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OUR MISSION

OUR MISSION AT WE ANIMALS MEDIA IS TO BRING VISIBILITY TO HIDDEN ANIMALS THROUGH COMPELLING PHOTOJOURNALISM.

We tell the stories of animals used for human purposes — for food, fashion, entertainment and experimentation — and connect those stories to the individuals, organizations and media who can amplify their reach.
WHO WE ARE

We Animals Media is the world’s leading animal photojournalism agency. We document the lives of animals across the globe and expose the ways people interact with, use, and abuse non-human beings. Our photography, videos, and stories are used by organizations, media outlets, and individuals across the globe to inspire compassion, conversation and change for animals.

In our organization’s short history, we have grown our international network of animal photojournalists to over 110 contributors. These brave people venture into farms, slaughterhouses, wet markets, and natural disasters with their cameras, putting themselves at physical and psychological risk. We are honoured to share their work on our stock platform, which has attracted over 3760 registered users in over 85 countries. We have also published three books, partnered with dozens of international organizations to conduct assignments, produced over 30 short films, and been featured in hundreds of news stories.

We believe seeing is an essential step in our collective efforts to repair our species’ broken relationship with non-human beings. With the escalating repercussions to animals due to human activities like factory farming, habitat destruction, and climate change, there is an urgent need to amplify our efforts.

Thank you for supporting our work and for not looking away.

We Animals Media is a federally incorporated Canadian nonprofit organization.
HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022-23

CONDUCTED IN-DEPTH ASSIGNMENTS AND TOLD COMPPELLING ANIMAL STORIES

PARTNERSHIP ASSIGNMENTS

- Canadian dairy cows with World Animal Protection
- Chickens inside Thailand’s factory farms with World Animal Protection Thailand
- Dairy farming in India with Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations
- Dairy industry in Vermont with The Guardian
- Evidentiary footage for a legal case against marketing claims about egg products with Animal Outlook
- Farming, transport, auctions and slaughter in Chile and Argentina with Sinergia Animal
- Heat exhaustion in poultry farms in India with Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations
- Human faces of factory farming with Compassion in World Farming
- Plant-based salmon with New School Foods
- Rise of industrial animal farming in Africa with Sibanye Animal Welfare and Conservancy Trust
- Vietnam’s wet markets and dog meat trade with Asia for Animals Coalition

SHORT FILMS AND EDITORIALS

- Ag-gag Campaign
- Fred the Turkey
- 100 Photographers Bringing You Animal Stories
- The Women of Animal Photojournalism
- This is Animal Photojournalism
- Transfarming Switzerland

We wrapped the Unbound Project, producing 12 final stories about pioneering women in animal advocacy, including Miyoko Schinner, Brenda Sanders, Sarah Heiligtag, Carolina Galvani, Dr. Breeze Harper, and others.
INDEPENDENT ASSIGNMENTS

- Avian influenza in the U.S., Canada, and Europe
- Camel wrestling in Türkiye
- Cattle feedlots in Canada
- Crowded bird markets during the rise of avian flu
- Eid-al-Adha sacrifice and slaughter in Türkiye (content warning - graphic violence)
- Farm Sanctuary in New York
- Farmed animals in flood zones in Northern California
- Foie gras farms in France
- Forrest & Friends farm animal sanctuary in Belgium
- Fur farming in Canada
- Gestation crates in North America
- Kaporos chicken slaughter in New York
- La Rêve d’Aby farm animal sanctuary in Belgium
- Luvin Arms Animal Sanctuary in Colorado
- Mega-dairies and water crisis in Arizona
- Pigs and chickens impacted by flooding in Italy
- Refugees and companion animals in Ukraine
- Shark fin and meat trade in Indonesia
- Sheep farming in Greece
- Sheep farming in Slovakia
- Shrimp farming in India
- The future of food is plant-based
- The Wild Animal Sanctuary in Colorado

EXPANDED OUR STOCK PLATFORM AND PHOTOGRAPHER NETWORK

- 25,000+ visuals from 80+ countries
- 110 animal photojournalists

REFRESHED AND HONED OUR VISUAL BRANDING

We worked with a branding agency to bring We Animals to a new level of clarity, action, and professionalism, which will be unveiled as part of our 2024-25 strategic plan.
GARNERED INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

