹⁹⁴

As CBC published glowing content about the prison farms and cows, and unrelated articles about prison-produced goods in international supply chains, Calvin Neufeld posted comments on these CBC articles, to draw attention to the prospect of CSC’s milk entering commercial and international markets.⁹⁹⁵ All were deactivated. The following are examples of comments that were immediately deactivated for allegedly “violating community standards”:

CBC: Federal government moves to seal off Canadian companies from human rights violations in China (2021):⁹⁹⁶

Neufeld: Sets a double standard when Canada’s new prison farms will be supplying infant formula exports to China. [CONTENT DEACTIVATED]

Neufeld: Will Canada also ensure that prison labour here is not used to produce a pipeline of infant formula exports to China? Major double standard here when our prisoners are about to be factory farming goats on prison farms for Feihe China. [CONTENT DEACTIVATED]

⁹⁹² CSC (2016, October 27). *Communications Approach: Release of Results of Farm Consultation*. Prepared by Sara Parkes, Communications Advisor, CSC. CSC A-2018-00451.

⁹⁹³ “Margaret Atwood (TBC)” (CSC, n.d. *Scenario Notes: Ministerial Announcement - Correctional Service of Canada. Reopening of the penitentiary farm operations, Joyceville Institution, Kingston, Ontario, June 21, 2018*. CSC A-2018-00300).

⁹⁹⁴ Email from Christine O’Nions, Senior Analyst, PCO, to [name redacted] (2018, June 21). PCO A-2022-00162.

⁹⁹⁵ CBC typically provides a public comment section underneath news articles.

⁹⁹⁶ Jones, R. P. (2021, January 12). *Federal government moves to seal off Canadian companies from human rights violations in China*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-xinjiang-forced-labour-1.5869752>.

CBC: Canada's grocery chains stocked with tomato products connected to Chinese forced labour (2021):⁹⁹⁷

Neufeld: On the flipside, CBC Marketplace should also look at the Canadian government's plan to build an industrial goat farm at Joyceville Institution in Kingston ON using prison labour to supply milk for Feihe International's infant formula exports to China. [CONTENT DEACTIVATED]

Neufeld: Why are my comments deactivated? Every time I've tried to comment about how prison labour is about to be used in Canada for commercial purposes via the new prison farms in Kingston my comments are removed. Surely this should be allowed to be discussed when CBC runs articles about prison labour/forced labour and human rights violations in other countries? [CONTENT DEACTIVATED]

CBC: Canada terminates \$222M PPE contract following forced labour probe (2022):⁹⁹⁸

Neufeld: If Canada is so concerned about keeping forced labour out of supply chains, why is the federal government investing millions into establishing a prison goat dairy operation in Kingston Ontario that will use prison labour to supply milk for the Chinese baby formula market? These human rights abuses aren't just abroad, they're happening right here in Canada. [CONTENT DEACTIVATED]

The deactivation of Neufeld's comments was immediate and consistent. The pattern was tested by changing words, such as using "baby formula" instead of "infant formula," or omitting the word "Feihe." The only time that Neufeld's comments were not deactivated was when they didn't mention the prison farms in combination with the other words. For example, on a 2021 article titled "Year of the Goat," the following comment was *not* deactivated:

"Is CBC's promotion of goat dairy part of the federal government's push to build the goat dairy industry to supply the new Feihe International infant formula factory in Kingston? This Chinese corporation got tens of millions of dollars in Canadian federal and provincial grants before the CEO of the Canadian Dairy Commission Jacques Laforge stepped down to take a paid position on the Board of Feihe China. High price tag for the taxpayer, not much benefit to goat farmers or anyone else in Canada."⁹⁹⁹

⁹⁹⁷ Szeto, E. et al (2021, October 29). *Canada's grocery chains stocked with tomato products connected to Chinese forced labour*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/marketplace-tomato-products-investigation-1.6227359>.

⁹⁹⁸ McGregor, J. (2022, January 18). *Canada terminates \$222M PPE contract following forced labour probe*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/malaysia-nitrile-gloves-supermax-contract-terminated-1.6319190>.

⁹⁹⁹ "Year of the Goat" (n.d.). *CBC Docs POV*. <https://www.cbc.ca/cbcdocspov/episodes/the-year-of-the-goat>.

However, under the same “Year of the Goat” feature, the following comment, mentioning the prison farms, was immediately deactivated:

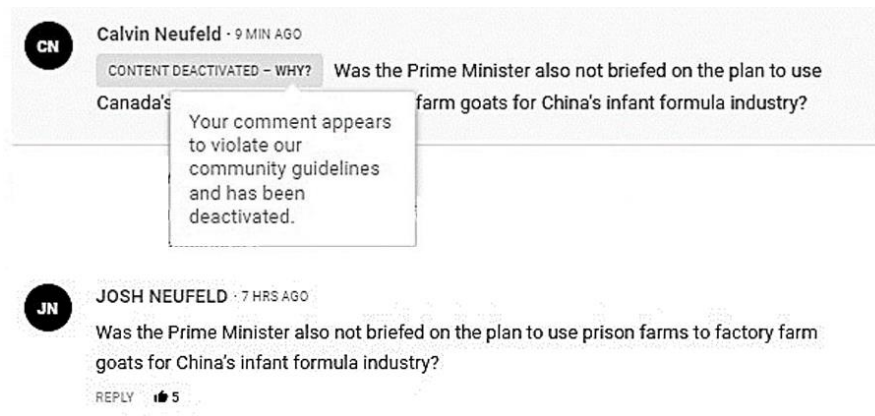
“CBC produces two documentaries, one promoting goat dairy and another promoting the new prison farms in Kingston - but the prison farm documentary makes no mention of the goats (the 2200 goats!) that will be the core enterprise of the new prison farms using prison labour to supply Feihe’s pipeline of infant formula exports to China. Are these documentaries or government-funded propaganda?”

CN Calvin Neufeld · NOVEMBER 5, 2021
CONTENT DEACTIVATED - WHY? CBC produces two documentaries, one promoting goat dairy and another promoting the new prison farms in Kingston - but the prison farm documentary makes no mention of the goats (the 2200 goats!) that will be the core enterprise of the new prison farms using prison labour to supply Feihe's pipeline of infant formula exports to China. Are these documentaries or government-funded propaganda?

CN Calvin Neufeld · NOVEMBER 5, 2021
Is CBC's promotion of goat dairy part of the federal government's push to build the goat dairy industry to supply the new Feihe International infant formula factory in Kingston? This Chinese corporation got tens of millions of dollars in Canadian federal and provincial grants before the CEO of the Canadian Dairy Commission Jacques Laforge stepped down to take a paid position on the Board of Feihe China. High price tag for the taxpayer, not much benefit to goat farmers or anyone else in Canada.

Comments that were deactivated for “violating community standards” were *not* deactivated when the same comment was posted by someone other than Calvin Neufeld. The following comment on a 2022 CBC article (“No intelligence briefing happened on Chinese funding of candidates: Trudeau”¹⁰⁰⁰) was immediately deactivated when posted by Calvin Neufeld, but it did not “violate community standards” when posted by someone else:

“Was the Prime Minister also not briefed on the plan to use prison farms to factory farm goats for China’s infant formula industry?”



¹⁰⁰⁰ Rabson, M. (2022, November 21). *No intelligence briefing happened on Chinese funding of candidates: Trudeau*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/trudeau-china-no-intelligence-report-1.6658616>.

In August 2021, Evolve filed a complaint with the CBC Ombudsman Jack Nagler, requesting an investigation into CBC's coverage of the prison farms and the pattern of targeted journalistic omissions and censorship.¹⁰⁰¹ Despite three follow up emails over the next six months, Evolve received no response. In February 2022, Neufeld left a voicemail message with Ombudsman Nagler's office and promptly received a call back. Nagler said he had received the voicemail but had not seen the complaint or the follow-up emails. His subsequent email response raises disconcerting questions about the "inexplicable" disappearance of Evolve's emails to CBC's Ombudsman:

"Allow me to begin by thanking you for yesterday's phone call, and to apologize profusely for the inexplicable lack of response to your emails until now. I say 'inexplicable', because for reasons I do not understand I never saw any of your three emails. Yet after hearing your voicemail, I searched for them, and alas - there they were. Needless to say, I am following up with CBC's IT department to understand what could possibly have happened. This office makes a point of acknowledging complaints promptly, and again, I am very, very sorry that you have been ignored for so long."¹⁰⁰²

Upon reviewing Evolve's complaint, Nagler explained that the moderation of comments does not fall under his mandate, and setting editorial priorities is the prerogative of CBC programmers.¹⁰⁰³ He referred Evolve's complaint to Brodie Fenlon, Editor in Chief of CBC News. Fenlon did not respond to the complaint or to Evolve's follow-up emails.

Over the years of CBC's promotion of the prison farm program, and the complete omission of Evolve's advocacy and investigative discoveries from CBC's reporting, there have only been a handful of interactions of note between Evolve and the CBC. The first involved CBC's Amanda Pfeffer, one of the primary CBC journalists responsible for covering the prison farm story. As key ATI records were released to Evolve, these were submitted to Pfeffer and two other CBC journalists (Janyce McGregor and Kathleen Harris) with appeals for the CBC to examine the prison farms through a critical journalistic lens.¹⁰⁰⁴ Pfeffer was in the

¹⁰⁰¹ Letter to Jack Nagler, CBC Ombudsman (2021, August 9). *Request for investigation into CBC's coverage of the reintroduction of prison farms*. Evolve Our Prison Farms. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/investigation-into-cbc-and-prison-farms/>.

¹⁰⁰² Email from Jack Nagler, CBC Ombud (2022, February 24). *Subject: RE: CBC News Complaint*.

¹⁰⁰³ "Because I operate independently from CBC management, I have no say in their day-to-day decisions about which stories they report. Setting editorial priorities is, appropriately, the prerogative of programmers. What I can do is share your emails with Brodie Fenlon, Editor in Chief of CBC News. While it is at his discretion whether to reply further, this ensures that he will be aware of your concerns" (Email from Jack Nagler, CBC Ombudsman, 2022, February 24. *Subject: RE: CBC News Complaint*).

¹⁰⁰⁴ "The time for nostalgia over the old prison farms has passed. The old farms fed prisoners under a '1950's' model of agriculture, as criticized by Harper's Conservatives. Where is the criticism of the Liberals' 'modernized' model of a for-profit institutional agribusiness intensively farming goats using prison labour for private industry and likely Chinese infant

CBC van that drove past Evolve demonstrators outside the prison farm media event at Collins Bay Institution in August 2019. As the van exited the media event, Calvin Neufeld used the opportunity to intercept Pfeffer, who simply asked: “Where is the infant formula factory?” Neufeld directed her: “Five kilometres straight up this road.”¹⁰⁰⁵ The van proceeded in that direction, but Pfeffer’s subsequent story made no mention of Evolve’s protest or her visit to the infant formula facility.¹⁰⁰⁶ She did, however, indicate to Evolve by email that “we’re working on doing something with this before labour day” (i.e. early September 2019).¹⁰⁰⁷ By Labour Day, no story had emerged, so Evolve followed up again. This time Pfeffer indicated that she had what she needed to proceed with a story on CSC’s goat plans for Feihe:

“I seem to have gotten the confirmation I need when I was there [at the prison farm launch]... a new rfp [Request for Proposals for goats] is going up next week so I’m going to be watching for that. I think we have the makings of a goat story with the rfp.”¹⁰⁰⁸

CSC’s (second) goat procurement RFP was posted on December 19, 2019, but again, no CBC story emerged. Again, Evolve followed up with Pfeffer, who replied in January 2020 saying that the federal government wanted the story to wait: “just an update that we’ve started a story but feds waiting until the contract process is underway before doing an interview.”¹⁰⁰⁹ No story ever emerged, and this was the last communication from the CBC for over a year, even though Evolve continued to submit information, until 2021 when Evolve filed an ATI request for records related to the CBC’s coverage of the prison farms. Within days of CBC’s records being released to Evolve, in April 2021, Neufeld received a phone call from Pfeffer who simply asked: “Has anything interesting come out in Access to Information lately?” In an email response, Neufeld provided Pfeffer with the following information and records:

- The scale of the goat operation and the “potentially serious issue”¹⁰¹⁰ of the volume of liquid and solid waste exceeding the capacity of the manure lagoon;
- CSC’s continued failure to acquire goats;

formula exports in a time of China-Canada tensions mid pandemic when prisons are under lockdown and when risk of zoonotic illness in concentrated animal environments is highlighted as a public health threat?” (Email from Calvin Neufeld to Amanda Pfeffer, 2020, June 26).

¹⁰⁰⁵ The Feihe facility was constructed at the end of Centennial Avenue in Kingston, which intersects with Bath Road at Collins Bay Institution, a 5 km distance. Joyceville Institution is located 23 km from Feihe.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Pfeffer, A. (2019, August 15). *Ontario prison farms making a comeback*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/prison-farms-comeback-ontario-1.5247129>.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Email from Amanda Pfeffer, CBC (2019, August 21). *Subject: Re: Prison Farms Feihe Connection*.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Email from Amanda Pfeffer, CBC (2019, September 6). *Subject: Re: Feihe connection*.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Email from Amanda Pfeffer, CBC (2020, January 10). *Subject: Re: goats*.

¹⁰¹⁰ CSC’s manure lagoon will “not provide adequate storage” for “a total (annual) projected production of 3246 tons of solid material, and 1,022,213 gallons of liquid material” (Eastern Crop Doctor Inc., 2019, February 20. *Correctional Service Canada Corcan Farms: Nutrient Management Strategy Submission*. CSC A-2020-00131).

- CSC’s continued failure to secure quota for the cows;
- CSC’s obstruction of Evolve’s ATI requests and attempts to block Evolve’s media access;
- Mounting evidence of the Feihe connection;
- Consequences faced by inmates who exercised freedom of speech; and
- 14 cow deaths.

Pfeffer’s reply, in its entirety, was: “I’m intrigued by these deaths – this has not been on my radar at all as we’ve been so preoccupied with the other story. Can you tell me more about that? And have the goats finally arrived?”¹⁰¹¹ Evolve replied with further information, but no story was ever published by CBC about the cow deaths, or the goats, or any subject that did not reflect glowingly on the prison farms. It appears from Pfeffer’s earlier statements that the government did not deny the infant formula connection, and that the CBC was satisfied that no coverage was needed prior to contracts being arranged and the goat plan being a *fait accompli*.

Also included in the information sent to Pfeffer were ATI records showing that CSC and the Public Safety Ministry had colluded to expressly prohibit Evolve from participating in prison farm media events. This was done despite CSC’s admission that Evolve qualifies as media. Leading up to the August 2019 official prison farm launch (where Pfeffer’s CBC van drove past Evolve’s demonstration outside), CSC had sought explicit instructions from Public Safety to “absolutely not allow” Evolve to attend [highlight and emphasis theirs]:

“If we are allowing media to attend even if they haven’t registered... then this sort of opens us up to allow access to other groups such as the Evolve Group. This group could say they’re media because they have social media sites, etc. Just something to think about and we will need to know if we are to absolutely not allow them access to the event. **We will need clear direction on how the Minister’s office wants to handle this.**”¹⁰¹²

¹⁰¹¹ Email from Amanda Pfeffer, CBC (2021, January 15). *Subject: Re: goats*.

¹⁰¹² Email from Justine Lewis, Media Relations and Outreach Advisor, CSC (2019, August 13). CSC A-2020-00408. Not only did CSC acknowledge that Evolve qualifies as media (beyond social media, Evolve’s founder Calvin Neufeld has published numerous articles and reports about the prison farms), but Evolve’s proposal for the prison farms was one of CORCAN’s three formal recommendations for the program. For these reasons, not only was there no justification for uniquely excluding Evolve, but Evolve merited *inclusion*. The following is from an email sent by Neufeld to CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle, after Public Safety had denied Evolve access to the 2018 prison farm media event: “I was disappointed by the media event in June announcing the details of the prison farms. There was no media advisory issued until the day before, and when I came across it that morning, I called Scott Bardsley in Minister Goodale’s office to ask whether we were allowed to attend. He hummed and hawed until he had opened his computer and read back to me the line in the media advisory: ‘Media representatives who wish to attend the event must... present photo ID and credentials.’ I tried to clarify, does that mean only media [with credentials] is allowed to attend, or can members of the public attend also? He referred back to the above. Although I can’t claim that Minister Goodale’s office lied to us, I do believe there was a deliberate effort to mislead us into not attending, and it worked. You can imagine how it felt to learn that many members of the public were

The evidence that the federal government colluded to suppress and control journalistic freedom should have been a story in itself, but this too was ignored. As Evolve concluded in the complaint submitted to the CBC Ombudsman (which inexplicably went missing):

“In January 2021, Evolve Our Prison Farms produced a 100-page report written by two academics, which made headlines in *The Conversation*, *National Post*, *Kingston Whig-Standard*, *Frontenac News*, *Ontario Farmer* and other media, but not CBC. Soon after, in March 2021, the Correctional Service of Canada quietly announced the temporary pause of its goat farming plan. This also received no coverage by CBC, even though the entire prison farm program that CBC has so enthusiastically promoted is dependent on the success of the goats as the major enterprise and sole revenue stream. In other words, if the goats fail, the entire program fails. It now appears likely that the prison farms are on course to re-closure, and all of this has unfolded in the absence of journalistic coverage by CBC. Canadian prisoners were almost put to work for China, our advocacy group has investigated, exposed, and opposed this violation, and we have potentially prevented the construction of a federally funded factory farm and the privatization of prison labour in Canada, without any coverage by CBC.”¹⁰¹³

The CBC’s selective silence and censorship appeared to change in 2023, when Evolve was contacted by the associate producer of CBC’s flagship documentary program, *The Fifth Estate*, who was pursuing a story on commercial uses of prison labour in Canada.¹⁰¹⁴ Calvin Neufeld replied, explaining that the only outright commercial uses of prison labour in Canada are the (formerly operational) abattoir at Joyceville Institution and the new prison farm program.¹⁰¹⁵ Over the next several months, Neufeld participated in phone calls and

in attendance, all prison dairy advocates [Save Our Prison Farms], including animals brought in for a well orchestrated event feeding media only one side of this story. We were approached afterwards by one of the Save Our Prison Farms leaders, who supports us but has been chastised into silence, who said ‘You should have been there protesting, all the media were there, you missed a huge opportunity to be seen and heard!’ It was wrong for us to have been actively excluded. We deserved inclusion, not as outside protestors but as invitees. You recognized the merits of our proposal, you included it as one of your three formal recommendations, and after two years of dedicated effort, meetings, report submissions and other forms of engagement in this process, we have earned a seat at the table” (Email from Calvin Neufeld to Kelly Hartle, CEO, CORCAN, 2018, August 15. CSC A-2018-00332).

¹⁰¹³ Letter to Jack Nagler, CBC Ombudsman (2021, August 9). *Request for investigation into CBC’s coverage of the reintroduction of prison farms*. Evolve Our Prison Farms. <https://evolveourprisonfarms.ca/investigation-into-cbc-and-prison-farms/>.

¹⁰¹⁴ Email from Eman Bare, Associate Producer, *The Fifth Estate*, CBC (2023, August 9). *Subject: Story on Prison Labor for CBC News*.

¹⁰¹⁵ Evolve has tried to trace other examples of commercial prison labour programs and/or public-private partnerships in the federal Canadian correctional system. There have been some small-scale attempts but most of these arrangements were short-lived and outdated. These include a boat-making company that would come in and craft boats with inmates at Beaver Creek Institution (ON), according to former inmate Shaun Shannon, who also said inmates worked for a US-based call centre for a time, but this ended, according to Shannon, after problems arose from inmates having access to phones. At Matsqui Institution (BC), there was a partnership with Lyman Lures, with inmates producing fishing lures for the company, but in a January 2024 statement to Evolve, Lyman Lures said “Yes we had a contract to have our products manufactured by Corcan for a couple years. We ended the program because of production changes and our company

videoconference interviews with *The Fifth Estate* journalists and producers, collated and shared materials, provided detailed answers to questions by email, and pursued inmate pay stubs and other information from prison sources at CBC's request. Eventually, they requested access to Evolve's entire collection of ATI records, which at the time numbered approximately 25,000 pages from over one hundred requests filed over more than five years.¹⁰¹⁶ Neufeld shared Evolve's entire body of work and provided direction on where key records could be found. *The Fifth Estate*'s Associate Producer Eman Bare assured Neufeld that the materials and the story were in good hands: "Thank you so much for trusting me. Looking forward to getting this story out there with your help."¹⁰¹⁷ Months later, after extracting all of Evolve's investigative research, *The Fifth Estate* killed the story, saying that their "leadership team" found nothing newsworthy:

"We have had to make the difficult decision to not pursue this prison story... our research did not uncover a story that can be published on CBC or the Fifth Estate at this time. This can happen for a variety of reasons as we must work with our leadership team to ensure we have met a high bar of newsworthiness, public interest and viability."¹⁰¹⁸

was moving in a different direction" (Email from Colin Redisky, Lyman Lures, 2024, January 9. *Subject: Re: prison partnership*). This is confirmed in CORCAN's 2016-2019 Business Plan: "Moving forward, the Manufacturing Business Line is looking at opening... a new chair shop at Matsqui to replace the closed Lyman Lures operation with more valuable offender training opportunities" (CORCAN, n.d. *CORCAN Business Plan 2016-17 to 2018-19*. CSC A-2019-00324). In a January 2023 interview with Evolve, a former CORCAN CEO described one of CORCAN's first public-private partnerships after receiving its status as a Special Operating Agency in 1992. This involved bringing The Great Canadian Bagel Ltd. to Beaver Creek Institution so that instead of working in the institution's kitchen, inmates could be employed by the company producing food for staff. The former CEO explained that this offered more professional work experience and "street credit" that was more valuable on a post-release résumé than working in a "prison kitchen." This partnership also did not last, though Evolve is unaware of the details and timing of the terminated partnership. During Evolve's tour of the Joyceville farm in November 2023, CORCAN's Detlef Fischer said that Joyceville formerly ran a greenhouse program selling flowers at low cost for federal government property landscaping, but this ended as production and delivery costs outweighed the benefits, and competitors complained about the correctional institution undercutting their business. In 2019, CORCAN promoted a partnership with SmartPods at Nova Institution in Nova Scotia, where inmates assembled electronic parts for the private company (the article, published by CSC's *Let's Talk Express* at <https://www.lte-ene.ca/en/nova-institution-new-smartpods-pulse-assembly-and-testing-site>, is no longer online). Spokespersons for SmartPods told Evolve in March 2023 that the company had filed for bankruptcy in 2022 (Emails from Gerry O'Brien and Leon DesRoches, 2023, March 28 & 29). In Kingston, CSC has a partnership providing inmate labour for Terra Nova Truss; in this work release program, inmates work offsite for the company and earn minimum wage directly from the company (as recounted by one inmate who spoke to Evolve but who did not work for Terra Nova Truss), but an inmate job recruitment flyer from Joyceville Institution states that "only a very few positions are available." A similar partnership previously existed with Kingston's Mulrooney Trucking, but inmates told Evolve that this ended with the pandemic. There are simply no examples of purely commercial uses of underpaid prison labour in Canada outside of the Joyceville abattoir (now shuttered but potentially reopening) and the prison farms that will produce cow and goat milk for commercial sale.

¹⁰¹⁶ As of the publication of this report, Evolve has over 38,000 pages of documents from more than 130 ATI requests with CSC, PSC, PSPC, AAFC, CDC, CFIA, CBC, PCO, IAAC, OMAFRA, City of Kingston, and others.

¹⁰¹⁷ Email from Eman Bare, Associate Producer, CBC (2023, August 22). *Subject: Re: Prison Farms ATI Index*.

¹⁰¹⁸ Email from Rachel Ward, investigative journalist, CBC (2023, November 8).

It is clear that the CBC’s singular interest is in the dairy cows and the promotion of a “good news” prison farm story,¹⁰¹⁹ and that there has been high-level intervention by CBC’s leadership and the federal government to control the narrative put out by country’s public broadcaster. Other media and reporters may have been similarly motivated and influenced, or taken the lead from CBC, or simply neglected to dig any deeper than what was proffered by CSC and politicians.¹⁰²⁰ Whether the journalistic failures were coerced or organic, wilful or neglectful, the media’s complicity in the prison farm promotion was summed up by an *Ontario Farmer* journalist who had reviewed some of Evolve’s ATI records:

“In June 2019 CSC had dozens of emails organizing a media blitz of ‘approved media lines’ around the fact that they had purchased six open heifers. Kelly Hartle from CSC stated that they would ‘buckle up’ the narrative to make it easy for the media. CBC, TVO, Global and leading print publications all sought access to the prison farms... One leading publication [*The Kingston Whig-Standard*] promised a ‘good news CSC story.’ The CBC promised to ‘highlight the benefits of the prison farm programs.’”¹⁰²¹

If CSC and Public Safety had not coordinated to “absolutely not allow” Evolve at media events, questions may have been posed, based on ATI records that were in Evolve’s possession, that would have changed the journalistic discourse on the prison farm program. Even so, this does not explain why the records shared with journalists and editors at dozens of media outlets went mostly unheeded.¹⁰²² It can perhaps be explained by the gulf that exists between reporting a simplistic “good news story” about “cows coming home,” and reporting a story so complex, controversial, and borderline unbelievable that it would require significant time and resources to investigate, and some journalistic risk to expose. As one seasoned journalist wrote to Evolve: “This is a very detailed story and probably more for a Royal Commission than a newspaper or columnist.”¹⁰²³ As detailed as it is, most journalists covering the prison farm story were aware of the questionable undercurrents from the beginning, and many were sent evidence as Evolve obtained it, yet

¹⁰¹⁹ “Is the filming request part of a good news story?” (Email from Kerry Gatién, Media Relations and Outreach Advisor, CSC, 2020, September 21. Subject: *Approval Required* Inmate Interview Request - CBC Prison Farm Documentary. CSC A-2020-00407).

¹⁰²⁰ They may also have heeded MP Mark Holland’s warning that it would be “stupid” to counter Save Our Prison Farms: “Mr. Holland couldn’t guarantee that the farms would survive cuts from future governments, but warned against any such move. ‘I don’t know if anybody will be politically stupid enough to take this on again,’ he quipped. ‘This is not a group you want to go up against’” (White, P., 2018, June 21. Two Ontario prison farms closed by Harper government to be reopened after pressure from nearby residents. *The Globe and Mail*. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-two-ontario-prison-farms-closed-by-harper-government-to-be-reopened/>).

¹⁰²¹ Cumming, I. (2021, August 24). It’s not clear what animals will occupy prison farm barns. *Ontario Farmer*.

¹⁰²² Over the years, Evolve has issued media releases, submitted documents, and made pitches (brief, detailed, and from a variety of angles) to hundreds of journalists. A non-exhaustive list of media that Evolve has reached out to includes: *CBC, Radio-Canada, The Fifth Estate, CTV, W5, The Toronto Star, Global News, TVO, iPolitics, The Hill Times, National Post, The Globe and Mail, APTN, Ottawa Citizen, The Kingston Whig-Standard, Kingstonist, Ontario Farmer, Frontenac News, Briarpatch Magazine, Vice, The Walrus, MacLean’s, NY Times, Democracy Now!, BBC, The Guardian*, and more.

¹⁰²³ Email from Diane Francis, Editor-at-Large, *National Post* (2023, March 29). Royal Commissions are independent government inquiries into matters of national concern.

very little critical coverage emerged over the years. A large share of responsibility for these journalistic failures falls to CSC and politicians who have not only been vague and evasive in the information they have provided to media, but in some cases, they have knowingly disseminated false information.

