

# BRITAIN'S FAILING SLAUGHTERHOUSES



WHY IT'S TIME TO MAKE INDEPENDENTLY MONITORED CCTV MANDATORY

[www.animalaid.org.uk](http://www.animalaid.org.uk)



**SAY YES TO**  
SLAUGHTERHOUSE CCTV

**4,000**

**SERIOUS BREACHES  
OF ANIMAL  
WELFARE LAW**

**14/15**

**SLAUGHTERHOUSES  
FILMED WERE  
BREAKING THE LAW**

**0**

**SLAUGHTERHOUSES  
IN FULL COMPLIANCE  
WHEN AUDITED**

**More than 4,000 serious breaches of animal welfare laws in British slaughterhouses were reported by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in the two years to August 2016.<sup>1</sup> The regulator's audit showed that not one UK slaughterhouse was in full compliance when the data was analysed in June 2016.<sup>2</sup> Yet together, these are just a small sample of the breaches that actually occur inside Britain's slaughterhouses. We know this because Animal Aid and Hillside Animal Sanctuary have placed fly-on-the-wall cameras inside 15 English slaughterhouses and found how workers behave when they think they are not being watched. Fourteen of the slaughterhouses were breaking animal welfare laws.**

From small family-run abattoirs to multi-plant companies, all across the country, and in relation to all species, slaughterhouse workers break the law. Their abuses are both serious and widespread, and are hidden from the regulators.

When being secretly filmed, workers punched and kicked animals in the head; burned them with cigarettes; beat them with paddles and broom handles; picked them up by their fleeces and threw them across rooms; smashed sheep headfirst into solid structures; attacked pigs with shackle hooks; and deliberately gave animals powerful electric shocks through their ears, tails, abdomens and open mouths. A very high percentage (including more than 99 per cent of all pigs killed in two slaughterhouses) were improperly stunned. In more than one case, the abuse stopped temporarily when a vet or other senior official approached.

Some of these slaughterhouses had installed CCTV, which shows that the cameras alone do not deter law-breaking, and that unless the footage is properly monitored, Food Business Operators (FBOs) do not detect – or do not report – these breaches. It is unknown whether FBOs fail to monitor their cameras properly or they monitor them and choose not to report the abuse. We do know that one-fifth of slaughterhouses have refused to hand over the footage to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) when requested.<sup>3</sup>

Either way, the voluntary system of installation is not working, and it is now time to make cameras mandatory, and task an independent body that has animal welfare as its priority with monitoring the footage.

Since Animal Aid first brought slaughterhouse abuse to the attention of the UK authorities in 2009, the

FSA and industry have made efforts to tackle the illegal actions of slaughterhouse workers. These have not worked. In August 2016, after the jailing of one slaughterhouse worker, Defra and the FSA stated:

*'We hope the sentencing is a major deterrent to those who think they can profit from cutting corners and jeopardising food safety.'*<sup>4</sup>

Yet, just a few months later, an investigation at a Yorkshire slaughterhouse revealed that law-breaking

in UK abattoirs continues. In fact, investigators have not found a slaughterhouse where workers comply with animal welfare laws since June 2009.

While Animal Aid, the British Veterinary Association and more recently the FSA have called for mandatory CCTV with independent monitoring of the footage, other nations have moved before the UK, namely Israel and France where this important initiative has been enacted. Italy, the Netherlands and Belgium's Flemish Region are expected to follow suit. The UK – where the vast majority of evidence has been accumulated – has yet to act.

---

“

**EITHER WAY, THE VOLUNTARY SYSTEM OF INSTALLATION IS NOT WORKING, AND IT IS NOW TIME TO MAKE CAMERAS MANDATORY, AND TASK AN INDEPENDENT BODY THAT HAS ANIMAL WELFARE AS ITS PRIORITY WITH MONITORING THE FOOTAGE.**

”

---

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### WHY?

More than 4,000 serious breaches of animal welfare laws in British slaughterhouses were reported by the FSA in the two years to August 2016.<sup>5</sup>

The regulator's audit showed that not one UK slaughterhouse was in full compliance when the data was analysed in June 2016.<sup>6</sup>

Yet together, these are just a small sample of the breaches that *actually* occur inside Britain's slaughterhouses. We know this because Animal Aid and Hillside Animal Sanctuary have placed fly-on-the-wall cameras inside 15 English slaughterhouses and found how workers behave when they think they are not being watched. Fourteen of the slaughterhouses were breaking animal welfare laws. (See page 7 for details of each investigation.)

Workers punched and kicked animals in the head; burned them with cigarettes; beat them with paddles and broom handles; picked them up by their fleeces and threw them across rooms; smashed sheep headfirst into solid structures; attacked pigs with shackle hooks; and deliberately gave animals powerful electric shocks through their ears, tails, abdomens and open mouths. A very high percentage (including more than 99 per cent of all pigs killed in two slaughterhouses) were improperly stunned.