- Awards and commendations for our animal photojournalism from prestigious organizations such as the Siena International Photography Awards, Natural History Museum’s Wildlife Photographer of the Year, Setting Sun Film Festival, reFOCUS Colour Photography Contest and Prix de la Photographie Paris.
- International exhibitions at the European Parliament and Prix de la Photographie Paris, as well as twelve HIDDEN exhibitions in countries including the US, Croatia, Greece, Peru, and Switzerland.
- Prominently featured in 400+ media outlets, from National Geographic to Vox and The Guardian.
- Images used in comprehensive reports by Harvard, New York University, Compassion in World Farming, and Sydney University Press.
- Our founder, Jo-Anne McArthur, was invited to present about factory farming at the EU Parliament. The talk was accompanied by an extensive exhibit of our work.
- Represented Animal Photojournalism at high-profile events, including the European Vegan Summit, Animals and War Symposium, Animal Protection Denmark conference, and Austrian Animal Rights Congress.

SUPPORTED THE FIELD OF ANIMAL PHOTOJOURNALISM

- Launched our annual Animal Photojournalism Fellowship, supporting the careers of three photographers in priority regions over two years
- We Animals was republished with a foreword, serving as a manual for aspiring animal photojournalists
- Participated in photography portfolio reviews at Visa pour l’Image in France, the international festival of photojournalism
- Showcased interviews with 12 animal photojournalists on our website
- Hosted bi-annual meetings for our contributing photographers
- 1:1 mentoring for many photographers from our founder
- Provided advice and resources to promote APJ in photo and film competitions
Over the next two years, we will forge stronger connections with our networks and audiences by deepening our assignment, communications, and fundraising capabilities and outputs. Pragmatically, we seek to diversify our revenue streams with the goal of becoming a more impactful and sustainable non-profit.

We have five strategic priorities, which break into further objectives:

1. ACTIVATE THE WE ANIMALS BRAND EVOLUTION

We have honed the We Animals look, messaging, and tone since its inception in 2019. In late 2023, we underwent a brand refresh exercise to capture our organization’s evolving ethos. When paired with our evocative images and journalistic voice, our new, active branding will help us better share our work, empower people, and advocate for animals.

- Unveil the We Animals brand refresh in Q2 and familiarize our audiences with its various elements throughout 2024.
- Craft and hone an external Communications strategy and messaging for our active brand through 2024.
- Conduct one campaign for each in-depth investigation we conduct in 2024 and 2025 (pending investigation timelines).
2. ENHANCE EXTENSIVE STORYTELLING

In 2022, we slowed our storytelling to focus on evolving our brand and building the framework for our animal photojournalism agency. We prioritized collaborating with other organizations to provide them with materials for their campaigns. Now that we have honed that process, we can refocus our communications efforts on telling in-depth animal stories. Over the next two years, we will expand our efforts immensely by taking on We Animals-led investigations. We will also strengthen the connection between our assignments and communication channels to capture fieldwork and share it more effectively.

- Complete one We Animals-led, in-depth investigation in 2024 and one in 2025, connecting each to an active advocacy campaign
- Create a visual process map for enhancing WAM storytelling by Q2, which will provide internal clarity and alignment and ultimately connect more people to animal stories.
- Discover and highlight four stories of change and progress in 2024 and four in 2025, emphasizing that positive change can and is happening for animals. This is in response to the requests of our diverse audiences, who want solutions and empowerment!
- Assignments and Services
  - Cover five We Animals-driven storytelling assignments per year, including timely newsworthy events.
  - Collaborate on three partnership assignments per year with other animal protection organizations.
  - Conduct four service assignments per year to support the visual needs of other NGOs.

3. SUPPORT AND BUILD THE ANIMAL PHOTOJOURNALISM NETWORK

If we want to uncover the treatment of animals worldwide, we need more animal photojournalists (APJs) and the work of APJs must become entrenched in the canon of photography and not just a passing trend. As the world’s leading APJ agency, we will continue to recruit, nurture, and champion the brave individuals who do this work.