6.3. “Perverse official intent” || Official Lies & Officials Lie

Records show that CSC and the federal government have repeatedly provided misleading information to journalists. The chronic obfuscation and misdirection stand in sharp contrast to CSC’s “commitment to keep the public informed about this initiative.”¹⁰²⁴ Beyond broad statements, the only specifics about the dairy plans that have been voluntarily disclosed by CSC in public announcements is that “the dairy cow herd size will be approximately 60.”¹⁰²⁵ Otherwise, CSC has generically maintained that the size of the goat herd and the goat milk market “will be determined as the implementation plan progresses.”¹⁰²⁶ All other information presented in this report has been extracted through Evolve’s Access to Information requests and media inquiries, as well as MP Reid’s Order Paper questions, against resistance by CSC and government.

The art of misdirection, at times, is so finely honed that it crosses the boundary into falsehood. ATI records provide a number of examples of this having occurred in statements by CSC and Public Safety officials about the prison farms and abattoir. For example, in August 2019, an unidentified journalist [name redacted] submitted a media inquiry to CSC: “Where are there prison ‘abattoir’ programs in Canada?” CSC responded: “There is no prison abattoir program in CSC’s institutions.”¹⁰²⁷ This is plainly false, as the Joyceville Institution abattoir provided “training” to inmates from at least 1960 until its closure in 2022. The intent of the reporter’s question was clear, yet CSC’s response can only be interpreted as denying the existence of any prison abattoir or abattoir training program in CSC institutions.

The same deception was used by the federal government on May 18, 2022, when MP Scott Reid raised a question in the House of Commons about the use of inmates in the Joyceville abattoir. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, MP Pam Damoff, replied saying that she had just toured the farms in Kingston and “To my knowledge, there is no slaughterhouse.”¹⁰²⁸ This could be generously

¹⁰²⁴ CSC (2020, April). *Media Lines: Reopening of CORCAN Farm Operations*. CSC A-2020-00407.

¹⁰²⁵ CSC (2019, July 2). *Media Lines: Reopening of CORCAN Farm Operations*. CSC A-2018-00441.

¹⁰²⁶ Numerous drafts of CSC Media Lines. Also: Email from Esther Mailhot, Communications Advisor, CSC, in response to a CBC media inquiry (2018, October 11). *Subject: RE: For Action: Media call - CBC re: Prison farms*. CSC A-2018-00441

¹⁰²⁷ Email from Marie-Pier Léculyer, Communications Advisor, CSC (2019, August 16). *Subject: Re: Farms event - Interview*. CSC A-2019-00317.

¹⁰²⁸ Damoff, P. (2022, May 18). “Labour.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 074*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-74/hansard>.

interpreted as an oversight, since she may not have been shown the abattoir on her visit. However, ATI records show that on March 29, 2022, weeks before Damoff’s “no slaughterhouse” statement in Parliament, Damoff had briefed the Public Safety Minister on the Joyceville Institution abattoir’s importance to industry and potential closure. Damoff had received correspondence from the Leeds County Federation of Agriculture, via MP Michael Barrett (Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes), requesting that the government facilitate the licensing of a new abattoir operator to maintain slaughter services beyond the September 2022 expiry of CSC’s contract with Wallace Beef.¹⁰²⁹ Damoff forwarded the correspondence to an unidentified person, whose name was redacted, and to the Minister of Public Safety directly, with Damoff explaining that the abattoir is “in house. CSC has it but this guy [Bruce Wallace/Wallace Beef] operates it.”¹⁰³⁰ After the Minister was briefed by Damoff, Minister Mendicino addressed the abattoir’s potential closure in the House of Commons on April 8, 2022, assuring MP Barrett that the government was “committed” to “engaging” on the issue of relicensing the abattoir.¹⁰³¹ Two days after Damoff denied the abattoir’s existence, Reid pressed this point, and Damoff deflected by repeating unsupported claims about the prison farms, and raising Save Our Prison Farms as a shield:

Reid: “Two days ago the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety stated, in reference to the prison farm in Joyceville, ‘To my knowledge, there is no slaughterhouse.’ This would appear to contradict the response given on April 8 to another MP by her minister, who stated that the existing slaughterhouse would remain in operation. We are all a bit confused.”

Damoff: “I applaud the hon. member for his new-found interest in corrections, and I have to ask where he was when the Conservative government was making mean-spirited cuts to corrections, including prison farms. We know that the rehabilitation of those who commit crimes is important for public safety, and that is why we reopened the prison farms. It is good for public safety, it is good for inmates and it is good for the community. I would ask him to ask the Save Our Prison Farms folks what they think about the prison farms in their communities.”¹⁰³²

¹⁰²⁹ The letter states (quoted as written): “The Prison farm at Joyceville Ontario houses a Provincially inspected abattoir. This abattoir is vital to Eastern Ontario farmers. There is very little slaughter capacity in Eastern Ontario and if we loss this abattoir there will be a tremendous strain put on Eastern Ontario business.... The Leeds Federation of Agriculture would like to know if you will be offering the license to another person, or if the prison farm would be operating it as a business for use by local farmers?” (Letter signed by Cornelia Dains [Danis], Leeds County Federation of Agriculture, to Public Safety Minister Mendicino, 2022, March 21. PSC A-2022-00101).

¹⁰³⁰ Email from MP Pam Damoff, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety (2022, March 29). *Subject: Fwd: Joyceville Abattoir*. PSC A-2022-00101.

¹⁰³¹ Mendicino, M. (2022, April 8). “Labour.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 056*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-56/hansard>.

¹⁰³² Reid, S. & Damoff, P. (2022, May 20). “Public Safety.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 076*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/documentviewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-76/hansard>.

To briefly pause and answer Damoff’s (non-sequitur) invitation to “ask the Save Our Prison Farms folks what they think,” even though the campaign ended in 2018, people who identified as Save Our Prison Farms advocates have called the “return” of the cows “window dressing”¹⁰³³ (Helen Forsey) and “token cattle”¹⁰³⁴ (Shaun Shannon). The perspective of many who were aligned with the campaign to oppose the closures, and who invested their time, money, and passion into the cause to restore the program, is captured in the words of activist Helen Forsey:

“As an agriculture graduate and long-time supporter of the efforts to save and restore the prison farms, I am appalled by the blatant contradiction of everything prison farm supporters have been working for over the past ten years. Without most people’s knowledge, the powers that be have taken our goal and twisted it into a mockery of itself. Corrections Canada and the government have been quite secretive about their plan, which would convert the prison farms into industrial livestock operations supplying corporate agribusiness instead of serving the public good. But thanks to the hard work and persistent research by a few committed people, the perverse official intent is now clear. And it must be stopped.”¹⁰³⁵

Similar sentiments have been expressed by former Save Our Prison Farms spokesperson Shaun Shannon, the formerly incarcerated prison farm worker who was used by MP Mark Holland and MP Mark Gerretsen as an example of how “the program works.”¹⁰³⁶ In interviews, Shannon sharply criticized the new program:

“If I had known that they were going to go this way, I would have given up a long time ago... this is not a victory at all. It’s not what I started fighting for. I did not. If I’d known this at the beginning of the fight, I wouldn’t have fought for it as passionately as I have been. I don’t think anybody would have fought as passionately as they have been, if they’d known this at the start.”¹⁰³⁷

¹⁰³³ “The CSC’s plan flies in the face of the goals that prison farm supporters like myself have fought for [and] it’s time those facts were exposed. Over the past three years, many critics have been silenced, ignored or shunned; others have apparently been seduced by the repeated claim that ‘The prison farm program has been restored and the cows are coming back.’ That claim is simply window-dressing for a coverup, and a betrayal” (Forsey, H., 2021, March 8. Scandal brewing over feds’ prison farm plan. *The Hill Times*. <https://www.hilltimes.com/story/2021/03/08/scandal-brewing-over-prison-farm-plan/268627/>).

¹⁰³⁴ “There’s no victory here, there’s no victory here, none. The Save Our Prison Farms group which I’m a part of... had to fight CSC to get the cattle. Token cattle” (Statement by Shaun Shannon in Evolve Our Prison Farms, 2019, August 2. *Ex-Prison Farm Worker Interview* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fd6gGw8cpAQ&t=962s>).

¹⁰³⁵ Forsey, H. (2020, April 23). Letter submitted to the editor of *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. This letter, along with several others criticizing the new prison farms, was not published.

¹⁰³⁶ See Chapter 3: “Promise Made, Promise Kept.”

¹⁰³⁷ Shaun Shannon speaking in Julia Miller’s Healthy Living Revolution. (2020, February 6). *Save and Evolve Prison Farm Revolution*. [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDo-mooYaxM>.

Returning to the false or misleading information issued by government officials, another example involves a statement by Damoff in response to MP Reid’s inquiries on CSC’s goat farming plans. On April 29, 2022, Damoff stated in the House of Commons:

“As I have told the hon. member personally, while Correctional Service was considering goat milk production, it is no longer under consideration. Correctional Service Canada does not intend to do any goat milk production.”¹⁰³⁸

Immediately after making this “refreshingly clear statement,”¹⁰³⁹ Damoff was visibly distracted by her phone and did not hear the Speaker of the House calling her name repeatedly to respond to another question that had just been posed by another member on an unrelated matter. Damoff stood, seemingly flustered, and said:

“I am sorry. I was listening to a lot of noise in the background, and I will be very honest with members: I did not hear the question, so if the member would like to speak to me afterward, I would be happy to answer it, and I do apologize.”¹⁰⁴⁰

At the next opportunity, on May 5, 2022, MP Reid pursued this [edited for brevity]:

“This evening I am returning to a question I asked respecting the prison farms located at the Joyceville and Collins Bay institutions. On April 8, I asked the following question of the Minister of Public Safety:

...even though no contract has yet been signed to use the milk from its proposed 2,200-goat prison farm, the government continues to build dairy facilities at the Joyceville and Collins Bay institutions. Given the absence of a contract, it is strange the government continues to act and to spend as if it still plans to use prison labour to produce goat milk for export.

¹⁰³⁸ Damoff, P. (2022, April 29). “Correctional Service Canada.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 061*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-61/hansard>. The parliamentary video shows a visibly flustered Damoff stating, verbatim: “As I have, um, told the honourable member personally, while Correctional Services was considering goat farming... goat farming... er, goat milk farming? What’s the right term? Um, it is no longer under consideration. Correctional Services Canada does not intend to do any goat milk farming... goat milk... thank you... what’s the right word...?” CPAC. (2022, April 29). *Question Period – April 29, 2022* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AYGOpbnxfmE>.

¹⁰³⁹ Reid, S. (2022, May 5). “Labour.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 065*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-65/hansard>.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Damoff, P. (2022, April 29). “Canada Border Services Agency.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 061*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-61/hansard>.

The parliamentary secretary helpfully provided me with a \$10-million contract for, according to the tender offer, ‘a large purpose built dairy cattle barn... to accommodate a milking herd of approximately seventy cows.’

The parliamentary secretary also made the following refreshingly clear statement: ‘While Correctional Service was considering goat milk production, it is no longer under consideration. Correctional Service Canada does not intend to do any goat milk production.’ Now, that is clear and definitive, and my human rights concerns would have been set at ease, were it not for the following fact.

Right after I was provided with that answer, one of my constituents asked Correctional Service Canada’s media relations team to confirm the answer, and on May 3, my constituent received a response that currently they don’t have any goats, that there are no plans under way and that, as previously mentioned, they will reassess the situation at a later date.¹⁰⁴¹ Now, this is a good deal less definitive and it leaves the door open for CSC to return to a plan that it clearly does not want to abandon: to use prison labour in a commercial dairy operation.

I want to believe the parliamentary secretary, and I hope that her statement, the definitive one, will be CSC’s policy moving forward, but I think what is needed is something additional: a clear policy statement from cabinet or in the form of an order from the minister that it is impermissible for Correctional Service Canada to reassess the situation, informing the agency that it is government policy that the industrial goat operation is officially and permanently dead.

Finally, and this is the question, given the parliamentary secretary’s comment and the commitment that the goat operation is no longer under consideration, could she explain why the current construction of the cow dairy facility includes the roadway and utilities for the future goat farm that remains in the engineering plans and why the current construction includes a manure lagoon sized for 2,200 goats?¹⁰⁴²

¹⁰⁴¹ On April 29, 2022, Evolve submitted a media inquiry to CSC: “Today in the House of Commons... Pam Damoff stated to MP Scott Reid that ‘While Correctional Services was considering goat farming, it is no longer under consideration. Corrections Canada does not intend to do any goat milk.’ *Can you please confirm: Has the Correctional Service of Canada cancelled all goat farming plans?*” CSC responded: “We do not currently have any goats and there are no plans underway. As previously mentioned, we will reassess the situation at a later date” (Email statement from Esme Bailey, Senior Media Relations Advisor, CSC, 2022, May 3). As previously noted, CSC has never cancelled the goat program, and CSC’s temporary pause announcement in 2021 maintained that “the implementation of the dairy goat program will resume.” Meanwhile, CSC’s goat barn remains “tender ready” with PSPC.

¹⁰⁴² Reid, S. (2022, May 5). “Labour.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 065*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-65/hansard>.

Damoff replied that if Reid visits the farms “he will meet not only a herd of friendly dairy cows, but the offenders who love them,” and repeated that “there are no goats and therefore no contracts.”¹⁰⁴³

There are many other examples of false or misleading statements from CSC and government officials. As previously noted, these include:

- Federal politicians repeatedly claimed that employment on prison farms make prisoners “three times less likely to reoffend,” a misinterpretation or misrepresentation of CSC’s research which finds no evidence that farm work reduces recidivism or improves post-release employment results;
- CSC’s Commissioner testified to the Senate Committee on Human Rights that CSC “does not slaughter animals,” and all prisoners working in the Joyceville abattoir are “earning hours toward a Retail Meat Cutter apprenticeship with the provincial authority,” which is contradicted by the provincial authority and ATI records,¹⁰⁴⁴ and
- Journalists inquiring about the size of the goat herd and the intended market were consistently told that both were undetermined, when records show that both were determined.

Rewinding the clock to 2016, we find the importance of transparency underscored in the unpublished Monachus report containing the consultants’ professional opinion that the public consultations had not provided a solid basis for reopening prison farms. The report concluded with the final point that, should the federal government move forward with the completion of an actual feasibility study, as recommended by the consultants and as requested by CSC:

¹⁰⁴³ Damoff, P. (2022, May 5). “Labour.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 065*. 44th Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-65/hansard>.

¹⁰⁴⁴ CSC records show that until 2017, registering inmates for Retail Meat Cutter apprenticeship had “fallen by the wayside” (Email from Chris Germain, Warden, Joyceville Institution, CSC, 2016, February 8. *Subject: FW: WALLACE BEEF CONTRACT*. CSC A-2018-00333). Spokespersons for the provincial authority (Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / MLITSD) told Evolve that they have no records of inmates registered for the Retail Meat Cutter apprenticeship. Evolve kept pressing MLITSD to verify, as the Commissioner’s claim should be publicly verifiable, especially given that it is the difference between “training” and the violation of human rights. Evolve asked MLITSD to search by apprenticeship sponsor, to see if anyone was sponsored by Wallace Beef or CORCAN. Finally, MLITSD replied with a vague statement: “Between January 1, 2020 and December 21, 2022 fewer than 20 apprentices were registered in the Retail Meat Cutter Trade to either Wallace Beef or CORCAN” (Email from Anu Dhar, MLITSD, 2023, March 27). The Commissioner’s statement was made before the span of time cited by MLITSD. Digging further, more concrete information was obtained through an Order Paper question by MP Reid. CSC registered one inmate for apprenticeship in 2017-2018 (out of 12 inmates who worked in the abattoir that year), four (out of 15) in 2018-2019, seven (out of 16) in 2019-2020, none (out of 11) in 2020-2021, eight (out of 11) in 2021-2022, and no prisoners ever completed the apprenticeship (House of Commons, 2023, October 26. *Order Paper Question No. Q-1947*. Reply to MP Scott Reid by MP Jennifer O’Connell, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs Dominic LeBlanc). In a phone conversation with Evolve, a spokesperson for MLITSD noted that “anyone can register for an apprenticeship but that doesn’t necessarily speak to the program’s success.”

“CSC should put in place a transparent and on-going communications and engagement initiative. The on-line and Town Hall consultations demonstrated a strong level of public dissatisfaction with the approach taken during the closure of the farms. Openness about the process of completing the feasibility study and its results would contribute to preventing this from re-occurring.”¹⁰⁴⁵

From the public consultations to the present, the opposite approach has been taken. Instead of openness there has been obfuscation in all aspects of the launch of the new prison farm program in Kingston. As has already been alluded to, a large part of the onus for this opacity has been on political interference.

6.4. “Hold that media call” || Privy Council Office Interference

In 2021, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau hoped to elevate his minority government to a majority government by triggering a controversial 36-day “snap” election at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was reportedly the most expensive election in Canadian history at an estimated cost of \$610 million.¹⁰⁴⁶ In the riding of Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston (LFK), where Joyceville Institution is located, Evolve founder Calvin Neufeld ran as the Green Party candidate.¹⁰⁴⁷ ATI records later revealed that the Privy Council Office (PCO), which supports the Prime Minister, attempted to use Neufeld’s candidacy to block Evolve’s investigations into the prison farms, a matter which requires some explanation.

The day the writ was dropped on August 15, 2021, triggering the election, Calvin Neufeld became the LFK Green Party candidate, though this was scarcely acknowledged by the CBC.¹⁰⁴⁸ On August 26, 2021, one

¹⁰⁴⁵ Monachus Consulting (2016, August 16). *Re: Report on the Town Hall Meeting on the Feasibility of Re-establishing Penitentiary Farms at the Joyceville and Collin’s Bay Institutions - Recommendations/Next Steps*. CSC A-2018-00333.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Woloshyn, R. (2021, September 6). *This is Canada’s most expensive election*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-election-expensive-cost-1.6164267>.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Devoy, D. (2021, July 15). Perth activist Calvin Neufeld seeks federal Green party nomination for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston: The author and motivational speaker was urged to run by former federal leader Elizabeth May. *Perth Courier*. https://www.insideottawavalley.com/news/perth-activist-calvin-neufeld-seeks-federal-green-party-nomination-for-lanark-frontenac-kingston/article_8e9650b4-81c1-54de-a964-1ffb475c239f.html.

¹⁰⁴⁸ While the CBC profiled all candidates in the federal election, listing professions, interests, and/or backgrounds, including satirical Rhinoceros Party candidates, all that the CBC published on Calvin Neufeld’s candidacy was “Calvin Neufeld will run for the Greens” (“Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston: loyal friends of the Conservatives,” 2021, August 15. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/lanark-frontenac-kingston-federal-election-2021-1.6122845>). CBC also did not include Neufeld in their profiles of LGBTQ candidates or their extensive coverage of trans candidates specifically, despite Neufeld’s longtime work in diversity education and advocacy as a trans man. Invisibility in CBC coverage may have contributed to Neufeld’s omission from other media profiles of LGBTQ candidates, such as *Xtra!*. After Neufeld submitted a complaint, CBC edited its Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston page to state that “Sustainable agriculture advocate and transgender man Calvin Neufeld will run for the Greens.” Nowhere is Neufeld identified as a “sustainable agriculture advocate,” suggesting that CBC’s awareness of Neufeld’s association with Evolve may have been why CBC did not publish

of Evolve’s media inquiries was forwarded by CSC to the Privy Council Office. This inquiry had been submitted well before the election was called, and CSC’s media department had delayed its response for weeks. While researching and writing *Bloody Bad Business: Report on the Joyceville Institution Abattoir*, Neufeld had requested clarification on the age of the Joyceville abattoir. CSC’s original response in May 2021 only stated that “The partnership between Wallace Beef and Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) began in 1995.”¹⁰⁴⁹ However, inmates and retired correctional officers had told Neufeld that the abattoir was much older than the Wallace Beef partnership. On August 1, 2021, CSC was asked to clarify what year the abattoir was originally constructed. On August 3, CSC spokesperson Marie-Pier Lécuyer asked for “flexibility with the deadline.”¹⁰⁵⁰ On August 6, Lécuyer indicated that “We will get back to you next week.”¹⁰⁵¹ On August 12, the media inquiry was transferred to another CSC spokesperson, Kyle Lawlor, who indicated that he would “provide you a response as soon as we can.”¹⁰⁵² The response was not received until more than a month later, September 16, seven weeks after the media request had originally been submitted, with Lécuyer stating that “The original Slaughterhouse Building was completed in 1960.”¹⁰⁵³

What occurred during this weeks-long delay was later revealed through Access to Information. On August 26, 2021, after having already delayed a response for nearly a month, and after the federal election had begun, CSC forwarded Neufeld’s media request to Gilbert LeGras, Senior Analyst in the Privy Council Office, stating:

“We’ve had a media request from a person who is running for political office. Can you advise whether government departments can provide information through media relations to political candidates? The request was made before the election was called, but it is regarding historical records dating back to mid-20th century, and it has taken a good deal of time to conduct the research.”¹⁰⁵⁴

In a series of emails, LeGras replied, “In other words, is a Green Party candidate in the federal election calling themselves a reporter and requesting a significant amount of research be done by federal public

a descriptive profile. If so, then CBC’s targeted censorship of Evolve rendered a member of a vulnerable community more marginalized and invisible.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Email statement from Isabelle Robitaille, Manager, Issue Management and Media Relations, CSC (2021, May 21).

Subject: Media inquiry: Joyceville abattoir.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Email statement from Marie-Pier Lécuyer, Media relations advisor, CSC (2021, August 3). *Subject: RE: Inquiry: Prison Abattoirs.*

¹⁰⁵¹ Email statement from Marie-Pier Lécuyer, CSC (2021, August 6). *Subject: RE: Inquiry: Prison Abattoirs.*

¹⁰⁵² Email statement from Kyle Lawlor, Senior Communications Advisor, CSC (2021, August 12). *Subject: RE: Inquiry: Prison Abattoirs.*

¹⁰⁵³ Email statement from Marie-Pier Lécuyer, Senior Media relations advisor, CSC (2021, September 16). *Subject: RE: Inquiry: Prison Abattoirs.*

¹⁰⁵⁴ Email from Colette Cibula, Associate Assistant Commissioner, Communications & Engagement, CSC, to Gilbert LeGras, PCO (2021, August 26). PSC A-2022-00246.

servants?”¹⁰⁵⁵ Ten minutes later, LeGras instructed CSC to “hold that media call until I confer with colleagues here.”¹⁰⁵⁶ A half hour later, “I spoke with the Director of PCO Media Relations [and] the person is advocating a certain position so going forward you would have to divert future requests from this advocate... you would need to raise this with your Deputy Head (presumably Commissioner Anne Kelly) and it might be prudent to reach out to Elections Canada.”¹⁰⁵⁷ LeGras provided CSC with the contact information for Nicholas Alexander, Investigator, Office of the Commissioner of Elections Canada. All of this unfolded because, prior to the 36-day snap election, Neufeld had asked for clarity on the age of the Joyceville Institution abattoir.

CSC’s allegation that the question had consumed “a good deal of time” to research was false. In fact, CSC was already aware of the abattoir’s age. ATI records show that the information was readily available in a historical backgrounder attached to CSC’s 2019 news release on the prison farms.¹⁰⁵⁸ Also, a recent briefing note from CSC Commissioner Anne Kelly to the Minister of Public Safety on the potential reopening of the Joyceville abattoir notes that “The original building was constructed in 1958.”¹⁰⁵⁹ Other than as an obstructive measure, it is inexplicable that CSC and the Privy Council Office would coordinate to use Neufeld’s candidacy in the 2021 election to block his inquiries. Even PCO’s LeGras admitted that he had reviewed the federal “Guidelines on the conduct of Ministers, Ministers of State, exempt staff and public servants during an election”¹⁰⁶⁰ and “there’s nothing that jumps out of the document dealing with an instance like this.”¹⁰⁶¹ That is because there are no governmental policies that would prohibit a candidate, who is not even an elected public servant, from conducting research for journalistic purposes, or advocating a certain position. Nevertheless, the Privy Council Office judged it worthwhile to use the time of federal public servants to explore this avenue to interfere with Evolve’s inquiries.

In July 2023, Evolve filed an ATI request with the Privy Council Office for all records related to the prison farms.¹⁰⁶² In August 2023, PCO responded that “A thorough search of the records under the control of PCO

¹⁰⁵⁵ Email from Gilbert LeGras, PCO, to Colette Cibula, CSC (2021, August 26). PSC A-2022-00246.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Email from Gilbert LeGras, PCO, to Colette Cibula, CSC (2021, August 26). PSC A-2022-00246.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Email from Gilbert LeGras, PCO, to Colette Cibula, CSC (2021, August 26). PSC A-2022-00246.

¹⁰⁵⁸ “Joyceville Institution officially opened in December 1959. From its beginning, the primary function was to manage a herd of 300 beef cattle... Beef produced at the Joyceville Farm Annex was provided to area institutions” (CSC, 2019, August 15. *News Release: Penitentiary farms officially relaunched. Historical Backgrounder*. CSC A-2019-00323).

¹⁰⁵⁹ CSC (n.d.). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety: Ongoing use of abattoir on Joyceville Institution property*. CSC A-2023-00232.

¹⁰⁶⁰ PCO (2021, August). *Guidelines on the conduct of Ministers, Ministers of State, exempt staff and public servants during an election*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council/services/publications/guidelines-conduct-ministers-state-exempt-staff-public-servants-election.html>.

¹⁰⁶¹ Email from Gilbert LeGras, PCO, to Colette Cibula, CSC (2021, August 26). PSC A-2022-00246.

¹⁰⁶² “From 2016 to the present, please release all records and communications pertaining to the prison farms/penitentiary agriculture program at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions in Kingston, Ontario.” PCO ATI request A-2023-00294.

was carried out on your behalf; however, no records relevant to your request were found.”¹⁰⁶³ Evolve immediately filed an incomplete search complaint with the Office of the Information Commissioner. The complaint was assigned to a senior investigator in February 2024, who requested evidence as to why there is reason to believe records exist. Evolve compiled a 75-page package of emails from ATI releases from CSC and Public Safety showing PCO involvement in nearly every aspect of the prison farm rollout since 2016, including:

- PCO approved CSC farm communications in 2016
- PCO received prison farm correspondence from community members in 2016
- PCO reviewed CSC’s online public consultation questionnaire in 2016
- PCO discussed CSC’s farm consultations in 2016 and 2017
- PCO monitored prison farm coverage and media inquiries received by CSC
- PCO requested updates on CSC’s farm project
- PCO asked CSC in 2018 to provide the analysis that led to the decision to farm goats
- PCO Issues Management monitored the Prison Farm Advisory Panel’s reaction to the 2018 goats-only announcement
- PCO participated in planning CSC’s prison farm media events
- PCO mocked the ministerial prison farm launch featuring a goat and a cow and Atwood’s support
- PCO approved CSC’s reply to Helen Forsey’s *Hill Times* article critiquing the prison farms
- PCO reviewed CBC’s *Prison Farm* film prior to release
- PCO received CSC’s 2021 announcement “temporarily” pausing the goat program
- PCO investigated Evolve founder Calvin Neufeld

The outcome of the OIC’s investigation, disclosed to Evolve in April 2024, is that PCO’s “no records” result was reasonable. The investigator’s wording was carefully chosen: the PCO had explained that “the keywords used in the search were based on your request text” and “no documents of business value were destroyed.”¹⁰⁶⁴ Given the volume of PCO emails contained in CSC and Public Safety releases, it would appear that PCO exercised the narrowest search permissible within legal parameters, and/or destroyed email records, which presumably do not constitute documents of business value. On May 7, 2024, Evolve submitted a new ATI request with the PCO, this time with highly specific details, search words, and the names of PCO staff who were involved in the monitoring, planning, and promotion of the prison farm

¹⁰⁶³ “Final Response NIL” (Letter from David Neilson, Executive Director, Access to Information and Privacy, PCO, 2023, August 17. *Subject: A-2023-00294*).