Other countries have acted when faced with cruelty inside slaughterhouses. Both Israel and France have now made CCTV mandatory. Italy, the Netherlands and the Belgium Flemish Region are expected to follow. The Indian state of Uttar Pradesh has made CCTV mandatory.

The presence of CCTV cameras alone does not work. For effective deterrence and detection of abuse, there must be independent monitoring of the footage.

### HOW?

A regulation could be made under Section 12 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Section 12 'provides for the making of regulations for the purpose of promoting the welfare of animals for which a person is responsible'. This would not be without precedent as The Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007 were introduced this way.

### HOW MUCH?

The cost of installing cameras is 'relatively modest' (George Eustice, Adjournment Debate, 3rd February 2015) and should not be a barrier to implementation.

The cost of monitoring will depend on how it is done, by whom and how much footage is monitored. An independent report by Professor Ian Rotherham of Sheffield Hallam University (published August 2016) found that an independent CCTV-monitoring system could cost between £150,000 and £370,000 a year for slaughterhouses in England.

### WHY NOW?

The presence of independently monitored cameras in slaughterhouses is long overdue. The many scandals emanating from this industry – from welfare abuses and deaths of workers to the horsemeat contamination, bullying of staff and campylobacter – have led to reputational damage across the whole industry.

Post-Brexit, it will be more important than ever that high welfare standards are maintained and enforced.



**THE COST OF INSTALLING CAMERAS IS  
'RELATIVELY MODEST'.**



**- GEORGE EUSTICE MP**

# CCTV IN SLAUGHTERHOUSES: PROPOSED LEGISLATION IN BRIEF

## HOW?

A regulation could be made under Section 12 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Section 12 'provides for the making of regulations for the purpose of promoting the welfare of animals for which a person is responsible'. This would not be without precedent as The Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007 were introduced this way.

## WHERE ELSE HAS CCTV BEEN MADE MANDATORY?

Both Israel and France have made CCTV cameras mandatory in response to investigations that revealed abuse of animals inside their country's slaughterhouses.

The Netherlands, Italy and Belgium's Flemish Region have legislation pending.

The Indian State of Uttar Pradesh has mandatory CCTV in all its slaughterhouses.

## WHAT WOULD IT COST?

The cost of installing cameras is 'relatively modest' (George Eustice, Adjournment Debate, 3rd February 2015) and should not be a barrier to implementation.

The cost of monitoring will depend on how it is done, by whom and how much footage is monitored. An independent report by Professor Ian Rotherham of Sheffield Hallam University (published August 2016) found that an independent CCTV-monitoring system would cost between £150,000 and £370,000 a year for slaughterhouses in England.

These modest figures should be weighed against the cost of not acting. The many scandals emanating from this industry – from welfare abuses and deaths of workers to the horsemeat contamination, staff bullying and campylobacter – have led to

reputational damage across the whole industry. As a result of animal welfare abuses being uncovered, two slaughterhouses have gone out of business and a third has been shut down by the FSA. The cost of independent monitoring is very little compared with the immediate and longer-term costs arising from such scandals.

The 2016 Rotherham report suggested a levy on each animal killed, so that industry and consumer pay, rather than government and taxpayer, in line with current regulatory policy. One penny per red meat carcass would cover the cost of monitoring.

## HOW MANY SLAUGHTERHOUSES ALREADY HAVE CAMERAS?

Around 49 per cent of red meat slaughterhouses and 70 per cent of white meat slaughterhouses in England and Wales have some form of CCTV.

## WHY IS A LAW NEEDED?

Not every slaughterhouse has installed cameras, and voluntary take-up has plateaued. Moreover, the cameras are often not installed throughout their premises, are not necessarily facing the right way, turned on, well maintained or working. The footage is not monitored by an independent body with welfare as its priority, nor does it have to be handed over to regulators when requested. In May 2016, *The Times* reported that one-fifth of slaughterhouses with cameras refuse to share the footage with the regulators. A law would set out all these requirements, as well as details of how the footage would be monitored.

## WHY THE EMPHASIS ON INDEPENDENT MONITORING?

Five of the slaughterhouses in this report had CCTV cameras installed but unless the footage is monitored, serious breaches of animal welfare laws go unreported. It is clear that FBOs are either failing to monitor their cameras, or failing to report breaches they witness on their footage. It is essential that a body with welfare as its priority monitors the footage.

## WHO ELSE IS CALLING FOR MANDATORY CCTV IN SLAUGHTERHOUSES?

The **FSA** supports mandatory CCTV. Its Chair stated that the case for CCTV in slaughterhouses has been made (November 2016).

The **British Veterinary Association** supports mandatory CCTV with independent monitoring of the footage.

**UNISON** – the union that represents meat hygiene inspectors and slaughterhouse vets – supports mandatory CCTV with independent monitoring of the footage.