- Uplevel new and existing animal photojournalists with one week of portfolio reviews in 2024 and two in 2025, bringing together renowned editors and animal photojournalists.
- Provide one-to-one support in the field by conducting one mentorship assignment in 2024 and another in 2025.
- Develop and produce at least two image critique sessions each year to educate, inspire, and recognize more animal photojournalists.
- Speak at conferences and educational events on the topic of animal photojournalism.
4. LEVERAGE OUR DIGITAL ASSETS

The future is unpredictable, but we know the fight for animal justice will not end soon. Reflecting on the years to come and the overall health of our organization, we aim to secure steady cash flows and decrease risk by diversifying our revenue streams. Over the next two years, we will explore the creation of new products and services.

- Complete one metadata licensing pilot project by the end of 2025.
- Promote and sell subscription licenses as a new revenue stream and a way to make visuals more easily accessible to NGOs.
- Acquire content from 8-12 new content categories year-over-year to build depth on the stock platform and add to our value proposition.
- Develop a pilot project for premium licensed content by Q2 2025 to provide financial support to APJs and encourage new contributors to join the network.

5. INCREASE FUNDRAISING CAPACITY

As a nonprofit, We Animals relies on the generosity of external grants and donations. Investing in our development efforts and growing our donor network will help provide financial security that is essential for us to operate. We aim to strengthen relationships with our community of donors and connect with more values-driven supporters in the animal rights movement and beyond.

- Achieve 20% growth in individual giving by 2025.
- Increase the number of annual donor engagements to three.
- Create an annual monthly donor drive by Q3 of 2024.
- Conduct a Donor Survey by Q2 of 2024.
- Launch a new spring/summer campaign in 2024.
LESSONS FROM 2022-23

- Our storytelling could reach a broader audience more effectively. Storytelling now features prominently in our Strategic Plan for 2024-2025, bringing us back to our roots as an organization in a more aligned and strategic way.

- We recognized that we needed to clarify our brand and product/service offerings to better communicate with and serve our different audiences and customers.

- During this challenging economic period, we understood the need to strengthen our fundraising efforts. We hired a new fundraising manager position and better integrated the role for a more holistic approach to our development communications.

- We found more ways to compensate our contributors by overhauling our licensing agreement and exploring subscription licensing. We want to make their work sustainable and will keep seeking avenues to do so!

- With more than 25,000 visuals on our stock platform, over 3500 registered users and a growing network of contributing animal photojournalists, we have a lot of data to manage. We learned that effective Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) requires excellent data management and analysis, so we are expanding our team in 2024 to include a data analyst. This will help provide essential insights for the organization’s management and elevate our reporting and analysis to identify critical areas for improvement or exploration.

- We discovered that the dedicated animal photojournalists in the field and at the heart of what we do yearn for community and support. Moving into 2024, we will continue to build community and provide learning opportunities through new programs, including portfolio reviews, workshops and mentorship assignments.

- As we undertook more assignments and fieldwork than ever, we identified what works well - and what doesn't. We acknowledged that some things are out of our control, like ag-gag laws, avian influenza and foreign conflicts - and came to accept that it's okay to try and fail because when we try and succeed, it can be revelatory. We will continue to push boundaries and take risks in 2024 and beyond to bring the suffering of hidden animals to light.
OUR TEAM

We are finding our sweet spot as a nonprofit organization with a mix of part-time, full-time, and freelance staff. 2023 involved significant changes for We Animals, including hiring a Fundraising Manager and welcoming our new Managing Director, Lisa Amerongen, who joins us with over a decade of nonprofit experience in operations and communications roles and an MBA from the Rotman School of Management.

A special thank you to Kale Ridsdale, who served as We Animals’ inaugural Managing Director until the end of 2023. Kale was foundational in bringing the organization to its current state, and we are grateful for all of her efforts and dedication during her four and a half years with us.

We continue to look for ways to increase our capacity without sacrificing quality and a healthy pace. We are proud of our work but recognize the emotional difficulty that comes with it and continue to support our people.

Learn more about how we work and meet our team.
IN CLOSING

Our work is part of a global effort to end animal suffering at the hands of humans. This is a marathon and not a sprint, and, at times, feels overwhelming and unending. However, we are heartened by the tangible impact our photography and stories have had, galvanized by the prospective impact to come, and inspired by the organizations, activists, donors and advocates who work alongside us.

We look forward to the next two years and the outcomes our combined efforts will bring.