¹⁰⁶⁴ Email from Gordon Marshall, Investigator, OIC (2024, April 29).

program, according to the records from CSC and Public Safety.¹⁰⁶⁵ No acknowledgement of the request was received for two weeks.¹⁰⁶⁶ It was only after Evolve brought this to the attention of the PCO's ATIP Director that the request was acknowledged and assigned a number.¹⁰⁶⁷ The PCO then issued a 120-day extension, setting the legislated release date in October 2024. If no records are released in response to this request, the only conceivable explanation is that the PCO destroyed all records and communications related to the prison farms.

It is evident that there has been co-ordinated manipulation and cover-up involving multiple federal government agencies and officials, and the questionable activities are ongoing. After Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston (LFK) MP Scott Reid began questioning the prison farms in the House of Commons in 2022, Kingston and the Islands MP Mark Gerretsen lobbied, successfully, for Elections Canada to redraw the electoral map so that the slice of LFK located north of the 401 highway, encompassing Joyceville Institution, will be absorbed into MP Gerretsen's political riding as of any federal election that occurs after April 2024.¹⁰⁶⁸ As a result, MP Reid's riding will be reduced to Lanark-Frontenac, and Joyceville Institution (the site of the CSC's dairy operations and the Joyceville abattoir) will no longer be under MP Reid's jurisdiction.¹⁰⁶⁹ It should be alarming that MP Gerretsen, a staunch defender of the prison farm program

¹⁰⁶⁵ "From October 2015 to May 2024, please release all records and communications pertaining to the prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions in Kingston, Ontario. Please include emails and attachments, text messages, briefing notes, scenario notes, analyses, reports, speaking notes, communications products, media inquiries, media monitoring summaries, media monitoring for detect and correct initiative, media lines, news releases. Please include attachments, drafts and revisions, and do not limit the search to just documents of business value. Please include a search of emails to/from the following PCO staff and email accounts: CIMSOPER@pco-bcp.gc.ca, Consultation (PCO/BCP), News / Nouvelles (News-Nouvelles@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Issues Management, Director of PCO Media Relations, Frank Gale (Frank.Gale@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Judy Maclean (Judy.Maclean@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Laura Wesley, Jonathan Spassov (Jonathan.Spassov@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Myriam Massabki (Myriam.Massabki@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Christine O'Nions (Christine.O'Nions@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Ken MacKillop (Ken.MacKillop@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Stephane Levesque (Stephane.Levesque@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Anabel Lindblad (Anabel.Lindblad@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Cloe Prieur (Cloe.Prieur@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Gilbert LeGras (Gilbert.LeGras@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Paul Doucette (Paul.Doucette@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Andrew Green (Andrew.Green@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Ariane Boyer (Ariane.Boyer@pco-bcp.gc.ca). Please include the following search terms: prison farm, penitentiary farm, agriculture, agribusiness, CORCAN, CSC, Correctional Service of Canada, cow(s), cattle, beef, goat(s), kid(s), milk, dairy, abattoir, slaughterhouse, Wallace, Joyceville, Collins Bay, Mark Gerretsen, Mark Holland, Scott Reid, Don Head, Anne Kelly, Christian D'Auray, Kelly Hartle, Normand Payette, Evolve, Neufeld, Molzahn, Dowling, Peters, Doherty, Save Our Prison Farms (SOPF), Pen Farm Herd Co-Op (PFHC). Please also include any records that mention Feihe and/or Canada Royal Milk and/or infant formula and/or baby formula. Please also include communications relating to the above to/from Ministerial Liaison with Public Safety Canada and/or Correctional Service of Canada and/or Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and/or the offices of Minister Lawrence MacAulay and/or Minister Ralph Goodale, Minister Bill Blair, Minister Marco Mendicino, and/or Minister Dominic LeBlanc."

¹⁰⁶⁶ This has never happened in six years and over 130 ATI requests filed by Evolve. ATI requests are always acknowledged and assigned a number promptly.

¹⁰⁶⁷ PCO A-2024-00096.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Mark Gerretsen (2022, August 22). *Do you live in Kingston north of the 401? You belong in Kingston and the Islands!* [Status update]. Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/markgerretsen/posts/pfbid0GjYho3TvqnMFYpuxpeMBgRDU4NfpY7RZpivFtLRgKR11swGNUJRVSKbawoBwhk89L>.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Foley, J. (2023, February 10). Kingston and the Islands riding to include residents north of Highway 401. *Kingstonist*. <https://www.kingstonist.com/news/kingston-and-the-islands-riding-to-include-residents-north-of-highway-401/>

and the prison abattoir, will benefit so much from these border changes, which, remarkably, the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission admitted are disproportionate and not reasonable.¹⁰⁷⁰ The fact that Joyceville Institution is not currently within MP Gerretsen’s riding has not deterred him from acting otherwise, and it is possible that for a time he was not aware that Joyceville was not in his riding.¹⁰⁷¹

The day the online consultation was launched on June 2, 2016, MP Gerretsen and Minister Goodale coordinated an exchange in the House of Commons announcing the “feasibility study” into reopening prison farms, and MP Gerretsen claimed that Joyceville Institution was in his riding: “In my riding of Kingston and the Islands two prison farms were closed in Collins Bay and Joyceville.”¹⁰⁷² In 2018, Gerretsen was the MP “on hand” at the Joyceville Institution media event to announce the inclusion of cows.¹⁰⁷³ In 2019, MP Gerretsen posed for a photo-op promoting the arrival of the first beef cattle at Joyceville Institution.¹⁰⁷⁴ And in May 2024, MP Gerretsen hosted Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc on a tour of Joyceville Institution and the Joyceville abattoir.¹⁰⁷⁵ Meanwhile, MP Gerretsen continues to overstep his political boundaries as the primary lobbyist for the reopening of the Joyceville abattoir,¹⁰⁷⁶ more aggressively since the last abattoir in the Kingston area, Quinn’s Meats, burned down in June 2024.¹⁰⁷⁷

¹⁰⁷⁰ Elections Canada reported that: “With respect to Kingston and The Islands, there were many submissions that the parts of Kingston north of Highway 401 should be included in that district to preserve their community of interest and to enhance their representation. The Commission concluded that this should be implemented... This has given the district a deviation from the Quota of +15.3%, the highest in the province... The Commission observes that it may not be reasonably possible to maintain these boundaries in the future” (Elections Canada, 2022. *Federal Electoral Districts Redistribution 2022, Part E – The Geographic Pieces*. https://redcoupage-redistribution-2022.ca/com/on/rprt/othaut/p6_e.aspx).

¹⁰⁷¹ This fact was not discovered by Evolve until 2019, at which time Evolve began reporting this publicly and submitting information to the office of LFK MP Scott Reid. The subsequent interest by MP Reid and his many questions on the matter in the House of Commons may have directly contributed to MP Gerretsen’s push for Elections Canada to redraw the electoral boundaries.

¹⁰⁷² Gerretsen, M. (2016, June 2). “Public Safety.” Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Edited Hansard 64*. 42nd Parliament, 1st session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/house/sitting-64/hansard>.

¹⁰⁷³ Snowdon, F. (2018, June 21). More than 30 dairy cows now part of the prison farm program in Kingston. *Global News*. <https://globalnews.ca/news/4289722/more-than-30-dairy-cows-now-part-of-the-prison-farm-program-in-kingston/>.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Mark Gerretsen. (2019, May 23). *Earlier this week, Corrections Canada took possession of its first herd of cattle since the prison farms were closed in 2010. More to follow...* [Status update]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/markgerretsen/photos/pb.100047114861541.-2207520000/2291213307607338/?type=3>.

¹⁰⁷⁵ “On Monday, the Minister of Public Safety, Parliamentary Secretary, and I toured Joyceville Institution” (Email Newsletter from Mark Gerretsen, 2024, May 17. *Subject: Community Update: Happy May Long Weekend!*). This was confirmed by CSC: “We can confirm that both Minister LeBlanc and MP Mark Gerretsen recently toured Joyceville Institution, including the abattoir, on May 13th. Mr. Gerretsen also visited Joyceville Institution on March 6th” (Email statement from Esther Mailhot, Senior Advisor, Issues Management and Media Relations, CSC, 2024, June 11).

¹⁰⁷⁶ Benson, S. (2024, May 29). Prison-reform advocate calls on feds to permanently kill the Joyceville slaughterhouse. *The Hill Times*. <https://www.hilltimes.com/story/2024/05/28/prison-reform-advocate-calls-on-feds-to-permanently-kill-the-joyceville-slaughterhouse/423272/>.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Green, J. (2024, July 3). Quinn’s Meats Fire Worsens Crisis For Local Food Industry. *Frontenac News*.

<https://www.frontenacnews.ca/south-frontenac-news/item/17376-quinn-s-meats-fire-worsens-crisis-for-local-food-industry>. This article also perpetuates the false claim that Joyceville is located in MP Gerretsen’s riding: “Joyceville is located in the federal riding of [MP] Mark Gerretson [sic], Kingston and the Islands, and Gerretson has been engaged in efforts to re-open the abattoir. After the fire, he indicated the government is actively making efforts to re-open the abattoir at the penitentiary.” Calvin Neufeld published a letter to the editor in response: “If the meat industry has a problem, it is

While officials have never said whether the goat operation will proceed, there is ample evidence that the goat program is still on the table,¹⁰⁷⁸ and no evidence to the contrary. Aerial views of the construction site at Joyceville Institution, taken from Google Maps in 2024, when superimposed with CSC’s engineering plan, show that everything is in place, like a perfectly fitted puzzle piece, for the future goat barn (Appendix 4: Joyceville Construction). After the 2021 pause of the goat program, ATI records show that CSC extended its planned farm implementation spending into 2025-2026.¹⁰⁷⁹ By then, it will be in the political riding of Kingston and the Islands, under MP Gerretsen’s jurisdiction, if he retains his seat in the next federal election. This is not a difficult puzzle to solve, when the goat program has never been cancelled, and cow dairy alone is not feasible “unless coupled with later revenue generation from the goats.”¹⁰⁸⁰

It is obvious that CSC and the government continue to rely on the strategy, or hope, that the public will remain distracted by the return of a herd of cows, and by the implementation of a 30-cow dairy research program whose purpose they still can not explain. During Evolve’s November 2023 tour of the Joyceville farm with MP Reid – ahead of which, ATI records reveal, CSC staff referred to Calvin Neufeld as “our unwanted guest”¹⁰⁸¹ – the question was asked what research would be conducted, and what training for prisoners will be associated with it. CSC delegates answered both questions with “We don’t know.”¹⁰⁸² When the dairy research question was submitted to CSC Media, a spokesperson replied that “CSC has two agreements. One with McGill and one with Ridgetown (University of Guelph),”¹⁰⁸³ and the nature of the research will be determined by the institutions (in other words, “we don’t know”) but “all research will be linked to animal health and wellness.”¹⁰⁸⁴

not the prison’s problem to solve” (Neufeld, C., 2024, July 10. Letter Re: Quinn’s Meats. *Frontenac News*.

<https://www.frontenacnews.ca/letters/item/17381-re-quinn-s-meats>).

¹⁰⁷⁸ In addition to the ample evidence already outlined in this report, on July 30, 2024, CSC committed a further \$281,345 for geotechnical engineering services for the farms at Joyceville Institution, which could signal a first step towards proceeding with the goat barn (CanadaBuys, 2024, July 30. *Amend 005 - CSC Farms Joyceville Geotechnical - WSP Canada Inc.* <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/contract-history/eq754-200523/001/pwl-006>).

¹⁰⁷⁹ Email from Alexandre Giguere, Senior Manager, to François Sauvé, Senior Director, Technical Services and Facilities, CSC (2021, August 25). *Subject: Joyceville Farms*. CSC A-2021-00381.

¹⁰⁸⁰ CSC (2018, May 18). *Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness: New proposal for re-opening of Correctional Service of Canada’s penitentiary farm operations*. CSC A-2019-00124 supplementary release.

¹⁰⁸¹ Email from Lyndon Kenny, Construction Liaison CORCAN, CSC (2023, November 14). *Subject: MP Visit*. CSC A-2023-00397.

¹⁰⁸² Neufeld, C. (2023, December 6). Prison Farms Fraught with Problems, Delays, Cost Overruns, and Aimlessness.

Frontenac News. <https://www.frontenacnews.ca/item/16949-prison-farms-fraught-with-problems-delays-cost-overruns-and-aimlessness>.

¹⁰⁸³ Neither research institution has responded to Evolve’s requests for details on the research partnership.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Email statement from Kevin Antonucci, Senior Communications Advisor, CSC (2024, April 9).

CONCLUSION

As much as this is a story about prisoners, animals, and the problem-ridden relaunch of Canada's prison farm program, it is also a story about political manipulation, systemic failures, and lack of journalistic integrity. What has enabled this to occur can only be described as high-level collusion of some of Canada's most powerful and influential structures, including the Correctional Service of Canada, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Canadian Dairy Commission, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, Public Safety Canada, and the Privy Council Office. This is an explosive, complicated story that should have been subjected to an exposé or a rigorous analysis by a professional journalist who is trained in the art of reporting on such matters. In the absence of this, the story had to be told by Evolve.

If the political penal drama of Canada's prison farms had a title, it could be called "A Tale of Duplicities." What has played out on the public stage has not matched the motives of the scriptwriters.

The activism that sprang up in response to the prison farm closures in 2009-2011 rallied people around three key themes: justice, local food production, and preservation of farmland. The organizers of the movement, however, were motivated primarily by their economic interests and the preservation of their access to the Joyceville Institution abattoir, which they continue to fight for today, while endorsing the Correctional Service of Canada's implementation of a prison farm plan that will commercialize prison labour, put prison-produced goods into domestic and international supply chains, and build dairy infrastructure over farmland. Meanwhile, their "non-binding advice" has contributed to cost overruns in the tens of millions, all for the sake of selling their own cows to CORCAN.

During the prison farm closures, activists carried a sign that read: "Prison farms belong to all Canadians. Stop ignoring democracy." In the prison farm restoration process, many of these same activists have been instrumental in suppressing the voices of critics, while being given the exclusive ear of the government and the media. But the duplicity does not end there, as they themselves have been used by the government to foster the desired political narrative, while the government has ushered in a prison farm program that runs counter to the fundamental values held by most of the anti-closure activists. Today, the enthusiasm over the old prison farm story has died, and a heavy silence hangs over the new one.

When Evolve Our Prison Farms emerged during the 2016 public consultation process, my co-founders and I said to each other that we just wanted to have a conversation. The question seemed obvious: if prison farms are to be restored, and if we are looking at a blank slate of possibility, what would the best model

look like? The answer seemed equally obvious: good for prisoners, good for animals, good for the environment. Anything else is not justice. That desire to have a conversation drove us down a path that has evolved into a fight for justice, and ultimately, for truth.

The truth is that prison farms do not belong to all Canadians, except to the extent that we are paying for them, and Canadians deserve accountability for how our public funds are spent, and for what purpose. That transparency and accountability have not been given. The truth is also that prison farms do not belong to one advocacy group or to another. Save Our Prison Farms should never have been made the gatekeepers of the restored prison farm program, and Evolve Our Prison Farms should never have been excluded. But neither group has a right to dictate political and correctional decision-making. Most of all, prison farms do not belong to politicians.

The decision over whether to reintroduce a prison farm program, and what shape a restored model might take, should have been under the authority of researchers and experts in corrections and in programming that is conducive to rehabilitative and employability goals. If the Correctional Service of Canada had been given autonomy in the public consultation and feasibility process, the documents strongly suggest that the outcome would have been different. It is likely that the prison farm program would not have been reintroduced at all, and it is almost certain that the Correctional Service of Canada would not have adopted a dairy and animal agriculture model, let alone for the purpose of entering into market competition.

The duplicities revealed in government documents include the impression that the Correctional Service of Canada was under that they would be overseeing the public consultations, and that a feasibility study would follow, only to find the federal government taking control and orchestrating the process. Throughout, assurances have been made that the implementation of the prison farms will adhere to all federal, provincial, and municipal policies and legislation, yet the opposite has occurred, and all agencies responsible for ensuring compliance have failed to act on the reported violations. Politicians continue to exercise control by recycling stale media lines, issuing false and misleading statements, and deflecting questions with bland assurances and non-responses. While some may regard this as business as usual for governments, the reader is encouraged to take a closer examination of this prison farm story, which reveals an exceptional level of incompetence, deception, and potential corruption, even by government standards.

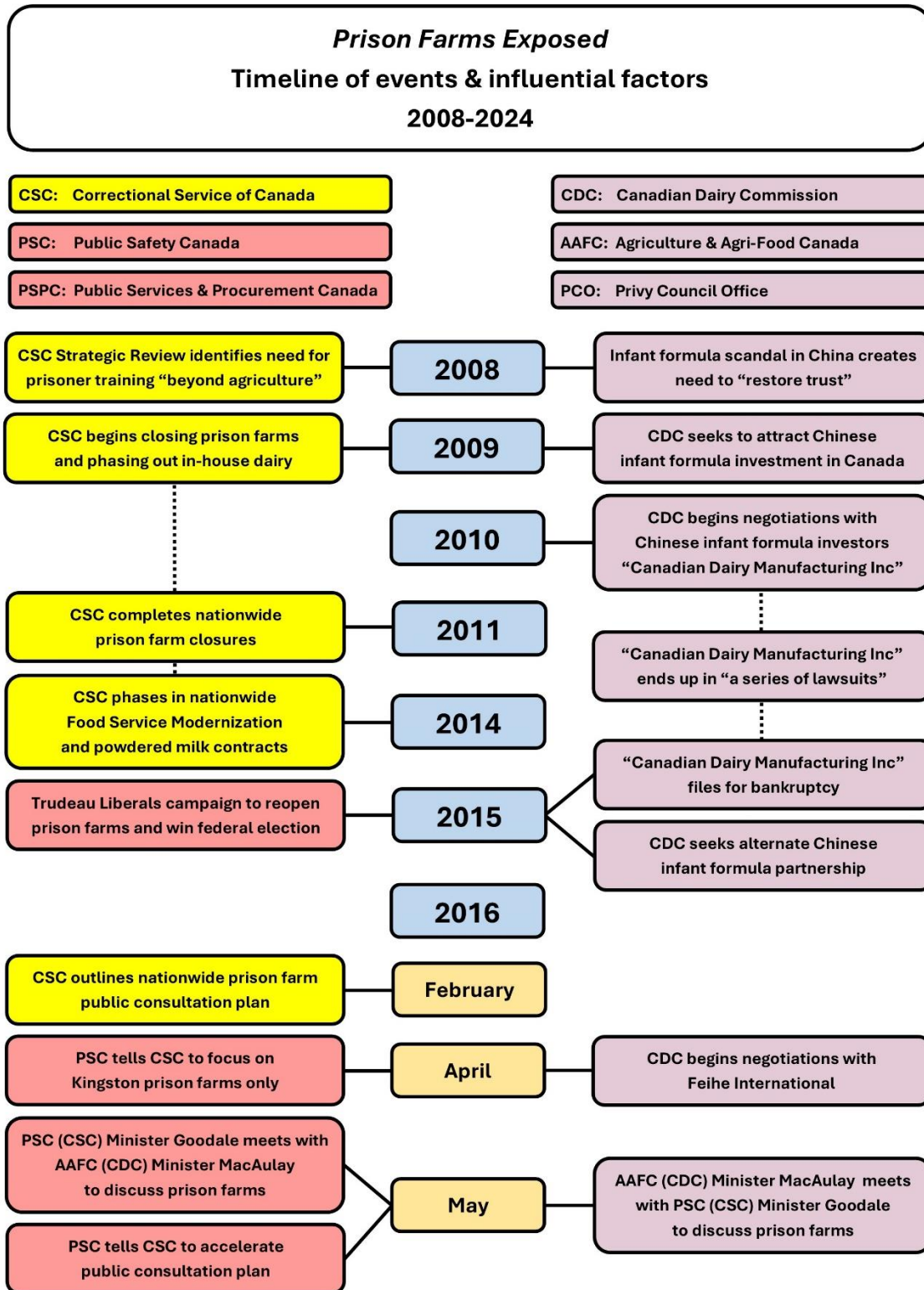
Officials touted the “return” of the prison farms as a “promise made, promise kept,” and a “hallmark” of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government, “committed to listening to Canadians and committed to making evidence-based decisions.” A more fitting slogan would be “promise made, promise betrayed,” if

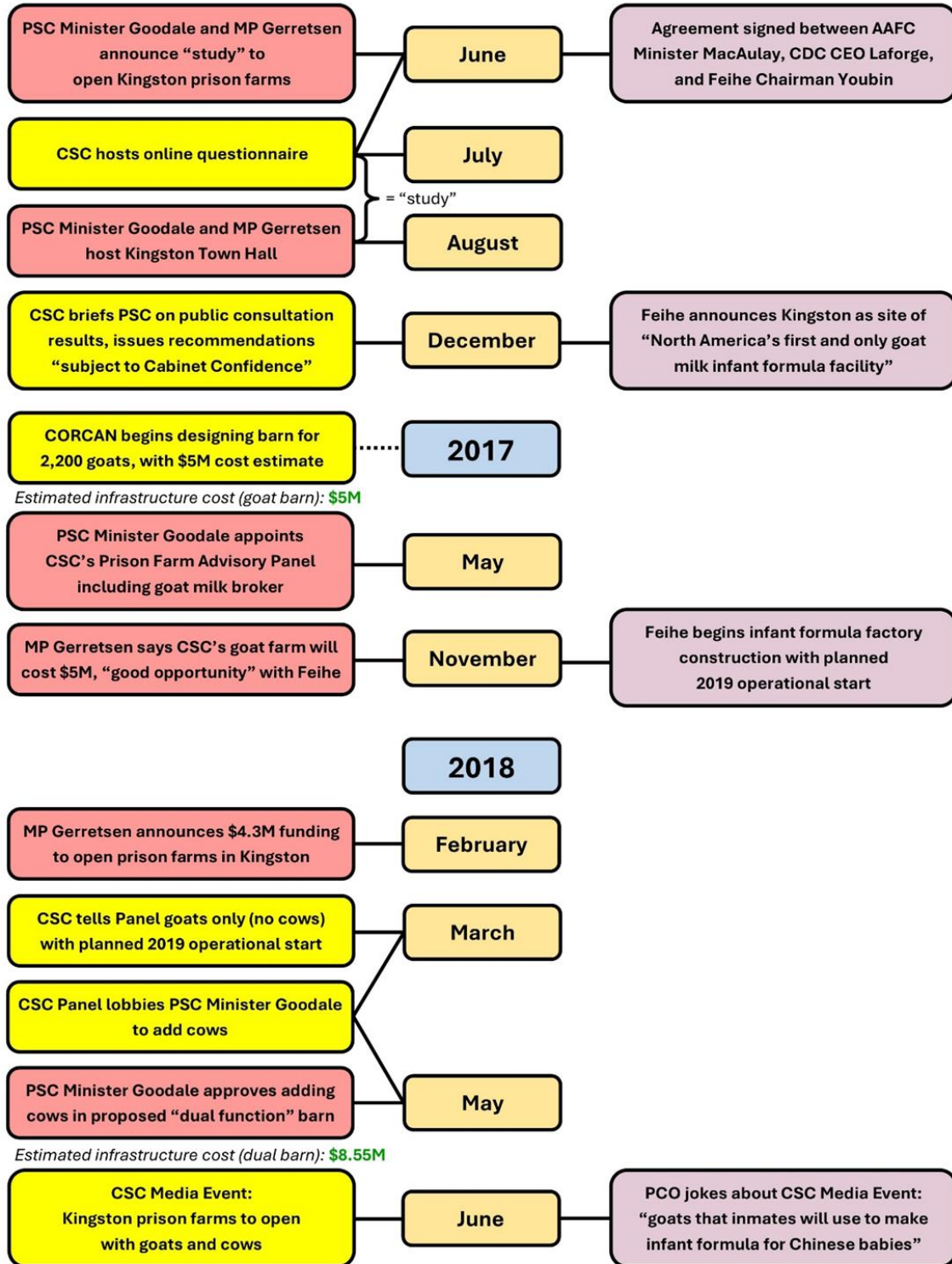
it were not for the fact that decisions should not be based on promises but on evidence, and the true betrayal in this prison farm story is not against the hopes and interests of one group or another, it is a betrayal of public trust, a betrayal of fiscal responsibility, and a betrayal of democracy worthy of a full public inquiry.

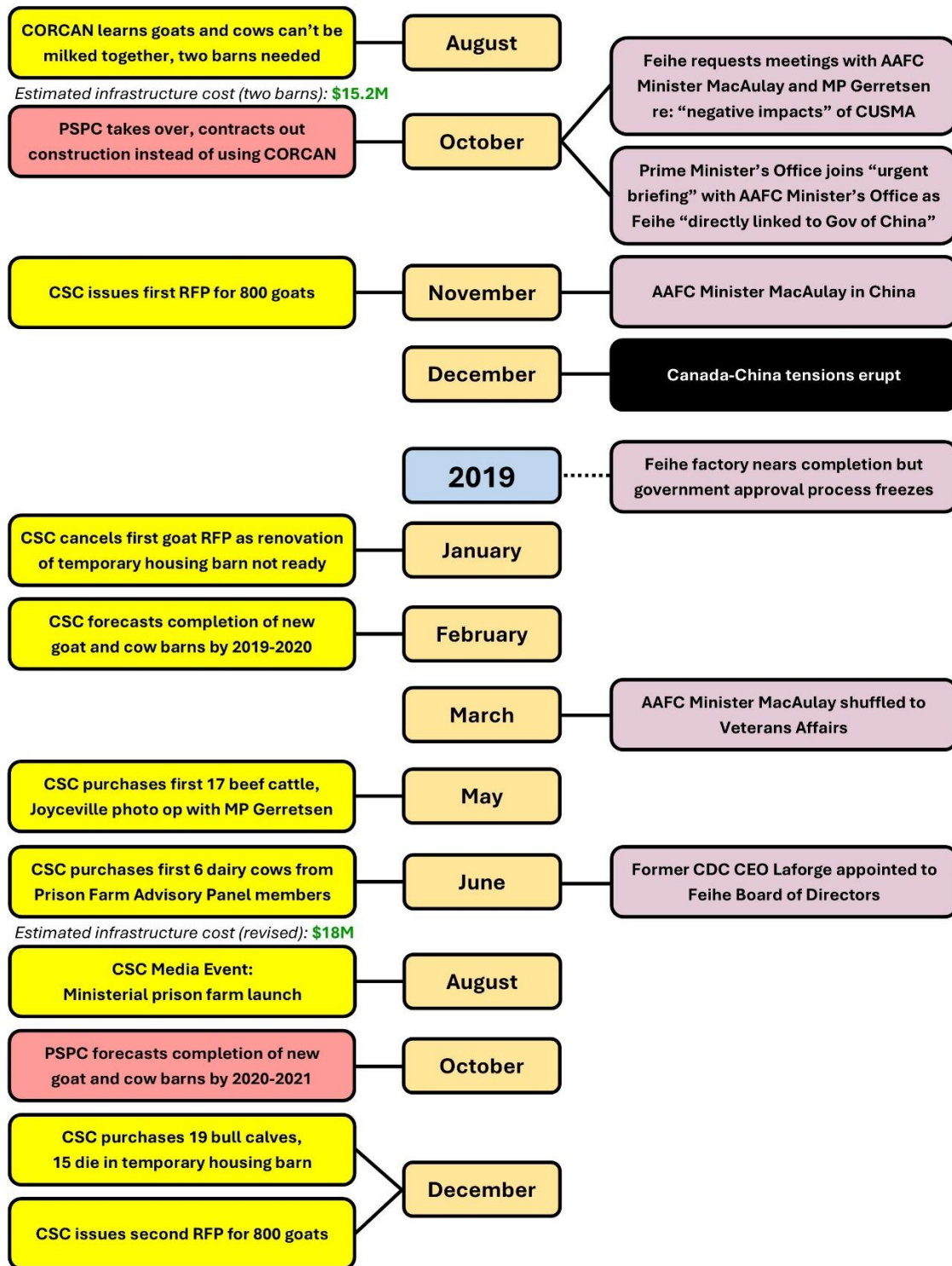
Finally, what can not be forgotten in the fog of the prison farm narrative is that the “return” of the prison farm program in Kingston, Ontario, has been a duplicitous strategy to establish a federally funded intensive livestock operation to supply large volumes of goat milk for a Chinese multinational corporation with deep ties to high-ranking Canadian government officials. The fact that the plan has failed, so far, and the cost to the public purse, as monumental as these matters are, are less scandalous than the fact that the plan was conceived in the first place, that it ran unchecked, and that it has been covered up year after year, while efforts to raise red flags have been met with opposition and suppression by the government, by the media, and by the public. Each had different motivations to preserve a “good news” prison farm story, but the result was cumulative and effective. Now, the Correctional Service of Canada finds itself with a cow dairy barn that it did not want, a “future goat barn” looming, a gutted financial situation, and a spotlight of scrutiny that would be better directed at the actors in the federal government, and on the Prison Farm Advisory Panel, who bear responsibility.