**142 MPs signed the latest EDM**, and others who do not sign EDMs have stated their support elsewhere.

**All the major supermarkets** have now agreed to deal only with slaughterhouses that have

‘independently monitored’ CCTV. The RSPCA also insists that all RSPCA Assured-approved slaughterhouses have CCTV with ‘independent monitoring’. (However, the level and robustness of the monitoring mentioned above varies widely, and in some cases is extremely weak, verging on the non-existent – another reason to put in place proper monitoring by a body that has welfare as its priority.)

The campaign is also supported by the **RSPCA**, **Compassion in World Farming** and many other animal protection groups.

A 2014 YouGov public opinion poll found that **76 per cent of respondents supported mandatory CCTV**. That figure rose to 87 per cent when taking into account only those who expressed a view. A petition hosted on the UK Government website in 2015 attracted **112,285 signatures**.



## THE UK SLAUGHTERHOUSES

At fourteen of these fifteen slaughterhouses, workers were filmed breaking animal welfare laws. The anomaly is Pickstock, a bovine slaughterhouse in Derbyshire (now located in Shropshire), where no illegal abuse took place on the three days we filmed, although the FSA did note poor practice, and requested additional staff training.

---

**Malik Food Group**  
*March 2017*

**A&G Barber**  
*April 2010*

**Cheshire Halal UK Ltd**  
*March 2017*

**JH Lambert**  
*March 2010*

**N Bramall and Son Ltd**  
*October 2016*

**Anglo Beef Processors**  
*February 2010*

**S Bagshaw and Sons**  
*February 2015*

**Tom Lang Ltd**  
*November 2009*

**Bowood Farms Ltd**  
(Trading as Bowood Yorkshire Lamb)  
*December 2014*

**Pickstock (Ashby) Ltd**  
*June 2009*

**Simply Halal (Banham) Ltd**  
*March 2014*

**AC Hopkins (Taunton) Ltd**  
*April 2009*

**Cheale Meats Ltd**  
*April 2011*

**JV Richards (Rietfontein) Ltd**  
*January 2009*

**F Drury & Son**  
*September 2010*

### A NOTE ON METHODS:

---

**ANIMAL AID HAS A STRICT INVESTIGATIONS POLICY WHICH ENSURES ADHERENCE TO BIOSECURITY MEASURES, OBTAINING ACCESS TO PREMISES WITHOUT CAUSING ANY DAMAGE TO PROPERTY AND SEEKING TO ENSURE THAT NO STRESS IS CAUSED TO ANIMALS AT SITES VISITED.**

---

## MALIK FOOD GROUP

(ALSO TRADES AS DALE VALLEY  
ROSSENDALE LTD AND RILEY  
BROTHERS WHOLESALE MEAT LTD)

This non-stun slaughterhouse in Lancashire was filmed slaughtering sheep over three days in March 2017.

### BREACHES OF THE LAW

- Sheep were picked up by their fleeces and thrown.
- Sheep were routinely moved within 20 seconds of having their throats cut without prior stunning.
- Sheep were loaded without due care on to the conveyor which resulted in animals being piled on top of one another.
- The slaughterman failed to maintain a surgically sharp knife which resulted in sheep's throats being hacked at up to seven times.

### ALSO OF CONCERN

- A worker warned the others when the FSA vet was approaching.

### ACTION

This slaughterhouse was reported by Animal Aid to the FSA on 29th March 2017.

It sent a Field Veterinary Co-ordinator to the site

immediately, increased veterinary cover at the point of killing, revoked the Certificate of Competence from one worker and issued a Welfare Enforcement Notice.

On 5th April, the FSA wrote to Animal Aid:

*'It is our intention to undertake a full investigation into the alleged breaches identified in your footage... The actions taken by Animal Aid in securing the footage will form part of the evidence of a criminal case...'*

### IN THE MEDIA

'One of Britain's largest halal slaughterhouses is under investigation over allegations of animal cruelty', *The Daily Mail*, 8th April 2017

'Major halal slaughterhouse investigated for animal cruelty', *The Metro*, 8th April 2017

'Inside one of Britain's largest halal slaughterhouses where "poorly trained" slaughtermen hack open terrified sheep's throats', *The Sun*, 8th April 2017



“

# A WORKER WARNED THE OTHERS WHEN THE FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY VET WAS APPROACHING.

”

‘Inside one of Britain’s largest halal slaughterhouses where “poorly trained” slaughtermen hack open terrified sheep’s throats’, *The Scottish Sun*, 8th April 2017

‘Food Standards Agency probe Burnley slaughterhouse over abuse claims’, *BBC Online*, 11th April 2017

‘Secret footage sparks probe into “barbaric” animal cruelty at halal abattoir’, *Lancashire Telegraph*, 11th April 2017

