



Horses are Leiki's favourite farm animal.



# Want to rescue farm animals when you grow up?

**We talked to Leiki Salumets, who runs the BC SPCA Good Shepherd Barn in Surrey. She shared with us what it's like caring for farm animals saved from abuse and neglect.**

**What made you want to work for the BC SPCA?**

As far back as I can remember, I've felt a calling to help animals. Growing up, I went to BC SPCA summer camp, where I learned that there were so many jobs out there that would allow me to improve the lives of animals. The BC SPCA is a great place to do that in many different ways.

**Are there any animals who have made a special impression on you?**

When I was 16, I adopted my

first horse. She was very anxious and had some back issues. She taught me to be patient and understanding. She also showed me that the happiness and well-being of a horse were more important to me than riding would ever be. I did still ride her for a bit, but now she's retired. She just enjoys being a horse. It makes me happy to be able to provide her a forever home where she never has to feel anxious again. I want to help more animals like her find caring forever homes.

**Can you tell us a little about your professional background?**

As a teenager, I worked at a stable, feeding and cleaning up after the horses. In the summers, I worked at horse camps as a counsellor. I also volunteered at a vet clinic, which led to a part-time job later on in high school and university. While getting my degree in English literature, I worked as a BC SPCA summer camp counsellor. This led to a full-time job with the BC SPCA, running camps and workshops for kids. Horses are still my biggest passion, so I continue to learn as much as I can about horse welfare and care through online university courses and reading.

**What's your favourite part of your job?**

Seeing animals come into our care after being neglected is very difficult, but seeing them recover and adopted out into loving homes is very rewarding. One of the best things is when an animal feels energetic and happy enough to play again!



Sheep and goats and pigs... oh my! Leiki cares for all sorts of farm animals at the BC SPCA Good Shepherd Barn in Surrey.

**Is there one case that sticks out in your mind?**

The best cases are ones where we don't have to seize any animals! We can make a difference just by providing guardians with the information and tools they need to improve the lives of the animals in their care. Those are the greatest successes in my mind.

**What's the most unusual animal you've helped?**

We've had all sorts of animals come into our care: everything from chickens and ducks to goats, sheep, donkeys, horses and even pigeons! But the most unusual animal I've helped would have to be a llama. They're such interesting creatures. They just have something majestic about



them. Seeing them canter about is quite something!

**What keeps you excited to do your job every day?**

The animals and the wonderful volunteers and staff I work with who share my love for animals. Knowing we're making a difference. The fact that compassion for animals is growing and spreading every day I do my job keeps me motivated. I also love learning about animals, and I definitely learn something new every day, which keeps things very interesting!

**What is one piece of advice you would give to kids who want to make a difference for animals?**

Role model! Even if you don't have pets of your own, or can't work hands-on with animals, you can make a huge difference just by being kind and compassionate to all living things - animals, plants and people. If you're kind to animals and their habitats and to the people who look after them, you're helping build an animal-friendly community. Keep learning, sharing and listening to others and follow your passions!

**Your career path... to becoming a BC SPCA farm animal care supervisor**

- ✓ Graduate high school
- ✓ Post-secondary school (preferred)
- ✓ B.C. driver's license
- ✓ Animal care skills
- ✓ Knowledge of farm animals
- ✓ Volunteer/work experience with farm animals
- ✓ Communication and organizational skills
- ✓ Good physical fitness