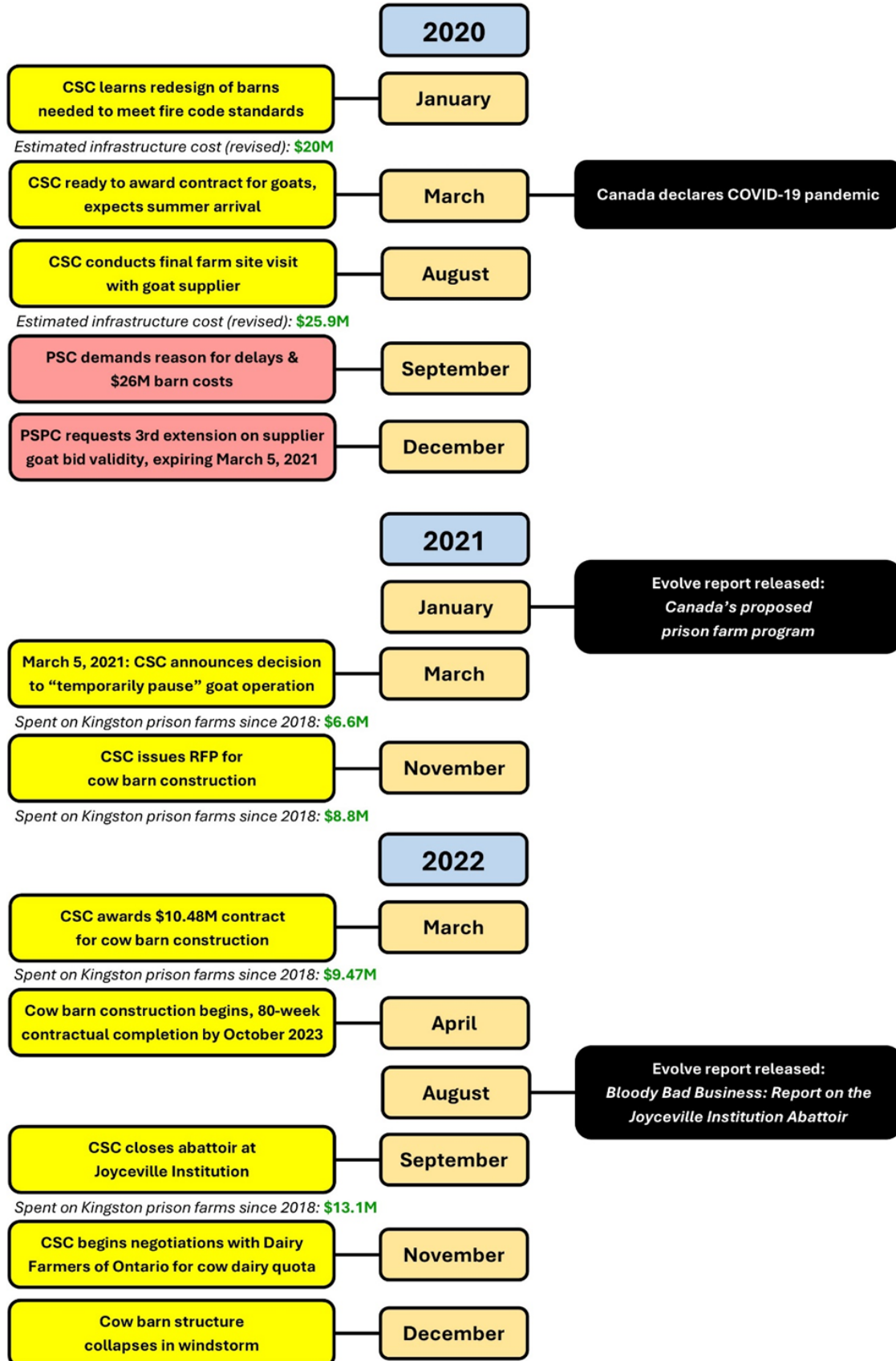
With the publication of this report, the “unpublished agenda” of the prison farms is now exposed, along with the “soap opera” that continues to play out behind a closed curtain. The problems with the prison farms now appear insoluble. The goal of this report, then, is to shatter the silence, and the illusion.

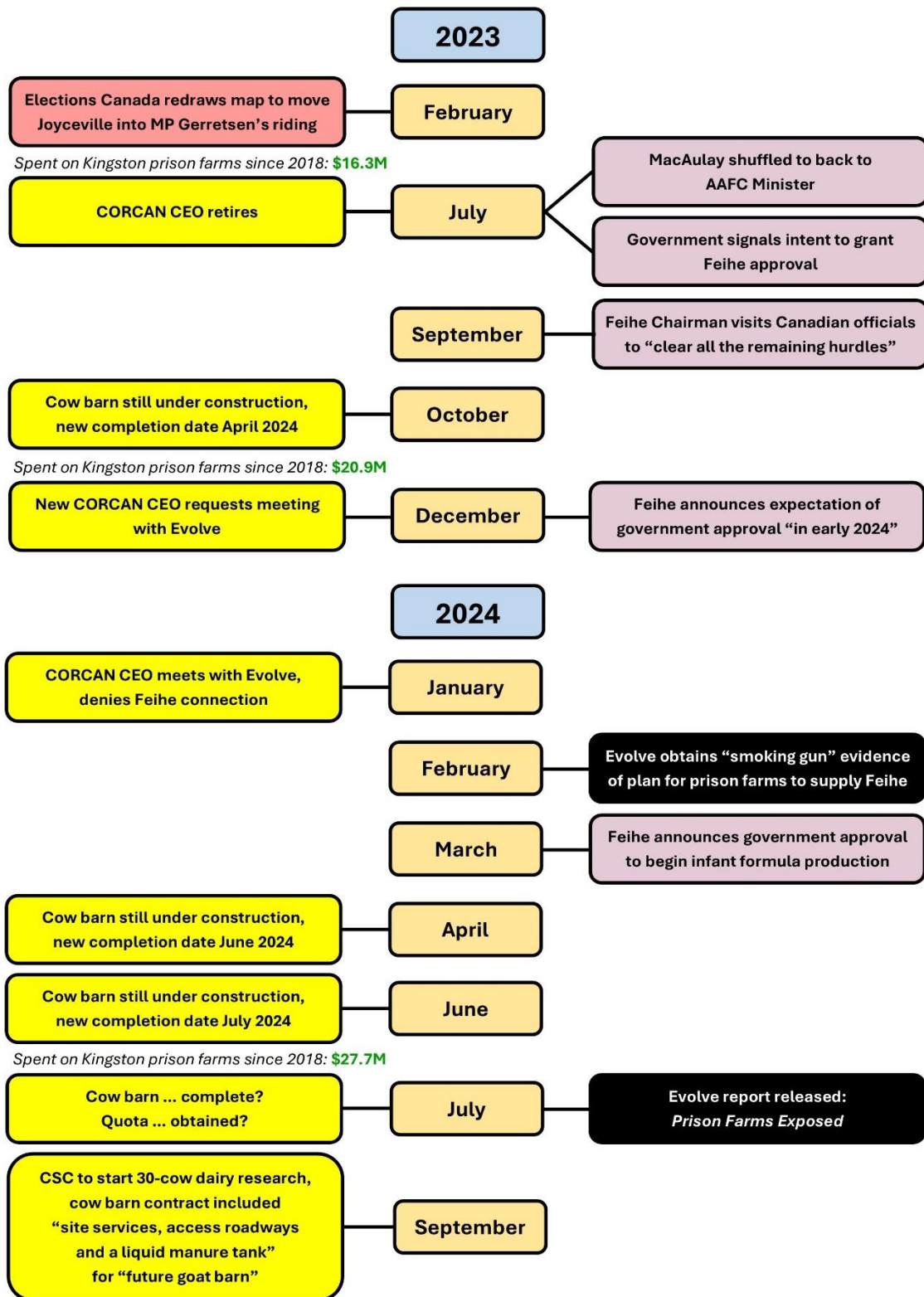
TIMELINE OF EVENTS











APPENDIX 1: "SMOKING GUN"

REVIEWED BY ATP DIVISION
Correctional Service of Canada
REVUE PAR LA DIVISION ATP
Service correctionnel du Canada

Doyle Nicole (NHQ-AC)

From: Payette, Normand (PS/SP) <normand.payette@canada.ca>
Sent: March 1, 2017 1:26 PM
To: Lavoie, Kimberly (PS/SP)
Subject: RE: Meeting with CORCAN on Prison Farms

Here you go Kimberly.

Norm

March 1st, 2017

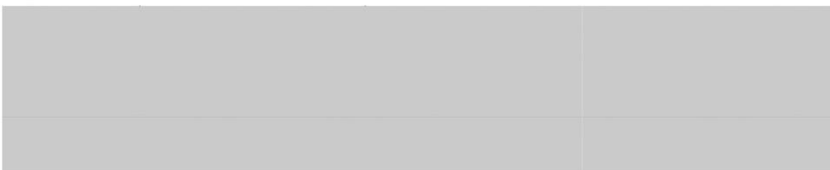
Meeting with CORCAN on Prison Farms
Christian D'Auray
Youssef Mani
Kimberly Lavoie
Normand Payette

- New BN for the Minister

- Collins Bay and Joyceville, MO wants both to be developed in the short term
- 1) Collins Bay: Option 3 is the preferred option for Collins Bay - powdered cow's milk
 - Company that converts the milk to powdered milk is in Brampton.
 - will need a quota (exemption) for cows milk
 - the facility has the capacity to accept the milk
 - transportation costs for the raw milk as part of the operations cost
- 2) Joyceville: goat milk operation; plan is to sell milk to Feihe International Inc. that will produce infant formula in Kingston

BN on Dairy Farm at Collins Bay and Goat Farm at Joyceville signed by the Commissioner on Feb 14th, 2017

Briefing Note for the Minister being drafted with suggestions of names of persons to be appointed to the Advisory panel



CORCAN will submit the BN on the advisory panel to AC today [redacted] - DC Ontario Region is also being kept in the loop.

Mandate of the Advisory Panel - Provide non binding advice relating to the opening of the CORCAN farms

2 requests for a contract are being processed:

- 1 contract for a consultant in agribusiness - what is needed to operate the productions
- 1 contract with an engineering firm to perform a review of the state of current facilities, what additional construction is required, the costs, parameters and timelines

In parallel - Advisory Panel

- consultations
- operations
- includes people who have been vocal from the beginning
- assistance with the exemption from the Dairy Farmers of Ontario
- balance vision of the community and the consultant

Have someone from PS present at panel consultations. Work in collaboration with CORCAN.

Next meeting with Corcan representatives will be held during the week of March 20th, likely Wednesday March 23.

Sent from my iPad

APPENDIX 2: “SLOW MOTION SPARRING” IN PARLIAMENT



House of Commons Debates

Prison Farms Exposed: Parliamentary Exchanges 2022-2024

MARCH 22, 2022

[\(Video & Transcript\)](#)

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a signatory to the conventions of the International Labour Organization, which prohibit international commerce in prison-made goods, unless the prisoners are paid market wages. This leaves me wondering how Corrections Canada justifies its plan to open a factory farm at Joyceville Penitentiary, where prisoners would milk 2,200 goats to produce infant formula for export to China while being paid only a fraction of the minimum wage. Doesn't this plan violate our international commitments?

Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The prison farm at Collins Bay, I know what a tremendous organization is happening there. I will check into that matter for the Honourable Member, and I will respond back to him.

APRIL 8, 2022

[\(Video & Transcript\)](#)

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Mr. Speaker, even though no contract has yet been signed to use the milk from its proposed 2,200-goat prison farm, the government continues to build dairy facilities at the Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions. Given the absence of a contract, it is strange the government continues to act and to spend as if it still plans to use prison labour to produce goat milk for export. Therefore, will the government promise to never sign any contract that involves the use of prison labour for export products?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety): Mr. Speaker, the penitentiary agricultural program helps federal inmates gain the employment skills that are required for them to find meaningful employment in the community, which enhances their integration. In fact, we know offenders who participate in these programs are three times less likely to reoffend and find themselves back in custody. That is why I am pleased to announce that the Correctional Service of Canada has indeed awarded a contract in Joyceville, and we will continue to work with my colleague and others in the chamber so that we can see this project to completion. Of course, we will make sure that this contract complies with all of Canada's international obligations.

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Mr. Speaker, for it to comply with all of our international agreements, we would have to pay prison labour market wages. We would have to ensure that the workers have all the benefits that are provided to free labour. The question that arises, now that we have learned the contract has been signed, is this: Has the government guaranteed that prisoners will be paid market wages? Alternatively, has it guaranteed that none of this will be used for export to China, as in its original plan? It must be one or the other, or else we are breaking international law.

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague that, of course, we want to treat inmates fairly and we want to compensate them fairly. That is why I am pleased to share with him, and all members, that we have awarded the contract through the Correctional Service of Canada. We are going to make sure that those inmates are getting the skills and the experience that they require to become positive, contributing members to society, and we will work with all members to make sure that this experience and the training are done in accordance with all of Canada's international obligations.

APRIL 29, 2022

[\(Video & Transcript\)](#)

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Madam Speaker, on April 8 I asked the Minister of Public Safety about proposed prison dairy farm operations at Joyceville and Collins Bay. The minister told this House that a contract had been signed. I think he was talking about a contract unrelated to the concerns I raised, but I cannot know for sure, because he neglected to provide any details about that contract. What exactly was the contract for? With whom was the contract signed? Is it related to goat milk production for export, and will the minister table the contract in the House?

Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety): Madam Speaker, as I have told the hon. member personally, while Correctional Service was considering goat milk production, it is no longer under consideration. Correctional Service Canada does not intend to do any goat milk production.

[NEXT QUESTION BY ANOTHER MP – UNRELATED]

Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety) [Speaker calls twice before she responds]: Madam Speaker, I am sorry. I was listening to a lot of noise in the background, and I will be very honest with members: I did not hear the question, so if the member would like to speak to me afterward, I would be happy to answer it, and I do apologize.

MAY 5, 2022
([Video](#) & [Transcript](#))

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Madam Speaker, this evening I am returning to a question I asked respecting the Correctional Service of Canada prison farms located at the Joyceville and Collins Bay institutions. On April 8, I asked the following question of the Minister of Public Safety:

...even though no contract has yet been signed to use the milk from its proposed 2,200-goat prison farm, the government continues to build dairy facilities at the Joyceville and Collins Bay institutions. Given the absence of a contract, it is strange the government continues to act and to spend as if it still plans to use prison labour to produce goat milk for export.

The minister responded by saying the following inter alia:

...the Correctional Service of Canada has indeed awarded a contract in Joyceville.... Of course, we will make sure that this contract complies with all of Canada's international obligations.

Now, this response surprised me, as I doubt that it is possible in practice to have an industrial farm producing an export product with prison labour that successfully conforms to the strict requirements of international law. It is certainly impossible to do so while actually producing a positive revenue stream or profit from that facility.

With these thoughts in mind, on April 29, I asked in the House to see the contract. The parliamentary secretary helpfully provided me with that contract or, more correctly, with the offer for tender for the contract earlier this week, so I thank her. It is a \$10-million contract for, according to the tender offer, “a large purpose built dairy cattle barn including office spaces, a manure holding tank, livestock holding areas, parlours, nurseries, refrigerated milk storage...to accommodate a milking herd of approximately seventy...cows.”

In her response in the House to my April 29 question, the parliamentary secretary also made the following refreshingly clear statement: “While Correctional Service was considering goat milk production, it is no longer under consideration. Correctional Service Canada does not intend to do any goat milk production.” Now, that is clear and definitive, and my human rights concerns would have been set at ease, were it not for the following fact.

Right after I was provided with that answer, one of my constituents asked Correctional Service Canada’s media relations team to confirm the answer, and on May 3, my constituent received a response that currently they don’t have any goats, that there are no plans under way and that, as previously mentioned, they will reassess the situation at a later date. Now, this is a good deal less definitive and it leaves the door open for CSC to return to a plan that it clearly does not want to abandon: to use prison labour in a commercial dairy operation.

I want to believe the parliamentary secretary, and I hope that her statement, the definitive one, will be CSC’s policy moving forward, but I think what is needed is something additional: a clear policy statement from cabinet or in the form of an order from the minister that it is impermissible for Correctional Service Canada to reassess the situation, informing the agency that it is government policy that the industrial goat operation is officially and permanently dead.

Finally, and this is the question, given the parliamentary secretary’s comment and the commitment that the goat operation is no longer under consideration, could she explain why the current construction of the cow dairy facility includes the roadway and utilities for the future goat farm that remains in the engineering plans and why the current construction includes a manure lagoon sized for 2,200 goats?

Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety): Madam Speaker, I am delighted that my hon. colleague has a new-found interest in the penitentiary agriculture program, also known as “prison farms.” It is a shame he was not as vocal on this issue when the previous Conservative government implemented mean-spirited cuts to corrections that scrapped this effective and popular initiative.

I want to thank the constituents of Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston and surrounding ridings who were so vocal in their advocacy to reopen the farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay. I am proud of our government’s decision to reinvest in correctional programming that we know leads to effective rehabilitation and a reduction in recidivism.

By investing in the penitentiary agriculture program, we are helping offenders gain and develop the appropriate skill sets to find meaningful employment. We have the statistics. Offenders who find jobs are three times less likely to return to custody for a new offence. Meaningful employment contributes to enhanced public safety through increased reintegration and the reduction of recidivism.

I had the privilege of visiting the dairy farm at Collins Bay in November. I met with the head of CORCAN, CSC employees and inmates who were participating in the dairy farm program. I have visited a number of prisons since being elected to this place. I can think of few experiences that were more meaningful than engaging with the offenders who were participating in this program. These men were naming baby calves and bottle-feeding them and were well on their way to transitioning to a life free from crime. One individual, who had a forthcoming parole hearing, had already secured employment at a farm nearby, outside of London, Ontario.

The Government of Canada will continue to support initiatives that have been proven to reduce crime and keep our communities safe.

I also wish to address the question that was raised by my colleague. I want to clarify that the Correctional Service of Canada currently does not have any goats within its program and does not have any agreements with third parties, either domestic or international, for the sale of goat milk. Simply put, there are no contracts because there are no goats.

The operations at Joyceville and Collins Bay are currently focused on the full implementation of dairy cow operations and enhancing other aspects of the program. The Correctional Service of Canada will continue to engage with community members and stakeholders, and proceed with other aspects of the program and its dairy cow operations. This includes the construction of a new barn at Joyceville Institution.

I want to assure the member opposite that all agricultural operations are being implemented in accordance with provincial and federal government legislation, and in accordance with industry standards. That includes the issue of inmate pay. As a founding and active member of the International Labour Organization, the Government of Canada takes its international obligations very seriously. We have ratified all of the ILO's fundamental standards that pertain to prison labour, and we continuously work to meet its strict conditions.

I would be delighted to return to Collins Bay with the hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston so that he can see how powerful an effective correctional program is. I can promise him that he will meet not only a herd of friendly dairy cows, but the offenders who love them.

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Madam Speaker, I may very well take the parliamentary secretary up on that very kind offer, which she has also made to me privately.

I do want to say, however, that in her response she abandoned the clarity that she showed on April 29, and moved to the fuzzy language used by the Correctional Service of Canada, which I presume wrote those remarks for her, leaving open the opportunity to move to an industrial goat operation. All of the conditional language about having no plans right now, owning no goats right now and so on is unsatisfying. What would be satisfying is a clear policy statement that we will not have any goat operation in the future.

I hope the parliamentary secretary, and perhaps future minister, will be able to say definitively that this is the case and repeat the clarity she showed on April 29.

Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety): Madam Speaker, I take pride in making sure that my remarks are my own, so I want to make sure the hon. member knows that the department did not write about my visit with the dairy cows. I will repeat that there are no goats and therefore no contracts.

I am a little confused about what the hon. member has an issue with. Is it the goats? Is it the fact that offenders are learning farming skills with dairy cows? When I visited CORCAN and spoke to the head of CORCAN, they had renovated one of the barns to accommodate cows because they were not moving forward with goats.

I am happy the hon. member is interested in corrections. I hope he is supportive of the dairy farming that is going on. I will reiterate that there are no goats and no contracts.

MAY 18, 2022
([Video](#) & [Transcript](#))

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Madam Speaker, I am returning to a question that I raised and that had an unsatisfactory answer by the Minister of Public Safety, who is responsible for Corrections Canada, relating to the prison farm proposals for Joyceville and Collins Bay.

CORCAN, Corrections Canada, has indicated an intention to establish a for-profit prison farm, with initial plans to establish a [2,200]-goat commercial operation to produce baby formula for export. The parliamentary secretary assures us that this has been taken off the table and that only cattle would be present. I am not sure she is correct about that, by the way, but the issue of it being a for-profit operation has not been dealt with by the government.

The prison farm was defended by the minister in his response to my initial question on two grounds: first, that it builds employment skills for inmates, and second, that it builds humane life skills and characteristics among inmates. Both of these are incorrect. The first of them is contradicted by CORCAN itself.

I am looking at the French version of a document in which the CEO of CORCAN was making a presentation at an international conference. It states, and this is my English translation, that they could not establish any link between offender participation in working in prison farms and obtaining employment upon release. The original in French is as follows.

[Translation] They were unable to demonstrate a direct link between offender involvement while incarcerated and obtaining employment upon release.

That is from the document put out by CORCAN.

With regard to the soft skills or human skills that, the claim is made, are developed for the prisoners, contradiction comes from prisoners themselves. Inmates believe that a clear and unambiguous not-for-profit model would make the farms a much more humane place.

I thought it might be helpful to read from a survey that was circulated to inmates in 2021 by a group called Evolve Our Prison Farms, and to read some of the responses.

Prisoners were asked, "Do you believe CORCAN's new prison farms have the best interests of inmates in mind?" Over 90% who responded said no. The second question was, "Would you like to see the prison farms (a) proceed as they are; (b) shut down; (c) transition to a not-for-profit purpose?" Eighty per cent favoured that option.

The comments are very revealing about the so-called humanity of what we see in this training and employment model. I am quoting from one of the forms. It says, "Private businesses should not benefit from inmates' labour. These kinds of things lead to the privatizing of prisons for profit. Inmates would be forced to work in unsuitable conditions instead of truly being able to get a chance to rehabilitate."

Here is a second one: "I don't believe that CORCAN Industries per se has the best interests of inmates in mind. It is nothing more than slave labour. Shutting down CORCAN will also shut down federally sponsored slavery."

Here is a third response, from a third inmate: "They presently are a slave labour force for one company or another, nothing at all to do with caring or rehabilitation."

I will stop there.

Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety): Madam Speaker, I am just going to be very blunt. I cannot believe we are back here again, talking about goats. I have repeatedly told the hon. member that there are no goats. There are no contracts.

I will reiterate that he should go and visit the dairy farm. He should actually speak to the head of CORCAN, as I have done. He should actually speak to the inmates there, as I have done. Then maybe we could have a conversation about whether this program is beneficial or not.

I would like to ask the hon. member where he was when his government mandated corrections to cut hundreds of millions of dollars under the Conservative deficit reduction action plan, DRAP. Under DRAP, the former Conservative government closed all of the prison farms, despite evidence of their value and support from the surrounding community. It got rid of fresh food and real milk, prepared on site to give inmates job skills, and implemented food service modernization, which introduced cook-chill food and powdered milk. Prisons had to get rid of the infrastructure needed to store and prepare fresh food and real milk.

Our government has reinvested in the penitentiary farm program, our prison farms for offenders at Joyceville and Collins Bay. I am proud of that, and I will take no lessons from the Conservatives about their approach to corrections.

Canadians may be wondering why our government has not reversed all of the mean-spirited cuts of the previous Conservative government, and it is because it is a lot easier to cut and slash programs than it is to build them up and invest in the infrastructure that the previous government literally removed from corrections kitchens.

Some of the other mean-spirited cuts the hon. member's government made under DRAP were a reduction in non-essential dental service, and the closure of hundreds of psychiatric hospital beds. It reduced funding for the pilot on alternate dispute resolution, reduced library services and closed the corrections addictions research centre. It imposed new food, accommodation and telephone deductions on inmates' pay. The previous government also thought it was a smart idea to eliminate incentive pay for work in prison industries, so while I welcome the member's new-found commitment to offender pay, I do wish his advocacy extended back to when he was in government.

I will never forget sitting in a committee when one of my hon. Conservative colleagues asked the correctional investigator why inmates should be paid at all. The correctional investigator looked at him and said it was so he could mail a birthday card home to his child, perhaps. We could tell by the look on his face that the Conservative member had never even considered that possibility.

What is abundantly clear is that the Conservatives' "tough on crime" cuts are vindictive and were created to further punish those already incarcerated. That does not lead to better safety; in fact, it worsens outcomes.

When it comes to cuts to corrections, the Conservatives brought in mandatory minimum sentences and increased the cost of a pardon from \$50 to over \$600. They were not protecting public safety; they were just ignoring the fact that the vast majority of those sentenced to federal prisons are released.

I will repeat my offer for the third time to the hon. member to actually visit Joyceville and Collins Bay, to meet with the offenders, to meet with the staff, to talk to CORCAN in person, to see the successful dairy farm that is operating there, and to see for himself the good work that is being done. I will say again, there are no goats; there are no contracts, and there is no goat milk being shipped to China.

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Madam Speaker, I would very much like to take up the parliamentary secretary on her kind offer. The parliamentary secretary has talked about all the cuddly activities that take place, bottle feeding, calves that have been recently birthed, and so on. That is not when I want to go. I want to go on a Thursday, when there is slaughter activity going on, and I want to make sure I can see what it is like for the inmates to be involved in that.

Will the parliamentary secretary allow me to go on a Thursday, so that I can see that activity? It should be a yes or no answer to that question. I would also like to take along, if I could, a person from Evolve Our Prison Farms to witness this as well. This is a person who has corresponded extensively with the inmates on this issue. Can I do that, yes or no?