‘Halal slaughterhouse being investigated over animal cruelty’, *Burnley Express*, 10th April 2017

‘Abattoir investigated by Food Standards Agency over alleged animal welfare breaches’, *Rosendale Free Press*, 13th April 2017

‘Investigation launched at slaughterhouse’, *2BR Lancashire*, 11th April 2017

‘Lancashire halal abattoir under investigation for animal cruelty’, *Farmers Guardian*, 19th April 2017

“An absolute disgrace” - farmers react as halal abattoir investigated for animal cruelty’, *Farmers Guardian*, 20th April 2017

‘Major halal slaughterhouse under investigation for animal cruelty’, *Meat Management*, 10th April 2017

‘Halal industry condemns “barbaric” slaughterhouse CCTV footage’, *Meat Trades Journal*, 12th April 2017

‘Campaigners stage silent vigil outside slaughterhouse after undercover probe’, *Lancashire Telegraph*, 26th April 2017

‘Protesters lay flowers at under-fire slaughterhouse’, *Lancashire Post*, 25th April 2017

‘Calls for tough action against slaughterhouse’, *2BR Lancashire*, 25th April 2017

‘Campaigners hold protest at slaughterhouse’, *2BR Lancashire*, 25th April 2017



**A sheep panics after being incompetently cut.**



**This slaughterhouse was filmed slaughtering sheep over three days in March 2017.**

## **BREACHES OF THE LAW**

- A sheep was picked up by the fleece and thrown over a gate.
- One sheep had the stunning tongs used on her abdomen.
- Another animal was pushed with such force she fell and was unable to get up for 20 seconds.
- One animal was pulled along by her hind leg.

## **ALSO OF CONCERN**

- A sick or injured sheep was carried to slaughter. Workers claimed that the animal had suffered a heart attack.

## **ACTION**

This slaughterhouse was reported by Animal Aid to the FSA on 29th March 2017. The Agency reviewed the footage and has recommended staff

be retrained. Animal Aid is pushing for workers' Certificates of Competence to be revoked.

“

**A SHEEP WAS PICKED UP BY THE FLEECE AND THROWN OVER A GATE...ONE SHEEP HAD THE STUNNING TONGS USED ON HER ABDOMEN.**

”



This slaughterhouse in South Yorkshire was filmed slaughtering sheep, cows and a water buffalo over four days in October 2016.

## BREACHES OF THE LAW

- A cow was held in a head restraint for two-and-a-half minutes.
- A distressed water buffalo was held in the stun box for four minutes and 55 seconds. He attempted to jump out after witnessing other animals being slaughtered.

## ALSO OF CONCERN

- Staff moved animals roughly.
- The stun pen was overcrowded.

## ACTION

This slaughterhouse was reported by Animal Aid to the FSA on 31st October 2016. The Agency visited the slaughterhouse and reviewed the footage. On 18th November it wrote to Animal Aid:

*'We agree there are some instances when the pen is overcrowded... There is one*

*incident where the animal is in the head restraint for 2.5 minutes whilst staff clarify the animal's ID. It cannot move its head and appears stressed. It is a legal requirement that animals are not delayed in the stunning box and we are writing to the FBO to ensure this does not happen in future.'*

It said it will work with the slaughterhouse to review their Standard Operating Procedures relating to overcrowding in the stun pen and the length of time animals may be kept in the stunning box.

## IN THE MEDIA

'Undercover secret video inside Sheffield slaughterhouse shows "nightmarish" animal "cruelty"', *Sheffield Star*, 25th January 2017

'Severed cow and sheep heads found dumped in skip at Sheffield slaughterhouse protest', *South Yorkshire Times*, 16 February 2017

## S BAGSHAW AND SONS

around - sickening violence inside family butchers' slaughterhouse in distressing video captured by campaigners' hidden cameras

- Warning: graphic content
- Horrifying clip of animals tormented
- In one scene worker stamps on a foot
- Another distressing video sees three desperate animals in seen staggering
- The shocking footage has prompted
- And the abattoir boss admits he was

By the author for the Daily Mail and published 10.02.15 February 2015 updated



Mirror

THE Sun

ALL NEWS UK NEWS WORLD NEWS

SLAUGHTERHOUSE SHOCK caught on secret camera

NEWS

England

Leek abattoir worker jailed for 'barbaric' animal cruelty

02 August 2016

METRO

HOME NEWS SPORT ENTERTAINMENT LIFESTYLE

UK WORLD NEWS TECH

'Barbaric' slaughterhouse worker jailed after being filmed crushing stamping on screaming animal

This Staffordshire slaughterhouse was filmed by Hillside Animal Sanctuary over a period of one year.

