From:	Moesha MacArthur
To:	Pat.Finnigan@gnb.ca
Cc:	Five Rivers Info; karen.campbell@5-rivers.ca; info@fermenb-agalliance.ca
Subject:	Urgent: The Impact of PVS Closure on Harcourt and Rural NB
Date:	March 18, 2026 5:25:00 PM

Dear Minister Finnigan,

I am writing to you today as a constituent in Harcourt and a member of the livestock community. I am deeply alarmed by the 2026-27 provincial budget's plan to phase out the Provincial Veterinary Service (PVS) over the next three years.

As a former farmer and leader within the Agricultural Alliance, you understand that reliable veterinary care is not a luxury - it is essential infrastructure for our provincial food system and our local economy. To be specific, just this past Monday, I had one of my eight horses suffer a colic. Without the Provincial Vet's prompt response and wonderful care, I would not have been able to get the necessary medications or the instruction needed to help my very young horse through that crisis.

Knowing the Provincial Vet is there to provide emergency services - and even end-of-life care if a situation isn't manageable - is a huge peace of mind for livestock owners. I would hate for owners to have to resort to "old school" ways of shooting their animals simply because they cannot access the care they need, or because a health issue has become severe with no other option available. While the transition to private care may seem viable in urban hubs, those of us in rural areas are facing a terrifying reality. I urge you to consider the following points:

- **Food Safety and Public Health:** How are our dairy and meat farmers supposed to ensure they are providing safe, high-quality products without consistent access to veterinary oversight? Preventing disease and maintaining herd health is the foundation of our local food chain. Removing provincial vets without a guaranteed, functional replacement is a direct threat to New Brunswick's food security.

- **The Myth of "Private Coverage":** I have personally been in contact with the only private clinic (in Irishtown) currently servicing equines (no other livestock) in my area (Harcourt). They informed me that Harcourt is at the absolute limit of their service area. If I am "just within the limit," what are the livestock owners in Blackville, Miramichi, or the North supposed to do? They are being left with zero options.

- **Selective Client Lists:** Even for those "within limits," the private market is not a guarantee. The clinic I contacted is only taking SELECT new equine clients and prioritizing those who need routine services immediately. Because I don't have animals due for vaccines today, I am not a priority to be taken on as a client. This leaves me - and many others - with no path for emergency care or long-term health management.

- **Emergency Infrastructure:** Private clinics often lead to specialization. While we have excellent private specialists, they are often not equipped or staffed to handle 24/7 general emergency calls (like a 3 AM colic or difficult birth) across the entire province. Who will answer the phone for a rural farmer in the middle of the night once the PVS is gone?

- **The Financial Barrier for Vets:** Expecting provincial vets to simply "start their own business" ignores reality. The startup cost for a fully equipped mobile unit can exceed $400,000, plus the significant cash reserves needed to survive the first year. Is it realistic to expect a vet on a government salary to secure nearly a million dollars in financing to service low-density rural "service deserts" where the math simply doesn't

work for a private business?

- **The "Rural Retreat":** I know of several owners who transitioned to private practices only to be told later that the clinic would no longer service their area because it was "too far to travel." These families were forced to return to the PVS just to keep their animals alive.

Relying on a few specialized or local private clinics to "pick up the slack" for general and emergency care is not a strategy; it is a gamble with animal welfare. If the government’s goal is to transition to a private model, it cannot be a "hand-off" that leaves rural New Brunswickers behind. We need concrete incentives - such as startup grants for rural clinics or travel subsidies - to ensure that a farmer's ability to provide safe food isn't determined by their proximity to a city.

I look forward to hearing how your department and the provincial government plan to protect rural animal welfare and the livelihoods of New Brunswick's livestock owners during this transition.

Sincerely,

Moesha MacArthur
Harcourt, NB E4T 2Y4
(506)524-2133