Finally, the parliamentary secretary spoke eloquently about the importance of inmates getting adequate pay. I take it that that means she is now stating that the government supports giving inmates market pay, or is she insincere about that? Yes or no, is there full pay for inmates when they are doing market-related work?

Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is putting words in my mouth. I have been there, and to my knowledge, there is no slaughterhouse. Perhaps the hon. member should be going down there. As a member of Parliament, he knows full well that he has the ability to visit any prison in Canada any time he wants. He does not need my permission or anybody's permission to go there.

In terms of taking other people with him, I do not know about that, but as an MP, he has the ability, and has had it the whole time he has been elected, to visit. Why has he never visited there himself to see, instead of standing here time and again to ask me about corrections, when he has not cared for the whole time he has been elected?

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Madam Speaker, on a point of order, it is inappropriate for the member to impute motives. At no point did I impute motives to her. How can she assert that I do not care?

Alexandra Mendès (Assistant Deputy Speaker): There are no points of order or questions of privilege during Adjournment Proceedings.

MAY 30, 2022
([Video](#) & [Transcript](#))

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Madam Speaker, I rise to follow up on a question I raised earlier this month with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety. I asked her why she had contradicted her minister on the subject of the closure of the slaughterhouse or abattoir at the Joyceville penitentiary. She made no attempt whatsoever to actually answer this question, so here we are again this evening.

Let me explain where the contradiction lies between the responses given by the parliamentary secretary and her minister. It starts with the minister's response on April 8 to a question posed by the member for Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, who said:

...the prison farm in Joyceville, Ontario, is also the home to a provincially inspected abattoir that serves eastern Ontario farmers.... The facility operator will be retiring....

Will the Minister of Public Safety offer that licence to another operator, or will the abattoir be closed?

To which the minister responded inter alia, "my hon. colleague raises a specific issue with regard to licensing. We are engaging with him, and we will continue to do so."

By contrast, the parliamentary secretary told the House this on May 18, "I have been there", in other words, to Joyceville, "and to my knowledge, there is no slaughterhouse."

In question period on May 20, two days later, I pointed out that the parliamentary secretary's comment, "would appear to contradict the response given on April 8...by her minister, who stated that the existing slaughterhouse would remain in operation." At the least, it was a matter of dialogue.

I then asked the parliamentary secretary this question: "Has the parliamentary secretary just announced that the slaughterhouse has been shut down and will not be reopened?" After all, that is what she appears to be saying.

The parliamentary secretary responded to this by saying, first, that I have only just started asking questions on this issue recently, second, that the Harper government was mean-spirited on corrections issues and, third, that the rehabilitation of prisoners is good for the community. All of that is no doubt very important information, but none of this helps us to learn whether the slaughterhouse at Joyceville has shut down and will not be reopened, which was the question.

Therefore, I will ask it again, but this time I will use the words employed by my colleague from Leeds—Grenville back in April. Will the Minister of Public Safety offer the licence at the Joyceville penitentiary to another operator or will the abattoir be kept permanently closed?

Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to Mark Holland, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank both you and the member opposite for the opportunity to speak about this important issue. This evening, I wish to address a few points that have been made recently in the House pertaining to the penitentiary agricultural program, commonly known as the prison farms.

To start with an issue that has been brought up a number of times, I will reiterate, first, that at this time, Correctional Service Canada does not possess any goats, and there are no contracts for the sale of goat milk.

Second, after the last exchange with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, she asked for more information on the rehabilitative nature of the employment programs run by Correctional Service Canada. She was informed that research undertaken by Correctional Service Canada, dating back to at least 2014, demonstrated rehabilitative effects and positive reintegration outcomes for offenders who participated in these programs, as they were able to develop meaningful skill sets. These findings also noted that offenders who were able to find employment in the community were less likely to reoffend. The statistics are very clear. In fact, offenders who find jobs in the community are three times less likely to return to custody for a new offence.

Third, I want to address an allegation that was raised the last time the member opposite spoke during Adjournment Proceedings. The allegation made was that CORCAN is slave labour. I want to be very clear: Offender employment programs operate under the principle of free consent and do not occur under the threat of penalty. In accordance with the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, inmates receive pay for participation in correctional, education and employment programs, which contribute to their rehabilitation and reintegration into the community. An inmate's level of pay is reviewed at least once every six months, and their pay level may be adjusted based on the ability to meet the requirements of each pay level.

I wish to advise the member opposite that throughout the pandemic, Correctional Service Canada also took steps to ensure inmates had more funds on hand to keep in touch with their loved ones. This was done by temporarily waiving food, accommodation and telephone deductions.

These operations are being implemented in accordance with applicable provincial and federal government legislation and practices, and in accordance with industry standards. Canada, as a founding and active member of the International Labour Organization, also continuously works to meet its strict obligations that pertain to prison labour.

I will also address the nature of these operations. CSC continually re-evaluates its operations based on consultation with stakeholders and sustainability.

Lastly, on the issue of the abattoir, offenders who participate in the employment program through on-the-job training in any area do so voluntarily. This includes the abattoir, where inmates can choose to apply to participate in vocational training. This is not mandatory. Each time the lease is up for renewal, CSC considers the options relative to continued operation and does so regularly. It will continue to engage with appropriate community members and stakeholders.

I should remind the member that there are many farmers in his riding, in the riding of Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes and indeed in my riding who rely on this abattoir. Disrupting the operation of it will seriously impact their livelihoods.

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Madam Speaker, that is very refreshing. It is actually a substantive answer, unlike the random insults we got from the parliamentary secretary. I appreciate that. I am not sure all the information is correct, but I think the member has answered the question. It sounds like the slaughter facility will remain open. For that, I thank him.

With regard to the comments about slave labour, I have some responses made by inmates to a prisoner feedback form that was circulated. Some 56 responses were received. Inmates were asked about the for-profit model that was being considered for the prison farm. One inmate responded, "Shutting down CORCAN will also shut down federally sponsored slavery." Another one said, "They presently are slave labour for one company or another. Inmates do not want a for-profit model."

I will ask the member another question, and I appreciate the fact that he is giving me some substance here. Is it the case that a for-profit model for the prison farm is absolutely off the table?

Carol Hughes (Assistant Deputy Speaker): I would remind the member that he is not to point out that he has a survey. He lifted the survey up as he was speaking. I want to remind him that he can read from the survey, but he cannot point to the survey.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to Mark Holland, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, if the member cherry-picks his data and just goes after one survey response or another survey response, I am pretty sure he can get any answer that he wants. However, if he looks at those survey responses in their totality, he will see that, overwhelmingly, the program has demonstrated that it serves inmates well.

I would encourage him to watch the documentary, much of it filmed in his riding, called *Til the Cows Come Home*. It was made during the previous Conservative government and is about what they were doing to prison farms that many inmates relied on so heavily. In that documentary, he will also hear testimony from inmates who talk about the positive contribution the program gave to their rehabilitative process.

JUNE 9, 2022
([Video](#) & [Transcript](#))

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Madam Speaker, in defending CORCAN's plan to rebuild the dairy herd at Joyceville and Collins Bay institutions, the minister and his parliamentary secretary have made claims that are completely divorced from reality.

Let us start with the minister's claim made in April. He said, "offenders who participate in [CORCAN] programs are three times less likely to reoffend and find themselves back in custody."

This would be impressive if it were true, but what Correctional Service Canada actually says is the following: "Offenders who were employed in the community [post-release]...were almost three times less likely to be reincarcerated with a new offence than those who were not employed."

In other words, it is getting a job, not participating in a CORCAN program, that cuts the risk of reoffending. How likely is it that participating in a CORCAN program would help offenders to find a job? The answer is provided in the same Correctional Services document. It says, "Offenders employed with CORCAN were 1.09 times more likely than offenders employed in non-CORCAN institutional employment...to obtain a job in the community".

To be clear, participating in a CORCAN program decreases an inmate's chances of reoffending by only 9%. It is not by two-thirds, as the minister claims. Frankly, 9% is pretty good compared to what happens if an inmate has been in the prison farm program. In 2009, the departmental report stated that, over the previous five years, 99 of the 25,000 offenders released found work in the agricultural sector. That is less than one half of 1%. In three of those five years, only a single former offender found work in the agricultural sector in Ontario, where Collins Bay and Joyceville are located.

Let us turn now to the parliamentary secretary's idyllic description of the prison farm program at Collins Bay. She said, "I can think of few experiences that were more meaningful than engaging with the offenders who are participating in this program. These men were naming baby calves and bottle-feeding them and were well on their way to transitioning to a life free from crime."

If only this bore any resemblance whatsoever to reality. I note that the parliamentary secretary simply passed over the fact that, over a period of about a year, nearly 20 calves died in the prison farm for reasons officially characterized as "unknown causes". How these deaths affected these offenders is unclear.

Here is what is actually like to be involved in the prison farm program taking care of cattle. I am quoting from an inmate, now free to report on his experiences at a prison farm. He said:

When I had to go in a take a baby calf away from her mother...they knew what we were doing, and they were going to do whatever was possible to stop that...[and] that affected me. Of course it affected me.... They would cry, the mother and the baby would be talking to each other, and it's – oh my God. And you know that hurt, that affected me.

The Liberals assure us that all inmates who work at the prison farm are volunteers, and besides, they are paid. To be clear, they are paid a maximum of \$6.90 for a full day of work. One inmate noted that, after mandatory deductions were taken into account, it took him six months to save enough money to buy a pair of shoes.

Here is one other inmate's description of what it means to be a volunteer. He said, "I was quietly 'warned' by a...manager here at Collins Bay Medium that the warden would consider any decision to quit work...as going against my Correctional Plan.... So, essentially I have been coerced into continuing to carry out labour for CORCAN Industries."

This program is a disaster. Why do the Liberals not just admit it?

Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend opposite for his interest in corrections.

We know that the rehabilitation of those who commit crimes is important for public safety, and it is important for the offenders' well-being. That is why we reopened the prison farms. It is good for public safety, it is good for inmates and it is good for the community.

I would ask him to ask the "save our prison farms" folks what they think about prison farms in their communities. I want to assure the member opposite that private industry is not benefiting financially from the involvement of inmates in the employment programs within their operations.

All revenues generated from these operations are invested directly into the offender employment and employability program. It is important that revenues from these operations are reinvested into the offender employment program because they have been found to promote rehabilitation and reintegration while reducing recidivism.

We have seen several research documents dating back to even earlier than 2014 that have noted a connection between employment and positive reintegration results. I would like to point out that the report previously mentioned by the member opposite also acknowledged that inmates who participate in CORCAN employment programs while incarcerated were more likely to be granted parole and more likely to get jobs in the community.

This report also acknowledges that offenders who were employed in the community were almost three times less likely to be revoked with a new offence than those who were not employed. The stats have shown that these programs work to foster and promote rehabilitation among inmates, which ultimately leads to safer communities for all Canadians. As such, inmates are encouraged to join them.

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons aptly pointed out, these programs involve free consent and occur without threat of penalty. Inmates also receive payment for their participation in employment assignments, as well as other parts of their correctional plan, and their level of pay is reviewed at least once every six months and possibly adjusted based on their ability to meet the requirements of each pay level.

Employment programs are implemented in accordance with applicable provincial and federal government legislation and practices, and in accordance with industry standards. Canada is a founding and active member of the International Labour Organization, and also continuously works to meet its strict obligations that pertain to prison labour.

Lastly, I will touch on the abattoir. It is operated through a lease with a privately owned company and not by Correctional Service Canada. Each time this lease is due for renewal, CSC considers the options relative to continued operation. As it does regularly, it will continue to engage, as appropriate, with community members and stakeholders.

Our government is committed to reform in our criminal justice system to prioritize rehabilitation and reduce recidivism. This program is simply one aspect of this commitment.

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments. It was very strange hearing him reciting back to me the same statistics I had just given to him. I pointed out that they been decontextualized by the minister. He simply repeated them. He repeated the same claim about being three times less likely to offend when one has been in a CORCAN program, which is just not true. Someone is one-third as likely to reoffend if they have found employment in a CORCAN program, which makes them 9% more likely to get employment, which is to say it is a very badly managed program if that is all it can do. CORCAN has this bizarre mandate where someone is working and it is treated as a kind of training in place of training. As a result, the training is simply ineffective at its intended purpose. He should know that, and I hope that his boss gets the message.

Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice): Madam Speaker, we know that the majority of inmates will eventually be released back into the community. That is why employment programs, such as the ones operated by Correctional Service Canada, are important. They help offenders develop transferable, technical and essential skill sets to find meaningful employment. This not only helps offenders become law-abiding citizens upon release, but it also works to the benefit of Canadians, as reducing recidivism leads to safer communities. I am proud that the Government of Canada reopened the farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay institutions, and we will continue to support the CSC in its efforts to promote rehabilitation.

JUNE 10, 2022

[\(Video & Transcript\)](#)

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Mr. Speaker, in April, in response to questions regarding a possible goat farm in Joyceville, the parliamentary secretary stated: "Correctional Service Canada does not intend to do any goat milk production." In May, she told the House: "they were not moving forward with goats."

However, on June 2, CSC stated that, while it currently had no plans for dairy operations, it would "reassess at a later date."

Why will the government not just admit that it is not going to take the goat farm option off the table?

Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety): Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate that there are no goats planned for Correctional Services Canada at this time. There are no contracts for the goat farming.

I would ask the hon. member why –

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Order. The hon. parliamentary secretary has 10 seconds or so.

Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but I have been asked about this so many times that I am losing track of what I said.

Currently, Correctional Services is not planning on goat farming, but I would reiterate and ask the hon. member this: Has he actually visited the prison farms? Has he thought about the fact that when his party was in government, it closed the prison farms and removed fresh food and dairy from the prisons? Maybe we should start –

JUNE 22, 2022
([Video](#) & [Transcript](#))

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Madam Speaker, a strange sort of slow-motion sparring match has been taking place in the Commons since March 22, when I first rose to ask the Minister of Public Safety about the government's plans for a potential goat farm at Joyceville Institution. I have asked questions over and over again on a very specific matter: Will the government guarantee that it will not permit CORCAN, the profit-making prison industry arm of the Correctional Services Canada, to establish a goat farm?

Various spokesmen for the government, sometimes the minister, sometimes the parliamentary secretary and on one occasion the member for Kingston and the Islands, have answered that there is at present no goat farm and no contract to start building one. A typical response is this one from May 30: "Correctional Service Canada does not possess any goats, and there are no contracts for the sale of goat milk."

Now, I do not doubt that this is true, but what I want is something different: a commitment from the government that it will absolutely, permanently close off the option of starting a goat operation. There is a real need for a definitive policy statement.

It is abundantly clear that Correctional Service Canada remains very much committed to creating a commercial goat farm. Every time we get a definitive-sounding answer in the House of Commons, like the one I just recited, we get the opposite from correctional services. For example, two days after I was told that there are no goats and there is no contract, CSC restated to the media that while at present there are no plans for dairy goat operations, it would "reassess at a later date", which means that a goat farm employing convict labour at below-market rates appears to still be on the table.

Meanwhile, a \$10-million contract has been issued for the construction of a dairy cow barn at Joyceville, despite the fact that correctional services is legally prohibited from using this milk to feed the inmate community. It is also illegally prohibited from selling it externally because it has no dairy quota. The sole plausible purpose for this cow's milk must be the one that correctional services intended from the start: to feed the baby goats whose own mothers' milk is being sold commercially.

Of course, there is this important detail: The site plan embedded in the \$10-million contract contains something labelled "Future Goat Barn. Not in Contract", and something called "Future Septic System for Goat Barn". The part of the contract labelled "project description" could hardly be less ambiguous on this point: "It is the intent of Correctional Services Canada to construct two livestock barns, one for Cattle and one for Goats at the Joyceville Institution. The proposed Goat barn will have an approximate footprint of 6500 square meters." It is abundantly clear that this contract is simply stage one of a two-stage construction project for a commercial goat farm.

While I am confident that Corrections Canada still does not own any goats and still does not have any contract for the sale of goat milk, I ask this once again, as I did on June 10: Will the government order Correctional Services Canada to end the possibility of any future reassessment of the goat farm, and will the government stop spending millions on the infrastructure for that goat farm, the one that it claims it does not want? Specifically, will the government commit to instructing Correctional Services Canada that no second Joyceville construction contract will be issued?

Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, there is a lot to unpack there, but I will start by saying that the only reason why correctional institutions do not supply regular dairy fresh milk to inmates is because Stephen Harper's government actually completely removed that and substituted it with powdered milk several years into its mandate. That is the reason why inmates are no longer drinking fresh milk, but that is beside the point of why we are here today.

I want to take the opportunity to address some of the things that I heard today from the member, and indeed, leading into today's question and to the various different ones. I will start by reiterating that Corrections Canada does not currently possess any goats for use in a penitentiary agricultural program. It also does not have any contracts or agreements with any third parties, either domestic or international, for the sale of goat milk.

I will remind the member opposite that the operations at the Joyceville and Collins Bay institutions, at this time, are currently focused on full implementation of dairy cow operations. I am very proud to note that the construction of the dairy cattle barn at the Joyceville institution, which the member referenced, commenced in April. Once completed, the barn will facilitate Correctional Services Canada fully implementing its dairy cattle operation.

When it comes to operations and programming, Correctional Services Canada has engaged, and will continue to engage, with community members and stakeholders. I would also encourage interested parliamentarians to visit these sites, if they have not already done so, to see for themselves first-hand what correctional interventions are offered to promote rehabilitation.

On that note, I am proud to speak to the successes associated with the offender employability program, which includes the penitentiary agricultural program. Through this CORCAN program, offenders can participate in various types of interventions and services, including on-the-job vocational and essential skills training.

While this allows them to acquire skills related to a specific industry, what they learn is also transferable to a variety of types of employment. This is something that the former Conservative government completely neglected to acknowledge when it decided to close those programs.

Finding and maintaining employment in the community is key to recidivism. CSC has research documents dating back even earlier than 2014 that note a connection between employment and positive reintegration results. I will note that the reports cited by the hon. member, which have subsequently been supported in other research since that time, noted the following: that inmates who participated in CORCAN employment

programs while incarcerated were more likely to be granted parole, that they were more likely to get a job in the community, and that they were more likely to have a reduced rate of returning to prison.

These points note that the earlier release on day parole and increased likelihood to obtain employment leads to a reduction in offenders repeating and re-entering into correctional programs.

Finally, despite the claims that have been made, I would like to emphasize that when it comes to the operations of these farms, private industry does not benefit financially from the involvement of inmates. Revenues generated from these operations are reinvested directly into the offender employment and employability program.

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Madam Speaker, I have a very brief question for the parliamentary secretary. I am aware that he is not in a position to make a statement on behalf of the government, so I will simply ask him to take this back to the Minister of Public Safety.

It is the question that I ended with. Will the government commit to instructing Correctional Services Canada that no second Joyceville construction contract will be issued? If that is done and that instruction is issued, that would end the possibility of a goat farm. It would also end the possibility of any further questions from me, which must be a very welcome prospect for the hon. member.

He is my neighbour and friend. I just want to take this opportunity, as we come to the end of the Parliamentary session, to wish my hon. colleague and friend a very happy summer. It sounds like he has some very nice plans put together. He has a wonderful family to share the summer with, and I wish him the very happiest summer vacation possible.

Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to Mark Holland, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, that sentiment is reciprocated to the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston. I know that in the House it quite often seems like we are continually sparring, but the member and I just had a great opportunity to have a very civilized personal conversation prior to this debate, despite the fact that we might be at odds on this particular issue.

I obviously do not have a direct answer to the member's question, but I also do not understand how this demand is coming forward through this question and answer period. If the member wants to put forward a policy objective of the government, he should do so through a motion or various other forms where he can do that. In the meantime, I do not think that it is indicative of the government in any regard to say that it can guarantee one way or another that it will do one thing or another. If the member is interested in changing the policy of the government, there are ways to do that, but I do not believe that this back-and-forth is the proper place.

MAY 12, 2023

[\(Video & Transcript\)](#)

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Mr. Speaker, meeting notes obtained via access to information reveal that the union representing prison staff is alarmed that, at Correctional Service of Canada's existing prison farm, staff are required to work with inmates after hours in unsafe conditions. This includes being alone and unaccompanied, and being denied the personal paging devices necessary to call for immediate backup. The union's fears include the potential for assault and hostage taking.

If the government cannot provide safe working conditions at its existing, relatively small, prison farm, how will it do so at its planned vast, new goat- and cow-milking operation?

Vance Badawey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services): Mr. Speaker, it is a good opportunity to reflect on a lot of the work the minister is doing, this being part of it, in working with our partners to ensure a lot of what the member brings up is being dealt with.

MAY 29, 2023

[\(Video & Transcript\)](#)

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Madam Speaker, I am rising to follow up on a question that I raised on May 12, before the break. On a number of occasions over the course of the past year and a half, I have raised the issue of the prison farm at Joyceville. There is a proposal to expand it to allow for the development of a goat farm.

Although the government insists on denying that this is what the expansion will entail, it also insists on following through on plans to build, among other things, a goat barn and a very large septic waste facility. These would be the right size to accommodate the herd of [2,200] goats the government has been talking about having there. The purpose of the goat farm is to create infant formula, which will be exported to China under a public-private partnership in which CORCAN would be involved.

There are a number of problems with this; I raised one of them on May 12. I pointed out that there are obvious human rights issues associated with having inmates being paid substantially less than the market wage to produce and export product. This goes against our International Labour Organization obligations.

There are issues associated with the entire for-profit model of the prison system. This is not merely in conflict with the other goals that our corrections system has but is also almost a joke, and in fact is a joke, given the colossal amount of money that the for-profit operation at CORCAN manages to lose every year. The opacity of this system makes it hard to see how much money they are losing.

The claim is that the prison farm will produce jobs; in fact, the prior prison farm was producing no jobs. The argument is that people who are trained in this way will be less likely to reoffend; in fact, recidivism rates have not improved. The focus in this farm is on animal husbandry, whereas the evidence suggests that, to the extent that there is any benefit in agricultural programs, it comes from horticulture programs focusing on raising plants.

Obviously, we can see how this works. A person who is released from prison, a former inmate, can go out and start working and raising their own goods and selling them at farmers' markets. That is very different from trying to obtain the capital necessary to take care of, say, cattle or goats on a large scale.

On May 12, I raised a question. I am seeking an opportunity to get a fuller answer to the additional problem that I raised.

At that time, I said the following:

...meeting notes obtained via access to information reveal that the union representing prison staff is alarmed that, at Correctional Service of Canada's existing prison farm, staff are required to work with inmates after hours in unsafe conditions. This includes being alone and unaccompanied, and being denied the personal paging devices necessary to call for immediate backup. The union's fears include the potential for assault and hostage taking.

If the government cannot provide safe working conditions at its existing, relatively small, prison farm, how will it do so at its planned vast, new goat- and cow-milking operation?

That was my question, and I hope that I will get a more fulsome answer today than I got on May 12.

Annie Koutrakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to stand in the House today to speak about the penitentiary agricultural program with the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston.

I would like to begin my remarks today by reiterating what the Government of Canada shared with this House back in May 2022 pertaining to the operations of this program. At the time, it was noted that the Correctional Service of Canada did not possess any goats as part of its agricultural program. One year later, this remains the same. As of this debate, CSC currently has no confirmed plan to expand its current agricultural operations to include goats.

Between the Collins Bay and Joyceville institutions, the program currently includes a number of different activities. These include management of livestock, such as both dairy and beef cattle; land management; beekeeping; fence line repair; maple syrup production; forestry management; horticulture; and crop production. Current operations continue to prioritize dairy cattle operations, which will be fully implemented once the barn construction is completed at Joyceville Institution. However, as noted, plans for this barn's operations will be for dairy cattle purposes.

I would also like to address the documents from 2021 that were released through an ATIP request. We know that there are unique risks that CSC employees are exposed to as part of their employment. I would like to take this time to recognize all those who work tirelessly and dutifully, despite these risks, to keep our communities safe. That is why CSC has implemented practices and procedures that work to keep their employees safe.

As part of this, CSC management regularly meets with union members to identify concerns and take any additional actions necessary to keep its workers safe. It is worth noting that, as indicated within the same documents from 2021 and mentioned by the member opposite, the concerns were discussed with a union representative and responded to by CSC. This included actions taken to do the following: ensure that overtime scheduled in advance would involve, where necessary, staff members working together to the extent possible; clarify directions to security staff regarding routine patrols; and clarify additional ways to enhance communication among staff and provide updates as required.

In addition, it was revealed through this documentation that, whereas other areas were identified as a concern, such as access to first aid and CPR training, CSC's response proved satisfactory to concerned parties. Since the time of this documentation, from almost two years ago, I can confirm that there have been neither violent incidents nor hostage takings involving participants in the penitentiary agriculture program. However, as they have done, it is our expectation that CSC and their union partners will continue to work together to prioritize the safety of their staff.

To conclude, I would like to speak about the successes associated with the offender employment and employability program, which includes the penitentiary agricultural program. CORCAN programs provide offenders with on-the-job, vocational and essential skills training, which is transferable to a variety of different types of employment. There have been several research documents dating back almost a decade that have noted a connection between employment and positive reintegration results. To date, there have been 427 vocational certifications directly related to agriculture that have been issued to offenders, with additional certifications issued for work associated with the implementation of penitentiary agriculture operations, such as construction for required renovations.

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Madam Speaker, I would like to take a moment just to observe, seeing that the member started with the subject of the goat operation, that she has stated once again that there are presently no goats. We already knew that. There are, however, plans for the construction of a goat barn. She mentioned that the barn under construction is for cattle. That is true. The construction plans had called for the laying of foundations of both barns as part of one tender and then a second tender in which they would be completed. For its own reasons, CORCAN decided to go with the complete construction first of the cattle barn and then of the goat barn.

Will she stand here, therefore, and finally say the thing that the government members have absolutely refused to say, which is that there will not be, under any circumstances, a goat farm producing formula for export in the Canadian prison system?

Annie Koutrakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the opportunity for us to recognize the outstanding efforts performed by CSC employees on a daily basis, as well as the inherent risks performed by many correctional officers. It also permits us to recognize the meetings that occur between CSC and its union partners that prioritize the safety of staff.

CSC has implemented many policies and practices to accomplish this goal. However, as the documents acknowledge, there are very clear forums, both formal and informal, to discuss any safety concern or question that arises in any situation.

I would like to conclude by recognizing the penitentiary agriculture program. Since its reopening, the program has worked to provide transferrable employment skills to offenders, the majority of whom will one day be released back into the community.

JUNE 2, 2023

[\(Video & Transcript\)](#)

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Madam Speaker, Corrections Canada tells us that offenders who find jobs in the community are three times less likely to reoffend. This is true, but it is also irrelevant because there is zero statistical correlation between participation in CSC's job-creating programs and getting post-incarceration work. Here is why: Instead of recognized third party vocational certifications, CSC issues informal statements of achievement that have all the authority of the ribbons issued at a children's bicycle-decorating contest. Will the government fix this problem?

Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to Karina Gould, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, the opposition has a wonderful opportunity by listening to the consultations and the output that came from the consultations with the provinces and Ottawa on bail reform. We have legislation here that the Conservative Party members could support. By doing that, they will be supporting the provinces and the legislation, which would be good for all Canadians.

MARCH 18, 2024

[\(Video & Transcript\)](#)

Mark Gerretsen (MP, Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition that actually has to do with Joyceville Institution. It is not a federal prison within my riding. It is actually in the neighbouring riding of Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston. This petition is with respect to an abattoir at Joyceville Institution.