## BREACHES OF THE LAW

- Sheep were kicked in the face, punched, dragged and hit.
- They were grabbed by their heads and necks, and thrown on their backs or against a metal gate.
- Sheep were restrained by their ears and horns.
- A sheep was hit on the head with a captive bolt gun.
- A sheep was hit with the chain of a metal shackle.
- One worker stamped on a conscious sheep.
- A pig was struck repeatedly with a metal gate, and pinned to a wall.
- Poor stunning was commonplace.

## ALSO OF CONCERN

- The workers all seemed to take part in the cruelty. Footage shows three men pinning a pig behind a gate.

## ACTION

The FSA revoked the licences of two workers and temporarily shut down the slaughterhouse. It brought a prosecution in which Anthony Bagshaw was convicted on 24 counts, which included seven food safety offences. He was jailed for 10 months and banned from keeping animals for 15 years.

## IN THE MEDIA

'Harrowing undercover footage in a butcher's abattoir shows farm animals kicked, punched and thrown around', *The Mirror*, 7 February 2015

'Barbaric torment of farm animals inside family butchers' slaughterhouse', *The Express*, 8 Feb 2015

"Barbaric" abattoir worker caught on secret camera kicking and knee dropping pigs and sheep', *The Sun*, 24 August 2016

'Kicked, punched, hit and thrown around - sickening violence inside a family butcher's slaughterhouse in distressing video captured by campaigners' hidden cameras', *The Daily Mail*, 9 February 2015

“Barbaric” slaughterhouse worker jailed after being filmed crushing and stamping on screaming animals’, *The Metro*, 23 August 2016

‘Cruel slaughterhouse worker who was caught on undercover footage kicking pigs in the face and hurling sheep against a metal gate is jailed’, *The Daily Mail*, 23 August 2016

‘Leek abattoir worker jailed for “barbaric” animal cruelty’, *BBC News*, 22 August 2016

‘Abattoir workers jailed for “shocking” animal cruelty’, *Farmers Weekly*, 25 August 2016

‘Caged: Vicious slaughterhouse worker filmed kicking and hitting animals before their death’, *The Daily Star*, 23 August 2016

---

“

**SHEEP WERE KICKED IN THE FACE,  
PUNCHED, DRAGGED AND HIT...A PIG WAS  
REPEATEDLY STRUCK WITH A METAL GATE,  
AND PINNED TO A WALL.**

”

---



**This non-stun slaughterhouse in North Yorkshire was filmed slaughtering sheep over three days in December 2014. All six workers filmed were breaking the law.**

**BREACHES OF THE LAW**

- Sheep were picked up by their ears, legs and fleeces, and smashed head first into solid structures.
- The layout of the slaughterhouse contributed to the suffering of animals: animals fell from the conveyor as the drop was too big; hit the structure in front of them as the conveyor was moving too fast and fell as the floor was too slippery.
- Eighty-six per cent of the first 500 sheep filmed were moved within 20 seconds of having their throats cut without prior stunning. (4,000 sheep were filmed in all.)
- The knife was not surgically sharp and the slaughtermen took up to five attempts to sever the blood vessels.
- Animals were routinely moved before they'd had time to lose consciousness.
- One worker turned a sheep over and, while holding her by her throat, pulled back a fist as if to punch her.

- Another kicked a sheep in the face before standing on her neck and bouncing up and down.
- Workers kicked the animals in the head and face, sometimes so hard they fell or hit their heads on the infrastructure.
- One sheep was loaded onto the conveyor upside down; another one backwards.
- One worker picked up a sheep and danced.
- One sheep emerged with spectacles drawn around her eyes in green paint. Even after her throat was cut and she was bleeding to death, the slaughterman held up her head, turning it round so everyone could see and laugh.
- Two slaughtermen slapped sheep in the face, waved their knives at them and taunted them for five minutes while they were trapped in the chute.

**ALSO OF CONCERN**

While there are differing opinions on what can be considered halal, we filmed many practices at Bowood that would defy expectations of what both Muslims and non-Muslims believe halal slaughter

to be. This included: Christmas songs being played; a slaughterman aborting a cut to take a phone call; shouting and swearing among colleagues; and using racist, abusive language.

## ACTION

The FSA suspended the licences of three slaughtermen and introduced a full-time FSA presence to monitor the staff and FBO. Its Official Veterinarian ensured the FBO made modifications to the floor. It conducted a full investigation and handed the file to the CPS for review in September 2015 but by August 2015, the company had gone into administration. In March 2016, the CPS charged three employees with causing unnecessary suffering, and two directors with failing to take action to prevent unnecessary suffering. As of April 2017, it is still going through legal processes.