The petitioners are beef farmers and supporters of the beef farming community. They are drawing to the attention of the government that some beef farmers must wait six to nine months and, in many cases, up to a year to have their cattle processed at provincial facilities. The abattoir located at Joyceville Institution has not been utilized for a couple of years. The closure of that abattoir put even more strain on processing, negatively impacting processing wait times for beef farmers in Lanark and Frontenac counties. The closure has had negative economic impacts on neighbouring businesses and restaurants that have relied on products from the abattoir.

The petitioners are therefore calling on the Government of Canada to explore all options to ensure that the abattoir located at Joyceville Institution is reopened to address the issues noted above.

MARCH 21, 2024

[\(Video & Transcript\)](#)

Mark Gerretsen (MP, Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, in the final petition I have today, actually, the majority of signatories are from a riding to the north of mine, Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston. These are farmers, beef farmers in particular, who are concerned about the fact that the abattoir at Joyceville federal institution has been closed for almost two years now. These beef farmers have indicated that they have been waiting six to nine months and, in many cases, up to a year to have their cattle processed at provincial facilities. The abattoir located at Joyceville Institution is on Highway 15 in Ontario. As I indicated, it closed in September 2022.

The petitioners have indicated the negative impacts that the closure has had, both economically and to businesses and restaurants that rely on their products. Therefore, they are calling on the Government of Canada to explore all options to ensure that the abattoir located at Joyceville Institution is reopened to address the issues noted.

MARCH 22, 2024

[\(Video & Transcript\)](#)

Mark Gerretsen (MP, Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, for the third petition, the majority of the residents are from a riding to the north of mine, Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston. These residents are drawing attention to the fact that, at the federal Joyceville Institution, the abattoir has been closed for about two years. They indicate that beef farmers are now waiting six to nine months, and in many cases up to a year, to advance to have their cattle processed at other facilities.

The abattoir located at Joyceville Institution on Highway 15 in Ontario closed in September 2022, and the closure has put even more strain on processing abattoirs, negatively impacting the process of wait times. They also highlight the negative economic impacts as a result of this abattoir closing.

Therefore, they are calling upon the Government of Canada to explore all options to ensure the abattoir located at Joyceville Institution is reopened to address the issues noted above.

APRIL 19, 2024

[\(Video & Transcript\)](#)

Mark Gerretsen (MP, Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am presenting today is from farmers primarily from the riding to the north of mine, which is Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston. They are bringing to the attention of the government that the abattoir that was located at the Joyceville Institution was shut down a number of months ago. As a result, there are no longer options to utilize an abattoir within the local area of Kingston. As such, these farmers have to bring their cattle to abattoirs that are a much further distance away.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to explore all options to ensure that the abattoir located at the Joyceville Institution is reopened to address the issues noted above.

MAY 31, 2024

[\(Video & Transcript\)](#)

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Madam Speaker, with respect to the dairy barn at the Joyceville correctional institution that is scheduled to open in July, number one, what was the original budgeted cost? Number two, what is the actual cost? Number three, has dairy quota been made available by Dairy Farmers of Ontario? If so, what are the contract details and how much will that cost? Finally, will any of the milk that is produced be entered into the general supply for public consumption?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for his ongoing interest in corrections and in the well-being of prisoners who are incarcerated. That was a complex question. We will take note of it and make sure we get back to him with the details. It was almost in the style of an Order Paper question.

What I would say is that Corrections Canada is committed to making sure that inmates leave our correctional facilities better than they came in. We provide vocational training whenever we can and wherever we can to ensure that they truly are rehabilitated and can make contributions to society in the future.

JUNE 13, 2024

[\(Video & Transcript\)](#)

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Mr. Speaker, on May 31, I asked the following question:

...with respect to the dairy barn at the Joyceville correctional institution that is scheduled to open in July, number one, what was the original budgeted cost? Number two, what is the actual cost? Number three, has dairy quota been made available by Dairy Farmers of Ontario? If so, what are the contract details and how much will that cost? Finally, will any of the milk that is produced be entered into the general supply for public consumption?

I will give some details. When the restoration of the Joyceville prison farm program was announced in 2018, Mr. Goodale, who was then the minister in charge of corrections, stated that the authorization came with three conditions, of which the first two were, "staying within the budget of \$4.3 million over five years, [and] being implemented in a timely fashion." The first of these conditions was breached almost instantly. In May 2018, the cost was revised upwards by more than 100%, to \$9.75 million. In October 2018, this was changed to \$15.2 million, three times what it had been less than a year earlier, but that was just the beginning.

In July 2019, this estimate was again adjusted to \$18 million, and internal documents from the time contained a notation stating that this estimate required further review as each project's scope of work had yet to be confirmed. In January 2020, the estimate was again increased, this time to \$20 million, and in May 2020, it was increased to \$21.08 million. By September 2020, internal documents showed that costs would hit \$25.9 million, which, if anyone is keeping track, is five times the original estimate. Finally, in March 2021, the goat dairy that was driving many of these cost increases was put on hold, although, I will note, it was never formally cancelled, and it is still an open question, as to whether Correctional Service Canada intends to open a goat dairy as well.

Regarding the issue of dairy quota for cow's milk, I am aware that a few months ago, Correctional Service Canada said that there were only 12 dairy cows in the herd housed at Collins Bay, and at that time, CSC still did not have an agreement for the purchase of milk quota. The facility is designed to house 30 cows and, supposedly, is to be used for research quota. CSC has stated that this research would be shared between two universities and that the quota is currently being negotiated, but McGill University and the University of Guelph are unwilling to comment on this arrangement.

Therefore, can the minister confirm where the quota is coming from, how much it will cost and what it will be used for. Finally, can the minister guarantee that milk produced using inmate, labour-paid prison wages, which are far below the minimum wage, will never enter the regular milk supply stream for human consumption?

Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs): Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to stand in the House today to speak to the rehabilitative benefits provided by Correctional Service of Canada's penitentiary agricultural program.

Since it was reopened in 2018, the penitentiary agricultural program at Joyceville and Collins Bay institutions have worked to help federal inmates gain employment skills to find meaningful employment in the community upon their safe, gradual release. I recently visited the institution with the minister, as well as the member for Kingston and the Islands.

The farm operations at these two sites provide on-the-job and vocational training that is both technical, as it relates to the agricultural industry, and transferable to other industries. In addition to employability skill development, which supports offenders in their reintegration, inmates at these farms perform activities building and renovating necessary infrastructure, as well as work to repair and rebuild farmland, in addition to working in crop production. These activities mirror the work that take place on agricultural lands all across the country, which employ tens of thousands of people at any given time. In addition, the Collins Bay and Joyceville farms work to enhance a safe reintegration of offenders in our community, when it is safe to do so, while also working to reduce recidivism.

I am proud to note that, through the programming provided at these farms and delivered through CORCAN more generally, Correctional Service Canada is recognized as an international leader in the development and delivery of correctional interventions. We know that inmates who participate in CORCAN employment programs while incarcerated, including at the farms, are more likely to obtain employment in the community, and offenders who find jobs in the community are three times less likely to return to custody for a new offence.

Considering the successes associated with the penitentiary agricultural program at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions, I am pleased to note that the implementation of the dairy barn is expected to be completed in July 2024, with dairy operations to begin in September 2024.

In response to the question from the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, I can confirm that products generated through the agricultural program, including milk, produce, crops and other potential byproducts of these operations, will be determined by internal use requirements prior to looking at external markets. This includes agreements and contracts signed as implementation occurs and products become available.

The Correctional Service of Canada continually re-evaluates its operations and takes into account elements such as sustainability and market availability, as dairy cow milk will be managed in accordance with Canada's system of supply management. With regard to the quota, CSC continues to negotiate an agreement with its partners. All revenues generated will be reinvested into the offender employment and employability program. To date, CSC has invested approximately \$20 million for facilities and incurred \$6 million in expenditures for the implementation and operations, which include the penitentiary agricultural program, and this is in addition to the \$1.7 million invested in capital equipment.

Scott Reid (MP, Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston): Madam Speaker, one of the questions I asked was whether the minister can confirm where the quota is coming from, how much it will cost and what it will be used for. I would like an answer to that question.

Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs): Madam Speaker, as I pointed out, this program is important for inmates in the employability program. It is to ensure that we reduce recidivism. The member opposite seems to have a real problem with CSC's work to help promote employability among the inmate population. We know that inmates who are able to find meaningful employment in their communities after they serve their sentence are three times less likely to commit another offence.

While we invest in programs to help create safer communities, the member opposite stands from a place of privilege and does not want to help support reducing recidivism.

APPENDIX 3: ATI REQUESTS & ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS

Prison Farms Exposed: Access to Information Requests 2018-2024

✓ = Listed in the Government of Canada's database of Completed Access to Information Requests*

X = Not listed in the Government of Canada's database of Completed Access to Information Requests

NYR = Not yet released

*The database previously contained older requests but as of March 2023 it was reduced to requests released since January 2020 only.

Many requests released to Evolve since 2020 remain unlisted in the government's database: <https://open.Canadfa.ca/en/search/ati>.

Government Agency	ATI requests filed by Evolve	Complaints filed with the Office of the Information Commissioner	Average days to complete release of records*
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)	3	1	413
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)	2	4	107
Canadian Dairy Commission (CDC)	1	1	1635
Correctional Service of Canada (CSC)	65	59	392
Privy Council Office (PCO)	5	1	104
Public Safety Canada (PSC)	33	16	178
Public Services & Procurement Canada (PSPC)	8	5	680

*Government institutions must release records within 30 calendar days. For large volumes of records, or when consultations are required, a time extension may be issued. On average, Evolve waited over a year for each ATI request with CSC and AAFC, nearly two years with PSPC, and more than four years with CDC. The large number of requests and complaints with CSC are reflective of the institution's resistance to releasing records in a timely and complete manner. Obtaining the information in this report took over six years, over 130 ATI requests, 86 complaints (delay, incomplete search, improper redactions), and four legal orders from the Information Commissioner who ruled that CSC and PSPC had refused access. None of the information in this report was easily obtained.

Federal Access to Information requests filed by Evolve							
	Institution	Number	Request	Requested	Received	# Days	# Pages
1	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)	A-2019-00055 ✓	All documents relating to Feihe / Canada Royal Milk infant formula factory in Kingston. Emails, contracts or agreements, briefing materials, reports, meeting minutes, grants, market analysis, media inquiries, and communications with Canadian Dairy Commission (CDC), Kingston Economic Development Corporation (KEDCO), City of Kingston, Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC), Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO), National Farmers Union (NFU), Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), CORCAN, Public Safety Canada, Prime Minister's Office. Date Range: 2014 - September 2019.	2019-09-17	2022-10-17	1126 days	902 pages
2	AAFC	A-2023-00098 ✓	For 2023, please release all emails, letters, meeting agendas and minutes, memos and briefing notes, pertaining to Feihe / Canada Royal Milk infant formula.	2024-01-08	2024-04-12	95 days	21 pages
3	AAFC	A-2023-00128 ✓	Records obtained through Access to Information include emails between Jane Taylor, Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Affairs Branch, AAFC, and other AAFC staff such as Steven Jurgutis, and CSC. Emails dated May 16, 2016, subject "Request from AAFC re farm closures," state "please find attached the two recent Briefing Notes on this (from November 2015)." The attachments are labelled "BN to Min Consultations on Future Use of Farm Land..." and "BN to the Minister - Opportunities for a New CORCAN Agri..." Please release briefing notes and communications between AAFC and CSC regarding prison / penitentiary farms, agribusiness, dairy, goat milk, and/or Feihe / Canada Royal Milk / infant formula. Date Range: 2015-2016.	2024-02-22	2024-03-11	18 days	6 pages
4	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)	A-2020-00113 X	All records relating to the CBC's coverage of the prison farms at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution. Emails, minutes, briefing notes, memos, media lines, reports, pitches, contracts, and any records that mention cows, goats, or Feihe (infant formula) in relation to the prison farms. Date Range: January 2015 - January 2021.	2021-01-14	2021-04-28	104 days	113 pages
5	CBC	A-2020-00114 X	Please release records showing how much money CBC invested into the "Prison Farm" documentary which was scheduled to air on CBC's POV in June 2020. Include communications between CBC, the filmmaker, and CSC, and records related to financing, planning, editing, production, and reasons for delay of release.	2021-01-13	2021-05-03	110 days	200 pages
6	Canadian Dairy Commission (CDC)	A2-2019-00001 X	All documents relating to Feihe / Canada Royal Milk infant formula factory in Kingston. [Types of records...] Date Range: 2014 - September 2019.	2019-09-17	Not yet fully released 1st interim release 2022-11-14 7th release 2024-03-09	1635 days as of latest interim release	3808 pages

7	Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)	A-2022-00155 ✓	A government briefing note states "In 2013, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and [China's] General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine for the recognition of a valid export certificate that would be used for export of Canadian-made infant formula to China. The negotiation of this MOU had been initiated by the CFIA following the launch of the project by Canadian Dairy Manufacturing Inc." Please release a copy of this MOU.	2022-12-13	2023-01-17: "Not able to release the records to you as they must be excluded in their entirety"	-	0 pages
8	Correctional Service of Canada (CSC)	A-2018-00440 ✓	All information related to the reinstatement of prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution. Types of records: email, lettermail, blackberry & cell phone, fax, telephone, briefing notes, handwritten notes, memos, reports, agendas, minutes, business plans including drafts, studies, media advisories, media inquiries & responses, fact sheets, budgets, public consultations, consultations with other federal institutions, market research, legal opinions, contracts, tenders, bids, purchase orders, CVs, human resource plans, security clearances, leases, environmental assessments. Date Range: 2015 - March 2019.	Submitted 2018-11-16 CSC claimed it was never received Resubmitted 2019-03-19	2020-05-05 CSC released unrelated previously released requests New request A-2019-00124 submitted 2019-07-03	536 days	361 pages
9	CSC	A-2018-00323 X	Business plans for prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution in Kingston.	2018-11-16	2019-06-28	224 days	64 pages
10	CSC	A-2018-00441 ✓	All information relating to the Prison Farm Advisory Panel appointed in May 2017. Records relating to the selection and appointment of Panel members Dianne Dowling, Bridget Doherty, Catherine Latimer, Jeff Peters, Alec Ross, Tony Straathof, Bruce (& Sharon) Vandenberg; records relating to process & criteria for the identification and selection of members, terms & conditions of appointment; correspondence between Panel members & CORCAN/CSC; agendas, minutes of meetings, teleconference, audio recordings, handwritten notes, backgrounders, fact sheets, notices, media advisories, media inquiries, consultations, recommendations, reports, briefing materials; records relating to the conflict of interest complaint by Evolve Our Prison Farms to Mario Dion July 27 2018 & related investigation; records relating to cows owned by Panel members (and/or Save Our Prison Farms and/or Pen Herd Co-Op) and purchases and/or plans to purchase cows for the prison farms. Date Range: 2015 - March 2019.	Submitted 2018-11-19 CSC claimed it was never received Resubmitted 2019-03-19	2020-05-05	533 days	421 pages
11	CSC	A-2018-00328 X	All records containing any mention of Feihe or Canada Royal Milk in relation to prison farm plans. [Types of records...] Date Range: 2015 - December 2018.	Submitted 2018-11-20 CSC claimed it was never received Resubmitted 2019-04-04	2019-04-26	157 days	13 pages
12	CSC	A-2018-00332 X	All information relating to Evolve Our Prison Farms including petitions, protests, meetings and meeting requests, letters, emails, phone calls, media inquiries, and records relating to the Joyceville media event June 21, 2018. Date Range: January 2017 - December 2018.	2018-11-21	2019-06-04	195 days	166 pages
13	CSC	A-2018-00333 ✓	Information related to the Joyceville Institution abattoir. Briefing notes to/from Commissioners and Wardens. Contracts. Financial statements. Records of animals processed. Staff records. Accident & injury reports. Date Range: 1995 - December 2018.	2018-11-22	2021-02-12	813 days	944 pages
14	CSC	A-2019-00030 ✓	All records containing any mention of Feihe / Canada Royal Milk and/or infant formula in relation to prison farms. Date Range: 2015 - March 2019.	2019-04-04	2020-03-03	334 days	130 pages
15	CSC	A-2019-00075 X	Information relating to the procurement of beef cattle introduced to the Joyceville prison farm in May 2019.	2019-06-03	2019-08-16	74 days	139 pages
16	CSC	A-2019-00085 X	All information relating to the procurement of dairy cows for Kingston's prison farms. Emails, contracts and agreements, purchasing records, backgrounders and briefing notes, reports, meeting minutes, and any other related documentation, including any mention of "Pen Herd" or "Save Our Prison Farms."	2019-06-12	2019-12-04	175 days	40 pages
17	CSC	A-2019-00107 ✓	All information regarding farm instructors and industry experts hired for the prison farm program at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution, including names, applications, evaluations, contracts, job descriptions.	2019-06-13	2020-06-30	383 days	1891 pages
18	CSC	A-2019-00112 ✓	All CORCAN programs at all federal correctional institutions including information regarding goods produced and sold, revenue, community & industry partnerships involved,	2019-06-20	2020-01-22	216 days	23 pages

			number of prisoners employed and incentive pay associated with each program.				
19	CSC	A-2019-00124 X	All information related to the reinstatement of prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution. [Types of records...] Date Range: 2015 - March 2019.	2019-07-03 Resubmitted version of A-2018-00440	2021-08-03	762 days	622 pages
20	CSC	A-2019-00125 X	All information relating to the Prison Farm Advisory Panel. [Types of records...] Date Range: January 2019 - June 2019.	2019-07-03	2019-11-25	145 days	10 pages
21	CSC	A-2019-00126 X	All information relating to Evolve Our Prison Farms. [Types of records...] Date Range: January 2019 - June 2019.	2019-07-03	2019-08-06	34 days	143 pages
22	CSC	A-2019-00127 X	All records containing any mention of Feihe / Canada Royal Milk / infant formula in relation to prison farms. Date Range: January 2019 - June 2019.	2019-07-03	2021-03-30	636 days	43 pages
23	CSC	A-2019-00128 X	Information related to Joyceville Institution abattoir. Financial statements. Records of animals processed. Staff records (CSC employees, prisoners, citizens) including salaries and prisoner pay. Contracts. Accident/injury reports. Briefing notes to/from CSC Commissioner and/or Wardens. Documents relating to Wallace Beef, Walt Freeman Mink Farm, tanners, farmers, companies served by or connected to abattoir operations. Date Range: January 2019 - June 2019.	2019-07-03	2019-12-06	156 days	68 pages
24	CSC	A-2019-00129 X	Business plans for prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution. Drafts, proposals, contracts, letters of intent, numbers and types of animals, farmland use, records relating to purchase of animals (beef cattle, dairy cows, dairy goats), infrastructure requirements, suppliers, clients, staffing (including CSC staff, supervisors, prisoners, civilian and/or contract employees), market analysis, sales strategies, funding requirements, financial projections, expenditures. Date Range: January 2019 - June 2019.	2019-07-03	2019-10-25 No records response	-	0 pages
25	CSC	A-2019-00145 X	Records of risk assessments and/or psychological assessments of prisoners before and after working in the Joyceville Institution abattoir. Date Range: 2000 - 2009.	2019-07-10	2019-10-04 "Withheld in its entirety"	-	0 pages
26	CSC	A-2019-00146 ✓	All records relating to research, correspondence, negotiations and/or contracts with goat and/or cow dairy brokers. Include any records (reports, emails, letters, minutes, briefing notes, contracts) that mention goat milk, cow milk, dairy, infant formula, Feihe, Canada Royal Milk, Zhiwen Yang, Mariposa Dairy, Bruce Vandenberg, Gay Lea, Ontario Goat, OMAFRA, Phillip Wilman, Carey Bidtnes. Date Range: 2016 - 2019.	2019-07-10	2020-12-14	523 days	308 pages
27	CSC	A-2019-00317 X	All information related to the reinstatement of prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution. [Types of records...] Date Range: July 2019 - January 2020.	2020-01-13	2022-06-30	899 days	2448 pages
28	CSC	A-2019-00318 ✓	All information related to the Prison Farm Advisory Panel and/or Save Our Prison Farms and/or Pen Farm Herd Co-Op. Date Range: July 2019 - January 2020.	2020-01-13	2020-05-06	114 days	198 pages
29	CSC	A-2019-00319 ✓	All information related to Evolve Our Prison Farms. Date Range: July 2019 - January 2020.	2020-01-13	2020-05-19	127 days	198 pages
30	CSC	A-2019-00320 ✓	All records containing any mention of Feihe / Canada Royal Milk / infant formula in relation to prison farms at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution. [Types of records...] Date Range: July 2019 - January 2020.	2020-01-13	2020-06-01	140 days	132 pages
31	CSC	A-2019-00324 ✓	Business plans (or statement of requirement or other termed documentation) for prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution. Date Range: July 2019 - January 2020. NOTE: Please do not limit the search to this date range. Earlier requests for "business plans" did not return any relevant records. A broader search with broader terminology would be appreciated.	2020-01-13	2021-07-14	548 days	219 pages
32	CSC	A-2019-00321 ✓	Information related to Joyceville Institution abattoir. [Types of records...] Date Range: July 2019 - January 2020.	2020-01-13	2020-05-28	136 days	72 pages
33	CSC	A-2019-00325 ✓	All information relating to animals for the prison farms at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution. Procurement, purchase, sale of cattle, cows, goats, bees. Information on dairy equipment and barn infrastructure. Information relating to animal care, supervision, deaths, circumstances of death, and what was done with carcasses. Date Range: July 2019 - January 2020.	2020-01-13	2021-12-08	695 days	402 pages

34	CSC	A-2019-00322 X	All information regarding staff hired or appointed to work on the prison farms at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution. Date Range: July 2019 – January 2020.	2020-01-13	2020-03-23	70 days	1 page
35	CSC	A-2019-00323 ✓	All records relating to correspondence, negotiations, contracts between CSC/CORCAN and goat and/or cow dairy brokers. Date Range: July 2019 – January 2020.	2020-01-13	2020-04-30	108 days	312 pages
36	CSC	A-2020-00055 X	On June 15 and June 18 2020, I emailed CSC's media department inquiring about information I received from within CSC that goats would soon be arriving at Collins Bay Institution. For the period June 15 2020 - July 2 2020, please release all records relating to my inquiry (including emails between CSC's media department and the institutions, and communications between wardens, assistant/deputy wardens, prison farm staff, CORCAN staff), and any other mention of "goats" or "Calvin Neufeld" or "Evolve Our Prison Farms" within CSC communications over this time period.	2020-07-02	2020-08-18	47 days	67 pages
37	CSC	A-2020-00131 ✓	Records relating directly or indirectly to the procurement of goats for the prison farms at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution. Emails, bids, contracts, reports, briefing notes, media inquiries, and any mention in CSC communications of goats, Feihe, infant formula (or baby formula), China, Canada Royal Milk, or Skotidakis. Date Range: January 2020 - August 2020.	2020-09-06	2023-08-02 OIC Legal Order to Release	1060 days	1463 pages
38	CSC	A-2020-00132 ✓	All records relating to the planned goat milking facility to be constructed at Joyceville Institution. In June 2020, CSC indicated that "the detailed plans and specifications for the goat facility are being prepared by the architect and engineering firms. Following completion of these technical requirements, and their approval by CSC, the request for proposals would then be posted on BuyandSell.gc.ca." Please release all records relating to plans for this facility including emails, briefing notes, business plans, statements of requirement, bids, contracts with architect and engineering firms, site plans, blueprints, building permits, financials, meeting minutes, environmental assessments, nutrient management plans and records indicating how manure will be managed.	2020-09-06	2023-10-20	1139 days	2481 pages
39	CSC	A-2020-00154 ✓	In December 2019, CSC acquired 19 bull calves for the prison farm program in Kingston. As of August 2020, there were only 5 calves remaining. CSC confirmed that 14 calves died over a number of months. No cause of death was provided and CSC stated that "there will be no ongoing investigation." Please release all records relating to the procurement, management, and deaths of these animals, including emails, veterinarian visits, medications, staff reports, health and safety, carcass removal and disposal, rendering collection service, media inquiries, and any records explaining how these animals were managed by CSC, how they died, how CSC investigated the deaths (if at all), and whether any measures were introduced to prevent reoccurrence.	2020-09-22	2023-01-19 CSC filed Notice of Application to Decline to Act 2020-11-02 (withdrawn 2020-11-04)	849 days	103 pages
40	CSC	A-2020-00155 ✓	In 2018, CSC hired consultants to conduct Environmental Effects Evaluation and Species at Risk assessments in relation to prison farms in Kingston. These reports identified documents required from CSC. I am requesting the following records: Nutrient Management Strategy and Nutrient Management Plan; Cropping Program; Five (5) year field application of Agricultural Source Materials (manure/compost); Environmental Farm Plan and workbooks to submit to the Eastern Ontario coordinator of the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association.	2020-09-22	2020-12-29	98 days	271 pages
41	CSC	A-2020-00156 ✓	Please release a list of staff employed full time and part time for the prison farm programs at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution. This should include CSC/CORCAN staff, farm instructors, beekeeping instructors, and consultants. Where possible, please provide salaries, contracts, and job descriptions. Date Range: July 2019 - September 2020.	2020-09-23	2021-08-25 CSC filed Notice of Application to Decline to Act 2020-11-02 (withdrawn 2020-11-04)	336 days	1 page
42	CSC	A-2020-00157 ✓	All records relating to activities of the Prison Farm Advisory Panel (meeting minutes, email correspondence, contracts, invoices); all records that mention Evolve Our Prison Farms; all briefing notes relating to the prison farms; any communications between CSC/CORCAN and Public Safety regarding the prison farms. Date Range: January 2020 - September 2020.	2020-09-24	2022-02-07 CSC filed Notice of Application to Decline to Act 2020-11-02 (withdrawn 2020-11-04)	501 days	5 pages

43	CSC	A-2020-00253 ✓	All records mentioning Ian Cumming's Ontario Farmer article "Former dairy farmer watches the government at work from his cell" (published October 13 2020). Date Range: July 2020 - November 2020.	2020-11-19	2021-01-26	68 days	8 pages
44	CSC	A-2020-00323 ✓	I would like to receive the following information on the reinstatement of prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution: procurement, sales and invoices for dairy cows, beef cattle, goats; all records related to the care of animals including protocols, housing, feeding, grooming, insemination, calving, disbudding, milking. Date Range: January 2020 - December 2020.	2021-01-06	2023-01-11	765 days	285 pages
45	CSC	Confidential	Prisoner transfer records.	2021-01-19	2021-10-04	258 days	154 pages
46	CSC	A-2020-00407 ✓	Records relating to the prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution. Veterinary records and invoices, and all emails to/from the following individuals that mention prison farms, goats, kids, cows, beef, cattle, livestock, calves, milk, quota, OMAFRA, Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO), Feihe, or infant formula: CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle, Managers Chris Staley, Chris Stein, and Craig Chinnery, Farm Instructors, Beekeeping Instructors, Filmmaker Tess Girard, Communications Advisors Veronique Vallee, Marie-Pier Lécuyer, Isabelle Robitaille and Justine Lewis, Commissioner Anne Kelly. Date Range: January 2020 - December 2020.	2021-01-26	2023-05-23	847 days	937 pages
47	CSC	A-2020-00408 X	On December 10, 2020, media access was removed from Calvin Neufeld/Evolve Our Prison Farms by Marie-Pier Lécuyer. I would like to receive all emails that illustrate how and why this decision was made.	2021-01-26	2021-02-22	27 days	4 pages
48	CSC	A-2021-00213 ✓	All information related to the prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution. Emails, briefing notes, meeting minutes, media inquiries and media monitoring summaries, and all records relating to the decision (March 5, 2021) to temporarily pause the goat plan. Please also include records that relate to ongoing prison farm activities, procurement or sale of equipment and animals, calving, milking, beekeeping, and the April 2021 accident involving a tractor falling on a farm instructor. Date Range: January 2021 - July 2021.	2021-08-02	2023-05-23	659 days	878 pages
49	CSC	A-2021-00214 X	All emails and other records related to CSC's communications with the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) for notices posted in relation to the construction of facilities for the prison farms in Kingston: Notice of Determination (https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/138394); Joyceville Institution Cattle and Goat Barn Construction (https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/80844)' Public Notice - Notice of Intent (https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/135851).	2021-08-02	Never released	-	-
50	CSC	A-2021-00215 X	On May 14 2021, I emailed Dawne.Flaborea@CSC-SCC.GC.CA and GEN-NHQ-ENV@CSC-scc.gc.ca with questions about the IAAC notice for CSC's Cattle and Goat Barn. Please release all CSC and IAAC email exchanges resulting from my inquiries into mitigation measures, IAAC postings, and public comment solicitation. Date Range: May 2021 - July 2021.	2021-08-02	2023-03-31	606 days	96 pages
51	CSC	A-2021-00216 ✓	All records (emails, briefing notes, memos, media summaries, media inquiries) regarding the farming accident involving an instructor that occurred in April 2021. Date Range: April 1 - July 31, 2021.	2021-08-02	2023-02-14	561 days	9 pages
52	CSC	A-2021-00381 ✓	All information related to the prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution. Emails, briefing notes, meeting minutes, media inquiries and media monitoring summaries, and all correspondence and documentation related to the Tender Notice for Construction of Dairy Facility and Cattle Barn at Joyceville Institution posted in November 2021. Date Range: August 2021 - December 2021.	2021-12-27	2023-03-03 OIC Legal Order to Release	431 days	1351 pages
53	CSC	A-2021-00382 ✓	All information related to the Joyceville Institution abattoir and Wallace Beef. Emails, reports, briefing notes, meeting minutes, media inquiries, contracts, inspections, financial information, and records related to the report submitted to CSC in August 2021 (Bloody Bad Business: Report on the Joyceville Institution Abattoir). Date Range: January 2020 - December 2021.	2021-12-27	2022-12-14	352 days	846 pages
54	CSC	A-2021-00383 ✓	All communications between Mark Gerretsen and CSC/CORCAN staff. Date Range: 2015 - 2021.	2021-12-27	2022-11-15	323 days	2 pages
55	CSC	A-2021-00384 ✓	Please release: Briefing Note to the Commissioner "Reopening of CORCAN farm at Collins Bay Institution" December 16 2016; Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety "Reopening of CORCAN farm at Collins Bay Institution" January 6 2017; Briefing Note to the Minister of	2021-12-29	2023-01-11	378 days	28 pages

			Public Safety "Reopening of CORCAN farm at Collins Bay Institution" February 14 2017; Briefing Note to the Minister of Public Safety "Establishment of Advisory Panel for CORCAN Farms" March 16 2017. Please include attachments.				
56	CSC	A-2021-00430 ✓	List of all Inmate Committee Chairmen, Vice Chairmen, and Lifers' Group Chairmen at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institutions (minimum and medium), broken down by institution, position, and date ranges that the positions were held. Date Range: January 2009 - February 2022.	2022-02-07	2022-07-22	165 days	34 pages
57	CSC	A-2022-00014 X	Please release the full contract that was awarded in March 2022 by CSC to Strong Bros General Contracting for Construction of Dairy Facility and Cattle Barn at Joyceville Institution.	2022-04-11	Never released Resubmitted 2022-05-03 to PSPC A-2022-00044	-	-
58	CSC	A-2022-00099 X	All information related to the prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution. Emails, briefing notes, memos, meeting minutes, media inquiries, contracts and invoices. Date Range: January 2022 - June 2022.	2022-07-08	2024-06-04	697 days	600 pages
59	CSC	Confidential	Prisoner transfer records.	2022-10-13	2023-05-23	222 days	39 pages
60	CSC	A-2022-00212 X	Emails, briefing notes, reports, contracts, media inquiries and media lines related to the Joyceville Institution Abattoir (slaughterhouse) that was operated by Wallace Beef until the contract expired September 30, 2022. Date Range: August 2022 - October 2022.	2022-11-11	2024-06-05	572 days	386 pages
61	CSC	A-2022-00244 ✓	All emails and text messages to/from CORCAN's Kelly Hartle that pertain to the prison farms (penitentiary agriculture program) at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution, including any communications containing the following keywords: farm, agriculture, agribusiness, goat, kid, calf, cattle, livestock, dairy, milk, beef, cheese, Calvin Neufeld, Evolve, infant/baby formula, Canada Royal Milk, Feihe, abattoir, Wallace Beef, Mark Gerretsen, Mark Holland, Carey Bidtnes. Include all communications to/from members of the Prison Farm Advisory Panel. Date Range: 2016 - 2022.	2022-12-27	2024-03-18 CSC searched only previously released requests, not Hartle's emails Request resubmitted 2024-03-20 A-2023-00481	447 days	150 pages
62	CSC	A-2023-00024 ✓	An ATI request from CSC (A-2021-00381) contains emails dated November 4 2021 mentioning an attached project brief "which describes what, why and how we are going about this construction project," subject line "Project Brief-New Barns-Joyceville-V 0.2-2019-01-07.pdf". Please release a copy of that project brief as well as any revised or draft versions.	2023-04-28	2023-06-20	53 days	163 pages
63	CSC	A-2023-00049 X	Please release emails and accident report records related to the injuries sustained by Rob O'Connor who was working in the Joyceville Institution abattoir in the fall of 2018 when a hanger broke and he was crushed by a beef carcass, as reported in Farmers Forum: https://farmersforum.com/eastern-ontario-fundraiser-for-injured-joyceville-beef-farmer/ .	2023-05-04	2023-08-08 No records response	-	0 pages
64	CSC	A-2023-00231 NYR	All information related to the prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution. [Types of records...] Date Range: July 2022 - July 2023.	2023-07-17	Not yet released	-	-
65	CSC	A-2023-00232 ✓	All records related to the Joyceville Institution Abattoir operated by Wallace Beef until September 30, 2022. Emails, briefing notes, meeting minutes, contracts, letters, invoices, media inquiries, media lines; records related to its closure, termination of services, dismantling of equipment; communications from industry associations, stakeholders, farmers, politicians, unions, City of Kingston; assessments, analyses, negotiations, applications, communications related to closing the abattoir permanently or recruiting a new operator and obtaining a new licence; repairs, estimates, costs, requirements to bring the facility to code to obtain a new licence to resume slaughter operations. Date Range: November 2022 - July 2023.	2023-07-17	2024-03-01	228 days	279 pages
66	CSC	A-2023-00233 NYR	CSC briefing notes (ex. Feb 14 2017) outlining business models for the prison farms state that "CSC will prepare a detailed business plan / implementation plan for the dairy operations... that will include a detailed costing of the dairy operations as well as the investment in capital required for the two farms, and an implementation plan." Another briefing note (May 18 2018) states that "The original model identified full sustainability in 2020-21, with the revenues exceeding the ongoing operational costs of the entire farming operations." Preliminary estimates for infrastructure construction were calculated at \$5 million in 2017 for the goats-only operation. This rose to \$9.75 million in 2018 after the decision was made to add cows. By 2019, estimated construction costs for	2023-07-20	Not yet released CSC issued 730-day extension with release date 2025-07-24	-	-

			CSC's agribusiness had risen to \$18 million. By January 2020, \$20 million. By September 2020, \$26 million. Given the changes in project costs, project plans, and implementation timelines, CSC's "detailed business plan / implementation plan" and "detailed costing" must have gone through multiple revisions to justify the increased "investment in capital required" and to show how the farms will achieve sustainability and return on investment. From 2016 to the present, I am requesting all cost breakdowns, revenue and expenditure projections, anticipated funding, feasibility studies, implementation plans, business plans, financial plans, and/or operational plans for prison farms at Joyceville Institution and Collins Bay Institution in Kingston.				
67	CSC	A-2023-00388 X	All records related to the prison farms at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution. Date Range: July 2023 - December 2023:	2024-01-02	2024-07-16	196 days	1,262 pages
68	CSC	A-2023-00391 X	All briefing notes between CSC and Public Safety that mention Feihe, Canada Royal Milk, infant formula or baby formula in relation to prison farms. Date Range: 2016-2017.	2024-01-05	2024-07-22	199 days	10 pages
69	CSC	A-2023-00397 X	All communications related to the Joyceville farm visit in November 2023 with MP Scott Reid and Calvin Neufeld. Include communications to/from the Commissioner, Senior Deputy Commissioner, ACCOP, CORCAN CEO, Joyceville Wardens, and CSC staff who were among the delegation (Scott MacPherson, Detlef Fischer, Chris Barkley, Hannah Wilson, Pat Anson).	2024-01-11	2024-05-28	138 days	65 pages
70	CSC	A-2023-00449 NYR	All briefing notes from 2015 related to CSC's prison farms. There should be at least two from November 2015, and others issued that year. Also older briefing notes which relate to legal action surrounding the farm closures, referenced in a May 16 2016 email from Shannon Muldoon to Scott Harris.	2024-02-12	Not yet released	-	-
71	CSC	A-2023-00466 NYR	In CSC's response to Order Paper question Q-1947, CSC indicated that the estimated cost of repairs to maintain the shuttered Joyceville Institution abattoir over the next two years is \$678,401. This is "to complete the maintenance recommended over the next two years in the 30-year horizon building condition report issued by Morrison Hershfield Limited." Please release a copy of this report and the "2008 designated substance report," email records commissioning the reports and coordinating with the consultants to assess the condition of the abattoir, and records indicating the cost of the Morrison Hershfield report.	2024-02-22	Not yet released	-	-
72	CSC	A-2023-00481 NYR	From January 2017 to July 2023, please release all emails and text messages to/from CORCAN CEO Kelly Hartle relating to the prison farms at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution in Kingston. [List of names & search terms...] Please process this as a new and complete request; do not consult previously released requests for the retrieval of records or exclude emails or text messages that have been previously released.	2024-03-20	Not yet released CSC issued 90-day extension with release date 2024-07-25	-	-
73	Department of Justice	A-2022-00801 X	A 2021 CSC email states that to maintain the prison abattoir (slaughterhouse) at Joyceville Institution, a review is required by the Department of Justice (DoJ). Please release all records related to the Joyceville Institution abattoir, any review conducted by DoJ, and all related reports and email communications. Date Range: 2021-2022.	2022-12-14	2023-02-13	61 days	2 pages (41 withheld solicitor privilege)
74	Department of Finance	No #	Federal Budget 2024 allocated \$377 million over five years to the Correctional Service of Canada "for CSC to stabilize core operations." Please release all materials submitted by CSC that resulted in this funding allocation. I am seeking specific details of what core operations this money will be used to stabilize.	2024-04-25	Never released "Budget requests... are considered Cabinet Confidences"	-	-
75	Employment and Social Development Canada	A-2022-04038 X	In April 2021, a CSC farm instructor was injured in a motor vehicle accident involving a tractor at Collins Bay Institution. Accident records released by CSC (A-2021-00216) contain Employment and Social Development Canada paperwork noting that a copy must be submitted to the Minister of Labour. Please release all emails and paperwork records related to this accident.	2023-03-08	2023-04-12	-	0 pages
76	Impact Assessment Agency of Canada	A-2020-00068 ✓	Please release all emails and other records involved in the development and posting of the following notices related to construction of facilities for the prison farms in Kingston: Notice of Determination; Joyceville Institution Cattle and Goat Barn Construction; Public Notice - Notice of Intent. Also, on June 14 2021, I filed a complaint with the IAAC (iaac.compliance-conformite.aeic@Canada.ca) requesting a review of the length of time that the Public Notice was posted. Please release email exchanges and records related to this complaint and the review conducted by the IAAC.	2021-08-02	2022-01-06	157 days	283 pages

77	Privy Council Office (PCO)	A-2019-00235 X	All documents relating to Feihe / Canada Royal Milk infant formula factory in Kingston. Emails, contracts, agreements, briefing materials, reports, meeting minutes, grants, market analysis, media inquiries and responses, communications with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), Canadian Dairy Commission (CDC), Kingston Economic Development Corporation (KEDCO), City of Kingston and Mayor Brian Paterson, Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC), Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO), National Farmers Union (NFU), Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), CORCAN, Public Safety. Date Range: 2014 –2019.	2019-09-17	2020-01-28	133 days	65 pages
78	PCO	A-2022-00162 ✓	On March 1, 2018, Christine O’Nions from PCO wrote to CSC requesting “the analysis that led to the decision to have goats instead of cows” on the prison farms in Kingston. Please release that analysis (or other form of response from CSC) and related PCO communications, emails, phone records, handwritten notes, memos, minutes, briefing notes, reports, analyses, and PCO-CSC communications regarding this matter.	2022-07-08	2022-09-22	76 days	197 pages
79	PCO	A-2023-00294 ✓	All records and communications pertaining to the prison farms/penitentiary agriculture program at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution in Kingston. Date Range: 2016 – July 2023.	2023-07-17	2023-08-17	-	0 pages
80	PCO	A-2023-00601 ✓	All documents, briefs, emails, speaking notes and drafts that have passed through PCO for statements delivered in the House of Commons during question and answer exchanges about CSC’s prison farm program at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution. Date Range: January 2023 - October 2023.	2023-10-02	2023-10-31	-	0 pages
81	PCO	A-2024-00096 NJR	All records and communications pertaining to the prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution. Emails and attachments, text messages, briefing notes, scenario notes, analyses, reports, speaking notes, communications products, media inquiries, media monitoring summaries, media lines, news releases. Do not limit the search to documents of business value. Include a search of emails to/from the following PCO staff and email accounts: CIMSOPER@pco-bcp.gc.ca, Consultation (PCO/BCP), News / Nouvelles (News-Nouvelles@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Issues Management, Director of PCO Media Relations, Frank Gale (Frank.Gale@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Judy Maclean (Judy.Maclean@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Laura Wesley, Jonathan Spassov (Jonathan.Spassov@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Myriam Massabki (Myriam.Massabki@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Christine O’Nions (Christine.O’Nions@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Ken MacKillop (Ken.MacKillop@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Stephane Levesque (Stephane.Levesque@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Anabel Lindblad (Anabel.Lindblad@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Cloe Prieur (Cloe.Prieur@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Gilbert LeGras (Gilbert.LeGras@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Paul Doucette (Paul.Doucette@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Andrew Green (Andrew.Green@pco-bcp.gc.ca), Ariane Boyer (Ariane.Boyer@pco-bcp.gc.ca). Include the following search terms: prison farm, penitentiary farm, agriculture, agribusiness, CORCAN, CSC, Correctional Service of Canada, cow(s), cattle, beef, goat(s), kid(s), milk, dairy, abattoir, slaughterhouse, Wallace, Mark Gerretsen, Mark Holland, Scott Reid, Don Head, Anne Kelly, Christian D’Auray, Kelly Hartle, Normand Payette, Evolve, Neufeld, Feihe, Canada Royal Milk, infant formula. Please also include related communications to/from Ministerial Liaison with Public Safety and/or CSC and/or AAFC and/or the offices of Minister MacAulay and/or Minister Goodale, Minister Blair, Minister Mendicino, and/or Minister LeBlanc. Date Range: October 2015 - May 2024.	2024-05-07	Not yet released PCO issued 120-day extension with release date 2024-10-04	-	-
82	Public Safety Canada (PSC)	A-2018-00451 X	All information related to the reinstatement of prison farms. [Types of records...] Date Range: November 2015 - November 2018.	Submitted 2018-11-15 PSC claimed it was never received Resubmitted 2019-03-11	2019-10-11	330 days	478 pages
83	PSC	A-2018-00277 X	Business plans for prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution.	2018-11-16	2019-12-19	398 days	12 pages
84	PSC	A-2018-00287 X	All information relating to the Prison Farm Advisory Panel including records relating to the selection / appointment of panel; terms & conditions, roles & responsibilities; correspondence between panel members & CORCAN / CSC /	2018-11-19	2021-05-25	918 days	215 pages

			Public Safety; agendas, minutes, briefing notes, media advisories & inquiries, consultations, recommendations, reports; records relating to the conflict of interest complaint submitted by Evolve Our Prison Farms to Ethics Commissioner Mario Dion & related investigation; any mention of Save Our Prison Farms or Pen Herd Co-Op in relation to panel appointments & activity & solicitation by panel to sell Pen Herd cows to CSC. Date Range: 2016 – 2018.				
85	PSC	A-2018-00450 X	All records connecting Feihe with prison farm plans. [Types of records & search words...] Date Range: November 2015 - November 2018.	Submitted 2018-11-20 PSC claimed it was never received Resubmitted 2019-03-11	2019-07-23	245 days	19 pages
86	PSC	A-2018-00300 X	All information relating to Evolve Our Prison Farms. Petitions, postcards, protests, meetings, letters, emails, records relating to the Joyceville media event June 21 2018 & phone call between Calvin Neufeld & Scott Bardsley saying Evolve would not be allowed to attend. Date Range: January 2017 - November 2018.	2018-11-21	2021-10-15	1059 days	284 pages
87	PSC	A-2018-00440 X	Records of all communications between Minister Goodale (or any member of his staff) and Dianne Dowling, including records of phone calls to/from 613-XXX-XXXX and emails to/from -----@---.net. Date Range: November 2015 - January 2019.	2019-02-20	2019-05-13	82 days	32 pages
88	PSC	A-2019-00102 X	All information related to the prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions. [Types of records...] Date Range: January 2019 - June 2019.	2019-07-03	2019-11-04	124 days	226 pages
89	PSC	A-2019-00101 X	All information relating to the Prison Farm Advisory Panel. [Types of records...] Date Range: January 2019 - June 2019.	2019-07-03	2019-11-08	128 days	193 pages
90	PSC	A-2019-00100 X	All information relating to Evolve Our Prison Farms. [Types of records...] Date Range: January 2019 - June 2019.	2019-07-03	2019-11-08	128 days	607 pages
91	PSC	A-2019-00099 X	All records containing any mention of Feihe / Canada Royal Milk / infant formula. Date Range: January 2019 - June 2019.	2019-07-03	2019-08-12	40 days	843 pages
92	PSC	A-2019-00112 X	All records relating to business plans for prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution. Date Range: January 2018 - June 2019.	2019-07-10	Never released	-	-
93	PSC	A-2019-00305 ✓	All information related to the prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions in Kingston. Date Range: July 2019 - January 2020. [Types of records...]	2020-01-13	2020-03-11	58 days	433 pages
94	PSC	A-2020-00215 ✓	All records relating to the prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay. [Types of records...] Date Range: January 2020 - September 2020.	2020-10-02	2020-11-18	47 days	36 pages
95	PSC	A-2020-00214 ✓	List of all individuals who have acted as members of the CORCAN Advisory Board from 1992-2020 including ex-officio members. Please include titles (i.e. what agency, institution, or business they represent) and dates and lengths of terms. "The CORCAN Advisory Board was established pursuant to the creation of CORCAN as a Special Operating Agency in 1992. CORCAN's Advisory Board is appointed by the Minister of Public Safety... as legislated through Section 108 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Regulations (CCRR)." https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/programs/corcan/corcan-advisory-board.html	2020-10-02	2020-11-17	46 days	3 pages
96	PSC	A-2021-00062 ✓	All records relating to the prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay. [Types of records...] Date Range: October 2020 - June 2021.	2021-06-01	2021-09-09	100 days	514 pages
97	PSC	A-2021-00332 ✓	All information related to the prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution. [Types of records...] Date Range: June 2021 - December 2021.	2021-12-27	2022-01-26	30 days	68 pages
98	PSC`	A-2021-00333 ✓	All communications between Mark Gerretsen and the Ministry of Public Safety. Date Range: 2015 - 2021.	2021-12-27	2022-04-12	106 days	153 pages
99	PSC	A-2021-00336 ✓	Briefing notes pertaining to the prison farms from January, February, March 2017.	2021-12-29	2022-03-03	64 days	17 pages
100	PSC	A-2022-00050 ✓	2012 Public Safety Memorandum for the Minister: Letter to Correctional Service of Canada regarding CORCAN from Acting Deputy Minister Graham Flack.	2022-05-27	2022-07-26	60 days	17 pages
101	PSC	A-2022-00074 ✓	Please release the 2008 Strategic Review that was submitted to Public Safety by CSC resulting in the 2009 announcement that CSC's farm operations would be closed across Canada.	2022-06-16	2022-06-24 No records response	-	0 pages

102	PSC	A-2022-00101 X	All information related to the prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution. Date Range: January 2022 - June 2022.	2022-07-08	2022-10-11	95 days	207 pages
103	PSC	A-2022-00246 ✓	All emails, letters, and briefing notes that mention the abattoir (slaughterhouse) at Joyceville Institution. Date Range: January 2021 - October 2022.	2022-11-11	2023-01-18	68 days	449 pages
104	PSC	A-2022-00258 ✓	All briefing notes between CSC and Public Safety that mention Feihe, Canada Royal Milk, infant formula or baby formula. Date Range: 2016 - 2022.	2022-11-24	2023-02-07	75 days	27 pages
105	PSC	A-2022-00331 ✓	Please release any briefing notes between CSC and Public Safety that mention Canada Kingston Dairy [another business name incorporated in Canada by Feihe]. Date Range: 2016 - 2022.	2023-01-13	2023-02-03	-	0 pages
106	PSC	A-2022-00412 ✓	Requesting the email sent December 9, 2016, by Angela Connidis regarding discussions about options for the prison farms in Kingston.	2023-02-11	2023-02-27	-	0 pages
107	PSC	A-2022-00419 X	Requesting the letter sent November 14, 2016, by Catherine Latimer, Executive Director of John Howard Society, regarding options for prison farms in Kingston (Joyceville and Collins Bay).	2023-02-16	2023-02-27	-	0 pages
108	PSC	A-2023-00024 ✓	CORCAN, a Special Operating Agency of CSC, is required to have an Advisory Board appointed by the Minister of Public Safety as legislated through Section 108 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Regulations. A prior ATI request with Public Safety (A-2020-00214) showed that there has been no Advisory Board since 2014. For years, CORCAN's website has stated that "As previous board members' terms have expired, it is anticipated that appointments will be made in the near future." A more recent ATI request with CSC (A-2021-00381) included a 2021 email saying "CORCAN Advisory panel -- The package is with ACCOP for approval. Once that happens it will then go to MO for their review since they are ministerial appointments. Appointments will take a few months." As of April 2023, CORCAN's website still shows no Advisory Board. For date range September 2020 - April 2023, please release all records relating to CORCAN's Advisory Board, including briefing materials, packages, and email exchanges. It was in September 2020 that I first began inquiring about CORCAN's Advisory Board, and October 2020 when I filed the Access to Information request with Public Safety. I would like to know if any process has begun at the ministerial level to re-establish the required Advisory Board for the Special Operating Agency responsible for prison labour programs in Canada, if any appointments have been proposed, who has been proposed for board membership, whether any actual board membership has been established, and what internal discussions have taken place since the Public Safety Ministry was alerted to the long absence of the required oversight body for this agency under Public Safety's portfolio.	2023-04-27	2023-12-21	238 days	73 pages
109	PSC	A-2023-00178 ✓	All records related to the prison farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay Institution. Date Range: July 2022 - July 2023.	2023-07-17	2023-08-16	30 days	65 pages
110	PSC	A-2023-00317 ✓	On May 29 2023, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport Annie Koutrakis responded to questions about the penitentiary agricultural program in Kingston, Ontario. Please release complete copies of all email communications, briefing notes, and original speaking notes (including drafts and revisions) provided to Ms Koutrakis for the statements she read in the House of Commons on this date.	2023-09-12	2023-09-21	-	0 pages
111	PSC	A-2023-00333 ✓	All documents prepared for and routed through the parliamentary affairs group relating to CSC's prison farm (penitentiary agriculture) program at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution. Please include speaking notes and drafts prepared for statements delivered in the House of Commons, as well as emails. Date Range: January 2023 - October 2023.	2023-10-02	2023-10-20	18 days	26 pages
112	PSC	A-2023-00438 ✓	All records related to the prison farms and prison abattoir in Kingston. [Types of records...] Date Range: July 2023 - December 2023.	2024-01-02	2024-04-16	105 days	235 pages
113	PSC	A-2023-00564 ✓	I am requesting all briefing notes from 2015 related to CSC's prison farms. I would also like to request any older briefing notes to the Public Safety Minister on the farms which relate to legal action surrounding the farm closures and management of real property next steps.	2024-02-12	2024-02-22	-	0 pages
114	PSC	A-2023-00592 ✓	All records related to the abattoir (slaughterhouse) at Joyceville Institution, which closed in September 2022 when CSC did not renew the contract with Wallace Beef after violations were exposed. Since then, industry associations such as Beef Farmers of Ontario, and officials such as MP	2024-03-04	2024-04-26	53 days	85 pages

			Mark Gerretsen and Senator Robert Black, have been lobbying to reopen this prison-labour-based commercial slaughter service, and CSC has been investing significant funds into maintaining the empty 64-year-old building and assessing costs of repairs. Please release all emails, letters, and briefing notes relating to this abattoir. Date Range: November 2022 - March 2024.				
115	Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC)	A-2018-01048 X	All records relating to the procurement of goats for the prison farms at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution. Tenders, bids, terms of reference, emails, questions from industry, specifications and standards, risks and quality assurance analysis, procurement plan, project plan, evaluation plan, requests for proposals, requests for tender, requests for prices, requests for interest, contract requests, contracts, standing offers, supply arrangements, certifications, source of funds, financial opinions, cost analysis, memoranda, meeting minutes. Date Range: 2018 - February 2019.	2019-02-20	2019-09-25	217 days	70 pages
116	PSPC	A-2019-00259 X	All records relating to the procurement of animals (goats, dairy cows, beef cows, bees) for CSC's prison farm program at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution. Date Range: January 2018 - June 2019.	2019-07-10	2022-08-23 OIC Legal Order to Release	1140 days	384 pages
117	PSPC	A-2019-00503 X	All records relating to the procurement of animals (goats, dairy cows, beef cows, bees, etc) for CSC's prison farm program at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution. Date range: July 2019 - January 2020.	2020-01-13	2022-12-19 OIC Legal Order to Release	1071 days	362 pages
118	PSPC	A-2021-00436 ✓	All records related to procurement for CSC's prison farm program at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution. Date Range: January 2020 - December 2021.	2021-12-27	2024-02-21	786 days	645 pages
119	PSPC	A-2022-00044 ✓	Contract awarded in March 2022 by CSC to Strong Bros General Contracting for Construction of Dairy Facility and Cattle Barn at Joyceville Institution.	2022-05-03	2022-11-08	189 days	38 pages
120	PSPC	A-2022-00347 NYR	All records related to procurement for CSC's prison farm program at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution. Date Range: January 2022 - January 2023.	2023-01-31	Not yet released	-	-
121	PSPC	A-2024-00002 NYR	Money spent on PSPC services for CSC's prison farm program at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution broken down by year (or fiscal year). Please also release all SSAs (Specific Service Agreements) for PSPC services for the prison farm program. Date Range: 2018 - April 2024.	2024-04-02	Not yet released	-	-
122	PSPC	A-2024-00008 ✓	In 2018, PSPC was handling the solicitation to acquire goats for CSC. This was cancelled in March 2019 because CORCAN did not have the temporary housing facilities ready. There are indications that a purchasing agent for public works (surname Carriere) dealt with paying a contract and giving notice that CSC would not take delivery. I would like to know how much money was spent on goats that could not be received. Please release any records of payments made to goat farmers who bid on solicitation 21C41-189474/A.	2024-04-07	2024-04-30 No records response	-	0 pages
123	Transport Canada	A-2023-00097 ✓	On Monday May 29 2023, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport Annie Koutrakis responded to questions on the penitentiary agricultural program. Please release complete copies of the speaking notes.	2023-05-31	2023-06-12 No records response	-	0 pages