**A sheep's head is deliberately crushed at Bowood.**

## IN THE MEDIA

'Secret halal slaughterhouse film reveals "horrific" animal abuse', *The Telegraph*, 3rd February 2015

'Halal slaughterhouse staff investigated over alleged cruelty', *The Guardian*, 3rd February 2015

'Inside the house of horrors: sickening footage shows "evil" abattoir staff "taunting sheep before hacking them to pieces"', *Mail Online*, 3rd February 2015

'Secret film shows "extreme cruelty" in slaughterhouse', *Channel 4 News*, 3rd February 2015

'CCTV Footage Exposes Slaughterhouse Cruelty', *Sky News*, 3rd February 2015

'Halal house of horror', *The Sun*, 3rd February 2015

'Halal slaughter: Outcry after undercover film exposes brutality of industry', *The Independent*, 3rd February 2015

'Shocking footage captures workers kicking sheep in the face and laughing at animals bleeding to death', *Daily Record*, 3rd February 2015

'Probe launched after secret cameras show shocking abuse of animals at Halal slaughterhouse in Yorkshire', *The Evening Standard*, 3rd February 2015

'Shocking "halal" slaughterhouse', *Asian Express*, February 10th 2015

'Abattoir staff "hacked and taunted sheep"', *Farmers Weekly*, 3rd February 2015

'Bowood Yorkshire Lamb Halal Slaughterhouse where Staff Abused Animals Goes Into Administration', *The Huffington Post*, 13 August 2015

'Thirsk animal "abuse" slaughterhouse in administration', *BBC News*, 13th August 2015

'Halal slaughterhouse filmed "abusing sheep" goes into administration', *The Express*, 14 August 2015

'Bowood Farms abattoir goes into administration', *The Grocer*, 14th August 2015

## SIMPLY HALAL (BANHAM) LTD

### Halal abattoir staff suspend cruelty claims

### MailOnline

### Horror at halal slaughterhouse Shocking undercover film shows 'needless suffering' of livestock are butchered without being stunned first

This Norfolk slaughterhouse was openly filmed by Mail on Sunday investigators in 2014, and then covertly by Hillside Animal Sanctuary over eight days in February and March 2016.

### BREACHES OF THE LAW

- When journalists posing as buyers filmed at Simply Halal, there were no clear legal breaches although there was evidence of poor practice – such as sheep being loaded onto the conveyor together, and the knife not being cleaned after each cut. However, when covert cameras were put into place, evidence of breaches was found.
- Animals were not sufficiently restrained and attempted to escape even after their throats were cut. Some fell on the floor and were thrown back into the blood trough.
- Animals were roughly manhandled.

### ALSO OF CONCERN

This slaughterhouse appears to have breached a number of halal requirements, meaning that the meat produced would not have been considered acceptable. This included sheep seeing one another dying.

### ACTION

The FSA halted operations and suspended seven workers – five slaughterhouse staff, its own vet

and one meat hygiene inspector – over ‘serious deficiencies’.<sup>7</sup>

The company closed down but Hillside Animal Sanctuary says its manager went on to become a Director of a new company, Norfolk Meat Traders, which slaughters animals on the same site.

### IN THE MEDIA

‘Horror at halal slaughterhouse: Shocking undercover film shows the “needless suffering” of livestock that are butchered without being stunned first’, *The Daily Mail*, 12 April 2014

‘Halal abattoir staff suspended over animal cruelty claim’, *Farmers Weekly*, 1 June 2014

‘Halal abattoir shut over “callous” killings’, *The Times*, 2 May 2016

‘Halal horror house as undercover video exposes cruel abattoir filled with terrified animals’, *The Mirror*, 6 May 2016

‘Halal slaughterhouse at Banham closed as undercover footage shows conditions inside’, *Eastern Daily Press*, 12 May 2016





**This Essex slaughterhouse was filmed over four days in March and April 2011.**

## BREACHES OF THE LAW

- At least two workers stubbed cigarettes out on the faces of pigs.
- Another worker landed a punch on the face of a pig who was walking by.
- Three seriously injured pigs were forced to crawl through the slaughterhouse. They were pushed, beaten and kicked along.
- One lame pig was dragged into the stun pen by his ears.
- An electric goad was used on the face of one pig and on the anus of another.
- Animals were beaten with excessive force and frequency, and around the head and face.
- Much of the stunning was incompetent, with tongs placed incorrectly. Some stuns appeared designed to bring the animals screaming to the ground, where a proper stun was then administered.

## ALSO OF CONCERN

- Animals experienced additional stress when blood from slaughtered pigs was washed around the feet of living pigs.
- One pig had her throat cut at the top of the chute so her blood fell onto living pigs below.

## ACTION

The FSA revoked two slaughter licences and increased monitoring.

After a protracted campaign to get the FSA to build a case for prosecution (it had refused because Defra had stated it would not prosecute where the footage had come from covert filming), the case was handed to the CPS and a successful trial was brought. In April 2012, two men were jailed for their part in the abuse of animals at Cheale Meats.