Provincial Freedom of Information requests filed by Evolve							
124	Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development	G-2021-01244	In April 2021, there was a farming accident at the federal prison farm site at Collins Bay Institution. It was reported that a farm instructor was loading a tractor for repairs but it was not properly secured and fell on him, resulting in injuries that required hospitalization. I am requesting all documentation related to this event, including emails, accident reports, and investigation by the Ministry of Labour.	2021-06-01	2022-01-10 No records response	-	0 pages
125	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)	#21-18	The 2018 Joyceville Abattoir Fire Safety Plan states "OMAFRA Officers visit on-site twice per week to ensure that all regulatory issues are followed. OMAFRA are also present during the slaughtering process." Please release all records relating to OMAFRA visits to the Joyceville Institution abattoir, dates when OMAFRA officers have been onsite, and all documentation related to the visits and inspections (notes, reports, emails). Date Range: January 2018 - April 2021.	2021-05-12	Abandoned Cost to obtain the records was too high (\$910)	-	-
126	OMAFRA	#21-19	Records relating to OMAFRA's suspension of the Joyceville Institution abattoir licence on October 6, 2003. A CSC briefing note states that allegations range from improper slaughtering and meat handling to criminal activities. Please release any OMAFRA records related to the 2003 investigation and suspension of the Joyceville abattoir licence.	2021-05-12	2021-10-06	-	1 page

127	OMAFRA	#21-21	All OMAFRA records relating to the prison farms at Collins Bay and Joyceville Institution. Letters, emails, briefing notes, reports, environmental assessments, site visits, inspections, nutrient management, and OMAFRA involvement in CSC's plans for milking facilities, manure lagoon, and animal procurement. Date Range: January 2016 to May 2021.	2021-06-01	Abandoned Cost to obtain the records was too high (\$265)	-	-
128	OMAFRA	#23-32	According to records released by the Canadian Dairy Commission (CDC), OMAFRA assisted the CDC and Feihe in developing a comprehensive investment package, a Goat Milk Production Development Policy, and Cost/Benefit analysis of goat milk supply and transportation to Feihe's Canada Royal Milk infant formula facility in Kingston. It is also noted in 2017 meeting minutes that "OMAFRA indicated a large scale goat farm in Ontario is a strong possibility." Please release emails or other records that contain any mention of the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), CORCAN, Joyceville, Collins Bay, prison farms.	2023-10-25	2023-12-04	-	2 pages

Municipal Freedom of Information requests filed by Evolve							
129	City of Kingston	No #	An email dated September 14 2016 from Carey Bidtnes to City of Kingston staff (Subject: Confidential Update - Chinese Project) states "Please find attached the counter-signed NDAs for the City and UK." Please release these NDAs.	2022-11-27	2022-12-20	-	7 pages
130	City of Kingston	No #	The City of Kingston Information Report to Rural Advisory Committee dated December 5, 2022 states "Staff met with the Deputy General of Corrections Services Canada (CSC) to discuss reopening of the Joyceville abattoir immediately... Staff have a few very interested, experienced individuals looking to operate the facility and are working closely with them... Farmers from the region are calling in stress." Please release records of meetings and communications between the City, CSC, farmers and potential operators regarding the Joyceville abattoir.	2023-03-04	2023-04-17	-	0 pages
131	City of Kingston	No #	Please release the 2022 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Kingston, Loving Spoonful, and the Correctional Service of Canada for the Community Training Farm project.	2024-06-08	2024-06-18	-	7 pages

Previously released requests obtained by Evolve							
132	AAFC	A1-2018-00074	All correspondence between AAFC Minister and CDC concerning Feihe factory; DFO; GayLea; funding under Dairy Farm Investment Program.	-	2018-11-28	-	237 pages
133	AAFC	A-2019-00057*	All reports, including summaries, advice and briefing material prepared for the Minister or Deputy Minister's Office, concerning the Feihe / Canada Royal Milk plant in Kingston, and international trade considerations, including the NAFTA renegotiations/USMCA.	-	2019-10-11	-	31 pages
134	AAFC	A-2017-00146	Provide briefing note number 234433, Letter to Incumbent Chief Executive Officer at the CDC.	-	2019-10-11	-	4 pages
135	AAFC	A-2018-00065	Briefing notes to the AAFC Minister and/or Deputy Minister pertaining to dairy supply management in regards to NAFTA negotiations from September 2017 - September 2018.	-	2019-03-15	-	65 pages
136	CDC	A2-2016-00002*	All correspondence, reports, and briefing notes prepared for Ministers and MPs in connection with the proposal by the Chinese company Feihe International seeking to open an infant formula factory in Kingston, Ontario (November 2015 to December 2016).	-	2019-09-27	-	467 pages
137	CFIA	A-2020-00220	All inspection reports and correspondence regarding certification requirements and compliance issues between the CFIA and Canada Royal Milk, including any communication between the CFIA and CRM's parent company, Feihe International, as well as its subcontractor, Realgoal Technology, from September 2017 to March 2021.	-	2023-05-24	-	952 pages
138	CSC	A-2020-00046	Statistics regarding recidivism involving CORCAN programs from 2018 and 2019 in locations: Edmonton, Kingston and Moncton. As well as reasons for re-offending.	-	2023-10-18	-	103 pages
139	CSC	A-2022-00077	1) Records of Discussion and/or Agendas for the CORCAN Farm Advisory Panel between January 2020 and June 2022. 2) Any information pertaining to the number of applications submitted for consideration as part of the CORCAN Farm Advisory Panel etc.	-	2023-10-11	-	167 pages
140	CSC	A-2017-00245	Inmate pay and deductions.	-	2023-07-01	-	1 page
141	CSC	A-2017-00244	Inmate telephone deductions.	-	2023-07-01	-	1 page

142	CSC	A-2018-00310*	Any documents related to prison labour programs involving animals (i.e. prison farm / animal slaughtering programs), particularly around decision-making to halt these programs in 2010 and decision-making to reinstate them in 2018.	-	2024-02-06	-	5195 pages
143	Global Affairs Canada	A-2019-01872	Records on the Feihe International/Canada Royal Milk plant in Kingston, Ontario, including but not limited to potential impacts of the Canada-US-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA, also known as the new NAFTA/revised North American Free Trade Agreement).	-	2024-06-24	-	1 page
144	City of Kingston	No #*	Communications between the mayor of Kingston (and City staff) and Feihe in 2016-2017.	-	2020-01-08	-	117 emails

Evolve gratefully acknowledges the following academics who shared their federal Access to Information and municipal Freedom of Information packages:

***Dr. Amy Fitzgerald, University of Windsor**

CSC A-2018-00310: Nine interim releases (now available through the Government of Canada’s database of Completed Access to Information Requests) with a total of 5,195 pages. This release package contained the 2017 “smoking gun” document confirming the plan for goat milk production at Joyceville Institution to supply Feihe’s infant formula exports, which should have been released in response to multiple ATI requests filed by Evolve. Some material from this voluminous release package has been cited in this report with Dr. Fitzgerald’s permission. Other information contained in this package, along with additional material from ATI records obtained by Evolve, are currently being used for an article in progress by Dr. Fitzgerald.

***Dr. Claudia Hirtenfelder and Dr. Carolyn Prouse, Queen’s University**

AAFC A-2018-00071 & CDC A2-2016-00002 were previously released requests obtained by these academics as part of their research for the following publication: Hirtenfelder, C. & Prouse, C. (2022, September). Milking economies: Multispecies entanglements in the infant formula industry. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, 5(3), 1296-1318. <https://doi.org/10.1177/25148486211036113>

***Dr. Miles Howe, Brock University**

As a PhD candidate at Queen’s University, Dr. Howe designed and taught a course on using the Access to Information Act. Some of his students filed for communications between the mayor of Kingston (and City staff) and Feihe in 2016-2017. Their municipal Freedom of Information release yielded hundreds of pages from 117 individually packaged email threads.

*Evolve also gratefully acknowledges **MP Scott Reid** for the information obtained through the following Order Paper questions:*

Q-1781 — May 23, 2018 — Mr. Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston) — With regard to Correctional Service Canada’s (CSC) planned re-establishment of penitentiary farm programming and agribusiness operations: (a) which of the six former penitentiary farm locations that were closed in 2010 does CSC plan to re-open; (b) does CSC plan to open any penitentiary farm locations other than the six locations that were closed in 2010 and, if so, what are those locations; (c) for any locations identified in (a) that CSC does not plan to re-open, for what reasons, broken down by location, has CSC decided not to re-open them; (d) for each location identified in (a), (i) since 2010, has CSC sold or otherwise divested itself of any portions of the land on which the penitentiary farms were located and, if so, how much of each location’s land, and at what price or benefit to CSC, (ii) has CSC re-acquired any land, or use thereof, that it had previously sold or otherwise divested itself of, or acquired new land, or use thereof, on which it plans to open those locations and, if so, how much land and at what cost to CSC, (iii) what facilities that were operated at the time of closing in 2010, or within five years before closing, does CSC plan to re-open or re-establish, (iv) for facilities identified in (d)(iii), what costs will CSC incur to re-acquire, renovate, and re-open them, itemized by type of expense; (e) for each location identified in (b), has CSC acquired any land, or use thereof and, if so, how much land and at what cost to CSC; (f) for each location identified in (a) and (b), (i) what are the dates on or time ranges during which CSC plans to open each location, (ii) what is the date or time range at which each is to be opened, (iii) what are the purposes, training and employment programs and agribusiness operations that CSC plans to operate, (iv) what livestock, and from what sources, does CSC plan to acquire for agribusiness-related training, programs and operations, (v) for livestock identified in (f)(iv), what alternative livestock were considered, and on what basis did CSC make its decision, (vi) what are the Internet sites where studies or research commissioned or used by CSC in its decision to re-open the penitentiary farm are available; (g) for each location identified in (a) and (b), what costs does CSC project to incur, broken down by fiscal year, to (i) build new agribusiness-related buildings and other agribusiness-related facilities, (ii) acquire or secure the use of capital equipment, existing buildings, vehicles, and other facilities for agribusiness-related use, (iii) employ or retain staff to administer and operate agribusiness-related programs and facilities, (iv) maintain agribusiness-related land and facilities, (v) operate agribusiness-related programming, (vi) acquire livestock, (vii) acquire other agricultural materials; (h) what skills does CSC aim to have gained by offenders who participate in agribusiness-related training, programs and operations; (i) how many and what percentage of all offenders, on an annual basis, does CSC project will participate in agribusiness-related training, programs and operations, and on what basis does CSC make this projection; (j) what is the projected employment rate, within one year of release, and on what basis does CSC make this projection, for (i) all released offenders, (ii) released offenders who participated in agribusiness-related training, programs and operations, (iii) released offenders who participated in agribusiness-related training, programs and operations, and who are employed in positions that require the agribusiness skills obtained while incarcerated; (k) what is the projected recidivism rate, within five years, and on what basis does CSC make this projection, for (i) all released offenders, (ii) released offenders who participated in agribusiness-related training, programs and operations, (iii) released offenders who participated in agribusiness-related training, programs and operations, and who are employed in positions that require the agribusiness skills obtained while incarcerated?

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Q-2494 — May 2, 2019 — Mr. Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston) — With regard to penitentiary farms, and agriculture and agri-food employment operations of CORCAN: (a) in what agriculture and agri-food employment operations are offenders at the Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions presently engaged, and in what numbers, broken down by location; (b) in what agriculture and agri-food employment operations are offenders at the Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions planned to engage in 2019 and 2020 respectively, and in what numbers, broken down by location; (c) are offenders at the Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions engaged, or will they be engaged, in agriculture and agri-food employment operations, at any time, off of Correctional Service of Canada premises and, if so, to what extent, at what locations, by whom are those locations managed, in what numbers, and for what purposes, listed by location; (d) does Correctional Service of Canada or CORCAN have any contracts or relationships, with respect to labour provided through agriculture and agri-food employment operations at the Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions, with Feihe International or Feihe Canada Royal Milk and, if so, when were they engaged, for what purpose, for what length of time, under what conditions, for what locations, and how will offenders at the Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions be involved and to what extent, broken down by contract or relationship; (e) does the Correctional Service of Canada or CORCAN have any supply agreements, with respect to products generated by agriculture and agri-food employment operations at the Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions, with Feihe International or Feihe Canada Royal Milk and, if so, when were they engaged, for what purpose, for what length of time, under what conditions, for what locations, and how will offenders at the Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions be involved and to what extent, broken down by agreement; (f) of the \$4.3 million allocated over five years in Budget 2018 for agriculture and agri-food employment operations at penitentiary farms, how much has been spent, at what locations, and for what purposes, broken down by fiscal year; and (g) what funds have been spent from Correctional Service of Canada's capital budget on infrastructure, equipment, and improvements to penitentiary farm and agriculture and agri-food employment facilities at the Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions, at what locations, and for what purposes, broken down by fiscal year since 2015?
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Q-673 — June 20, 2022 — Mr. Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston) — With regard to Correctional Service Canada's (CSC) penitentiary farms and related CORCAN operations, related to the Joyceville and Collins Bay institutions: (a) what are the total amounts spent to build, repair, maintain, and operate all related infrastructure since January 1, 2016, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (b) what are the total amounts spent to operate all related programming since January 1, 2016, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (c) what are the total amounts spent to build, repair, maintain, and operate any infrastructure relating to goat dairy farming since January 1, 2016, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (d) what are the total amounts spent to build, repair, maintain, and operate any infrastructure relating to cow dairy farming since January 1, 2016, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (e) what are the total amounts spent to build, repair, maintain, and operate any infrastructure relating to animal slaughter since January 1, 2016, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (f) what are the total amounts spent to operate all programming related to goat dairy farming since January 1, 2016, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (g) what are the total amounts spent to operate all programming related to cow dairy farming since January 1, 2016, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (h) what are the total amounts spent to operate all programming related to animal slaughter since January 1, 2016, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (i) what are the projected total amounts to be spent on infrastructure and programming relating to goat dairy farming from fiscal year 2021-2022 through fiscal year 2025-2026, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (j) what are the projected total amounts to be spent on infrastructure and programming relating to cow dairy farming from fiscal year 2021-2022 through fiscal year 2025-2026, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (k) what are the projected total amounts to be spent on infrastructure and programming relating to animal slaughter from fiscal year 2021-2022 through fiscal year 2025-2026, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (l) what are the total revenues that have been generated by the programming and operations referred to in parts (b), (f), (g), and (h), since January 1, 2016, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (m) what are the total revenues projected to be generated by the programming and operations referred to in parts (b), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), and (k), from fiscal year 2021-2022 through fiscal year 2025-2026, broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) purpose, (iv) source of funding; (n) how many animals are presently at each institution, how many are allocated for what purpose, and how many are projected to be purchased or added through fiscal year 2025-2026, broken down by (i) type of animal, (ii) purpose; (o) what measures are in place, and what measures are planned, at each location, to protect the well-being of the animals present, and to reduce the likelihood or possibility of animal abuse, neglect, or inhumane treatment; (p) what measures are in place, and what measures are planned to (i) monitor, (ii) interdict, (iii) reduce, (iv) eliminate the smuggling of contraband into or out of the institutions, as those measures relate to the penitentiary farms, the abattoir, and related CORCAN operations, by location; (q) do any agreements, contracts, memorandums of understanding or analogous arrangements exist between CSC or CORCAN and (i) Feihe International Inc., (ii) Canada Royal Milk, (iii) Mariposa Dairy, (iv) Gay Lea Foods Co-operative Limited, (v) any subsidiary thereof, (vi) any other external entity, respecting the sale, purchase, transfer, or use of goat milk or cow milk and, if so, what is the nature and summary of the terms of each arrangement; (r) for each penitentiary farm operation, whether referred to in parts (f), (g), and (h) or of some other agricultural nature, how much of the product is (i) kept and used inside CSC institutions, (ii) sold to external entities, (iii) transferred on a non-commercial basis to external entities, (iv) disposed of without use; (s) what is the present monthly capacity of each operation referred to in parts (f), (g), and (h), is the present monthly capacity for each operation substantially similar to the maximum planned capacity and, if not, when is the maximum planned capacity projected to be reached for each operation; (t) what is the number of inmates who are now or were previously employed in each operation referred to in parts (f), (g), and (h), broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) job or function; (u) what is the number of inmates who are projected to be employed in each operation referred to in parts (i), (j), and (k), broken down by (i) year, (ii) location, (iii) job or function; (v) how many correctional personnel are presently required, for a normal 24 hour period, to supervise each operation referred to in parts (f), (g), and (h), by location; (w) how many individuals, who are neither inmates nor correctional personnel, are presently employed, for a normal 24 hour period, in each operation referred to in parts (f), (g), and (h), by (i) location, (ii) job or function; (x) what specific measures are in place, or planned, to monitor and assess the effect of employment in CORCAN operations related to the penitentiary farms on inmates' post-release employment and recidivism rates; (y) what specific biosecurity measures are in place, or planned, to reduce the risk of disease outbreaks or negative health effects related to the penitentiary farms on inmates, correctional personnel, animals, and nearby residents; (z) what measures are in place to monitor and ensure that CORCAN operations related to the penitentiary farms are persistently in compliance with international and statutory obligations relating to inmate labour and inmate-produced goods and products; (aa) has CSC produced projections of the costs, excluding lost revenue, relating to ceasing each operation referred to in parts (f), (g), and (h), respectively and, if so, what are the details of those projections?

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Q-1946 — October 26, 2023 — Mr. Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston) — With regard to penitentiary farms, and agriculture and agri-food employment operations of CORCAN at the Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions: (a) of the \$4.3 million allocated over five years in budget 2018 for agriculture and agri-food employment operations at penitentiary farms, what funds have been spent, at what locations, and for what purposes, broken down by fiscal year since 2017-18; (b) what funds have been spent from Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) capital budget and CORCAN's Revolving Fund, broken down by source, on operations, infrastructure, equipment, and improvements to the penitentiary farm and agriculture and agri-food employment facilities at the Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions, at what locations, and for what purposes, broken down by fiscal year since 2017-18; (c) what funds have been spent, and from what budget, on each of management services, engineering and maintenance, security, environment, design coordination, facilities planning, capital implementation, project leaders, tender packages and tender calls, Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) fees and disbursements, consultant fees and disbursements, CSC salaries, travel costs, contingencies, project management services, geotechnical and architectural consultant work, quality control and testing, water and electrical supply analysis, hydrogeology, design and construction contract administration, and contracts and service agreements with PSPC, with regard to penitentiary farm and agriculture and agri-food operations at the Joyceville and Collins Bay Institutions, broken down by fiscal year since 2017-18; and (d) at present, what is the total estimated project cost, including a 15% contingency?

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Q-1947 — October 26, 2023 — Mr. Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston) — With regard to the abattoir at Joyceville Institution, which ceased operations on September 30, 2022: (a) what funds have been spent from Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) capital budget, CORCAN's Revolving Fund, and Joyceville Institution's budget, broken down by source, on each of repairs, operations, staffing, security, and maintenance, broken down by fiscal year from 2011-12 to 2022-23; (b) what revenues have been collected from abattoir operations by Joyceville Institution, CORCAN, and CSC, broken down by fiscal year from 2011-12 to 2022-23; (c) what funds have been spent on third party apprenticeship and vocational certification for offenders employed in the abattoir, broken down by fiscal year from 2011-12 to 2022-23; (d) how many offenders have been employed in the abattoir, broken down by year from 2012 to 2022; (e) what is the average number of hours spent by an individual offender working in the abattoir, based on number of hours per offender from 2020 to 2022; (f) how many offenders have been registered for a retail meat cutter apprenticeship with the provincial authority, broken down by year from 2012 to 2022; (g) how many offenders have earned third party vocational certification with the provincial authority through employment in the abattoir, broken down by year from 2012 to 2022; (h) what is the number of accident reports involving offenders, broken down by year from 2012 to 2022; (i) what is the number of security incidents involving offenders, broken down by year from 2012 to 2022; (j) what is the number of accident reports involving staff employed by CSC, broken down by year from 2012 to 2022; (k) what repairs are required to bring the abattoir facility to code for operations; and (l) what are the estimated costs of repairs required to bring the abattoir facility to code for operations?

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Q-2103 — December 11, 2023 — Mr. Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston) — With regard to federal correctional institutions, since September 1, 2020: (a) which Red Seal apprenticeships are offered in federal correctional institutions; (b) how many inmates have been registered in Red Seal apprenticeships during their incarceration; (c) how many inmates have successfully completed Red Seal apprenticeships during their incarceration; (d) how many inmates have been released while registered in a Red Seal apprenticeship; (e) does Correctional Service Canada track, seek, or otherwise possess data on the completion or non-completion of Red Seal apprenticeships by inmates who were released while registered in a Red Seal apprenticeship; (f) of the inmates who have been registered in Red Seal apprenticeships during their incarceration, what is the breakdown by region, by institution, and by specific type of Red Seal apprenticeship; (g) of the inmates who have successfully completed Red Seal apprenticeships during their incarceration, what is the breakdown by region, by institution, and by specific type of Red Seal apprenticeship; (h) what non-Red Seal apprenticeships are offered in federal correctional institutions; (i) how many inmates have been registered in non-Red Seal apprenticeships during their incarceration; (j) how many inmates have successfully completed non-Red Seal apprenticeships during their incarceration; (k) how many inmates have been released while registered in a non-Red Seal apprenticeship; (l) of the inmates who have been registered in non-Red Seal apprenticeships during their incarceration, what is the breakdown by region, by institution, and by specific type of non-Red Seal apprenticeship; (m) of the inmates who have successfully completed non-Red Seal apprenticeships during their incarceration, what is the breakdown by region, by institution, and by specific type of non-Red Seal apprenticeship; (n) how many vocational training certificates have been issued through CORCAN's on-the-job training opportunities; and (o) what are the three most common vocational training certificates issued through CORCAN's on-the-job training opportunities, broken down by number, region, and institution?

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Q-2368 — February 22, 2024 — Mr. Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston) — With regard to penitentiary farm and agriculture and agri-food operations at the Joyceville Institution and the Collins Bay Institution: (a) what funds have been spent on Public Services and Procurement Canada fees and disbursements and professional project management services, including, but not limited to, concept design, project leaders, tender packages, geo-technology, hydrogeology, engineering, and architectural consultants, broken down by fiscal year since 2018; (b) what funds have been spent on feasibility studies, public consultations, online consultations, and contracts with Goss Gilroy and Monachus Consulting during the feasibility and consultation phase of the penitentiary farm project, between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2018; (c) prior to the reinstatement of the penitentiary farm program, what revenues were earned by Correctional Service Canada from rental agreements for the penitentiary farmland at the Collins Bay Institution and the Joyceville Institution, broken down by year for each year from 2013 to 2018; (d) of the revenues earned from penitentiary agriculture programming since 2018, what is the breakdown by source and year; (e) how many offenders are currently employed in penitentiary agriculture programming, broken down by location; and (f) of the offenders who have been employed in penitentiary agriculture programming since it was reintroduced in 2018, how many have been released, and, of those released, how many obtained jobs in the agriculture sector?

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APPENDIX 4: JOYCEVILLE CONSTRUCTION

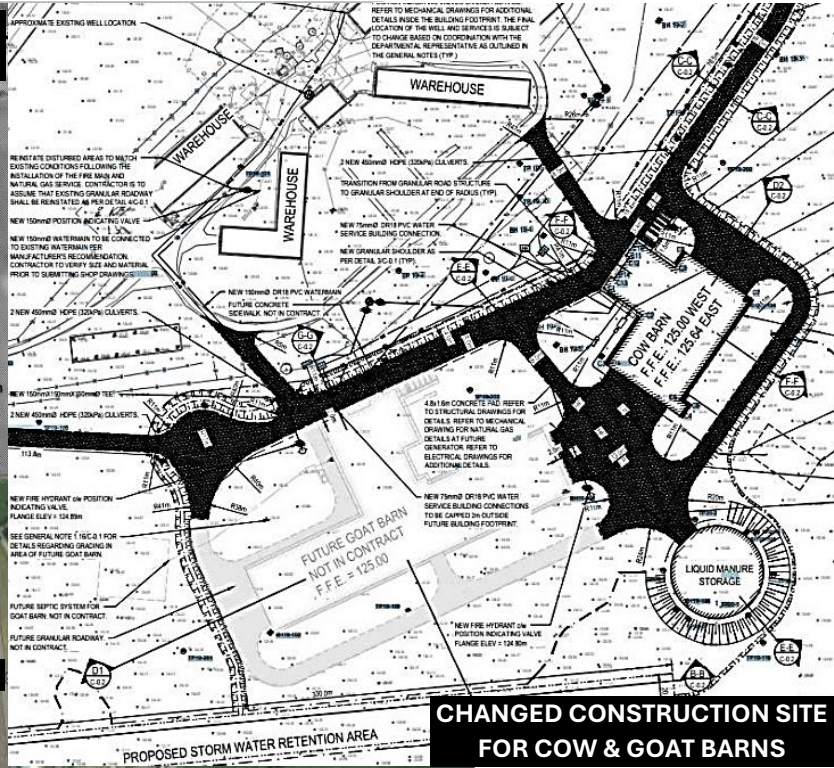
ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION SITE FOR GOAT BARN / DUAL BARN



RIDEAU RIVER



JOYCEVILLE INSTITUTION



CHANGED CONSTRUCTION SITE FOR COW & GOAT BARN

Commented [BJ11]: There is no demolition required under this cattle barn construction tender. An existing barn (PP-49) was originally slated for demolition to make way for a single large combination barn housing both cattle and goats. Shortly thereafter, the plan was revised to build two separate barn facilities, one for cattle and one for goats, as the requirements for the two facilities are quite different (environmental, agricultural codes, etc.). The locations for the barns were relocated to the empty fields adjacent to the original planned location, therefore negating the need to demolish PP-49.

Commented [BJ9]: There is no demolition required under this tender posting. Scope of work includes the new cattle barn facility plus site services, access roadways and a liquid manure tank to serve the cattle barn and future goat barn.



ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION SITE OVER CONCRETE PAD

CHANGED CONSTRUCTION SITE OVER FARMLAND



JOYCEVILLE FARM PRE-CONSTRUCTION 2022



JOYCEVILLE FARM CONSTRUCTION SITE 2024

JOYCEVILLE FARM CONSTRUCTION SITE 2024 SUPERIMPOSED WITH ENGINEERING PLAN



Images: © Google Maps

Engineering Plans: A&A Environmental Consultants (2018, December 10). *Environmental Effects Evaluation*. CSC A-2023-00024; CanadaBuys (2022, March 11). *Construction of Dairy Facility and Cattle Barn at Joyceville Institution*. <https://canadabuys.canada.ca/en/tender-opportunities/tender-notice/pw-pwl-048-2587>.

Commented Text: CSC (n.d.). *Media Lines: Request for Proposal – Cattle Barn* [Draft]. CSC A-2021-00381.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Calvin Neufeld is a social justice advocate, researcher, writer, and gardener. In 2016, Calvin founded Evolve Our Prison Farms as a concept and grassroots campaign. Previously, he worked as a legal researcher, and as executive assistant for the Eastern Lake Ontario Regional Innovation Network funded by the Ontario Ministry of Research and Innovation. In the 2021 federal election, Calvin ran as the Green Party candidate for Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston, where Joyceville Institution is located.