---

“

# AT LEAST TWO WORKERS STUBBED CIGARETTES OUT ON THE FACES OF PIGS.

”

---

## IN THE MEDIA

‘Revealed: Shocking cruelty at massive abattoir ... but those responsible WON’T be prosecuted’, *The Daily Mail*, 29 July 2011

‘Secret footage allegedly shows pigs abused at abattoir’, *The Telegraph*, 29 July 2011

‘Pig abuse: Abattoir staff filmed beating pigs and stubbing out cigarettes on their faces’, *The Mirror*, 30 Jul 2011

‘Exclusive: Video shows pigs abuse at abattoir’, *Sky News*, 29 July 2011

‘Shocking pig abuse at abattoir’, *The Sun*, 29 July 2011

‘Exposed: abattoir’s shocking pig cruelty’, *The Express*, 30 July 2011

‘Secret footage reveals pigs being punched and burned with cigarettes by staff’, *The Veterinary Times*, 1 August 2011

‘Animal cruelty pair jailed after being caught stubbing out cigarettes on pigs’ faces and hitting them with a baton’, *The Daily Mail*, 25 April 2012

‘Slaughtermen jailed for animal cruelty offences’, *Meat Trades Journal*, 25 April 2012

‘Ex slaughtermen admit pig cruelty at Essex abattoir’, *BBC News*, 18 April 2012



This Wiltshire slaughterhouse was filmed over two days in September 2010.

### BREACHES OF THE LAW

- Sheep had their necks broken and were decapitated immediately after their throats were cut. The law states 20 seconds must elapse to ensure the animal is dead.
- Two young calves were left to collapse repeatedly on the slippery floor of the slaughter room. Their ordeal lasted for three hours.
- Sheep were picked up by their fleeces and thrown.

### ALSO OF CONCERN

- There were several instances of poor stunning tong placement, which are likely to have caused suffering. In one case, a partially stunned sheep stood up, ran away and succumbed later.
- The recommended stun-to-stick interval was exceeded for a number of sheep and calves.

### ACTION

The FSA confirmed:

*'There are practices that are evident in the footage that show that the law relating to the times that animals need to bleed out was not being adhered to.'*

It recommended improvements including installation of CCTV and retraining.

### IN THE MEDIA

'Supermarket chain pledges CCTV in abattoirs to stamp out cruelty', *The Independent*, 19 November 2010



**This pig slaughterhouse in Essex was filmed over three days in April 2010.**

## **BREACHES OF THE LAW**

- One worker used the stunning tongs to deliberately send powerful electric shocks through the snouts, ears, tails, forelegs and bodies of animals, and even through the open mouth of a pig.
- He repeatedly jabbed a conscious pig in the face with the stunning tongs.
- He hit a pig in the face with a shackle hook, drawing blood.
- He left a semi-stunned pig on the ground for 30 seconds while he wiped his face.
- Both workers were filmed kicking the animals with shocking force, including in their faces and stomachs.
- The method of stunning itself was illegal. Animals were given a brief head stun, which was not sufficient to render them unconscious but was enough to make them collapse. Then they were given an electric shock around their bodies, and only then were they given a proper head stun.

- Pigs were shackled before being stunned.

---

“**THE CRUELTY ON SHOW IS THE WORST I HAVE SEEN.**”

**- FSA CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

---

## **ALSO OF CONCERN**

- While most of the violence was meted out by one man, his colleagues watched without stepping in.
- After a particularly violent episode, he looked up as someone approached. The next five pigs were stunned legally – the only ones to be stunned legally throughout the whole three days

– before he resumed his previous illegal method of stunning. It was deduced that he changed his behaviour when he thought he was being watched.

- The man stood over suffering pigs, and mocked them.
- The pen was covered in blood, which was slippery and added to the stress of the live animals brought in.

## ACTION

The FSA's Chief Executive said:

*'The cruelty on show is the worst I have seen.'*

Both the slaughterhouse operator and the slaughterman were facing prosecution but all charges were dropped by Defra in September 2010. No credible explanation was given.

The slaughterhouse's main buyer chose not to continue doing business with A&G Barber as a result of the footage, and the slaughterhouse closed down in August 2010.

## IN THE MEDIA

'Secret filming of animal abuse in slaughterhouses', *The Guardian*, 7 October 2010

'Investigation into alleged cruelty at abattoir,' *Chelmsford Weekly News*, 30 June 2010

'Undercover film exposes Russian slaughterman who tortured pigs,' *Essex Live*, 3 July 2010

'Purleigh abattoir shuts after cruelty probe,' *Maldon Standard*, 27 August 2010





**This Norfolk slaughterhouse was filmed over two days in March 2010.**

## **BREACHES OF THE LAW**

- Animals were dragged into the stun pen by their heads by five different members of staff.
- Animals were picked up by their fleeces and ears, and thrown forcibly into or across the stun pen.
- The stun-to-stick interval was breached.
- The method of stunning pigs was illegal. A brief head stun did not render animals unconscious but did make them collapse. Then, the slaughterman delivered what we believe was intended to be a 'head-to-body' kill using the same electric tongs.

## **ALSO OF CONCERN**

- Just one man was both stunning and sticking the animals. He often stunned three animals at once before moving into the stun pen to cut their throats. This is bad practice, contravenes Defra's guidelines and increases the likelihood of animals regaining consciousness.
- Dead pigs who had fallen into the blood pit were dragged out past live animals.

## **ACTION**

Three slaughterers had their licences suspended and a case for their prosecution – along with their employer – was compiled. No credible explanation was given for why Defra later dropped the case.

The company retrained staff.

## **IN THE MEDIA**

'Slaughtermen filmed dragging sheep by their heads, picking them up by their ears, hitting them and throwing them,' *The Mirror*, 14 May 2010

'Three suspended over secret footage in Norfolk abattoir,' *Eastern Daily Press*, 1 July 2010

'JH Lambert abattoir suspends slaughter workers,' *The Meat Trades Journal*, [date unspecified]



This bovine slaughterhouse in Dorset was filmed over four days in January and February 2010

### BREACHES OF THE LAW

- The stun box was not fitted with a head shelf. This meant that the animals entering the box were able to move their heads freely, making a clean shot with the captive bolt gun difficult to obtain. The Meat Hygiene Service (the forerunner of the FSA) confirmed that cows had been slaughtered in this illegal stun box for three months while the shelf was 'under development'. Twelve per cent of cows filmed were stunned more than once. The MHS Chief Executive wrote: 'The need to re-stun those animals that did not become immediately unconscious may have been avoided had the stunning box been fitted with a head restraint.'
- Poor practice often allowed more than one cow into the stun box at the same time. This inevitably led to violence with workers beating cows with goads or a squeegee mop, and bringing the tail gate down deliberately on the backs of the animals.

- Some cows were left in the stun box for far too long. One animal was left in there for more than an hour before she was stunned, even though staff had walked past and seen her.

### ALSO OF CONCERN

- When a partially stunned animal collapsed after two shots, workers held the stun operator by his legs so he could reach into the box to take a third, and then a fourth shot.
- Animal Aid remains concerned that the regulator, representatives of a leading supermarket which it supplied, the Soil Association which accredited this abattoir, and the FBO all failed to notice and / or enforce the installation of the legally-required head shelf.

### ACTION

One man had his slaughter licence suspended. This worker and the FBO were facing prosecution but Defra later decided it was 'not in the public interest' to prosecute.

Sainsbury's temporarily put its contract with the slaughterhouse on hold.

The MHS ensured staff were retrained and the company installed CCTV.

## IN THE MEDIA

'Sainsbury's suspend contract with North Dorset abattoir after cruelty claims', *Bournemouth Echo*, 29 June 2010

'ABP stalls on Sturminster plans,' *Meat Trades Journal*, [date unspecified]

'Action at abattoirs after secret filming reveals abuse,' *Bath Chronicle*, 2 November 2010



“

**WORKERS BEAT COWS...AND BROUGHT THE  
TAIL GATE DOWN DELIBERATELY ON THE  
BACKS OF THE ANIMALS.**

”



**This Devon slaughterhouse was filmed over two days in October and November 2009.**

## **BREACHES OF THE LAW**

- Sheep were picked up by their fleeces and thrown into the stun pen.
- Pigs were coerced into moving with chains, tongs, kicks and blows. One was dragged by his tail.
- The slaughterman used the electric stunning tongs across the body of a sheep. Only after she had struggled up from receiving this painful shock, was she stunned properly.
- The slaughterman additionally gave several sheep an abdominal electric shock after they had received head stuns. If the animal had been unconscious, there would be no need for this. If she or he was conscious, this would have only caused more pain.
- The stun-to-stick interval was breached. Two sheep went to the knife more than one minute after being stunned when anything after 15 seconds increases the likelihood of them regaining consciousness. In a random sample of 25 consecutively stunned sheep, none even left the stunning room within 15 seconds.

- Two slaughterers either dislocated the necks of sheep or decapitated them immediately after their throats had been cut, and while they were still alive.
- The MHS described the findings as 'abject cruelty'.

## **ALSO OF CONCERN**

- The use of a captive bolt gun on three sheep was an issue. Why three sheep and not the hundreds of others were stunned this way is unclear but it does not appear from the film that they were effectively stunned.

---

“

**ABJECT CRUELTY.**

”

**- THE MEAT HYGIENE SERVICE**

---

## ACTION

Three workers were suspended and the MHS announced that evidence to support a potential prosecution of Tom Lang's slaughterhouse operators and slaughterers was being collated. Defra subsequently dropped the prosecution without giving a credible explanation.

Additional MHS staff were brought to the site to monitor welfare. The Soil Association suspended its accreditation, and the FBO installed CCTV.

## IN THE MEDIA

'Slaughtermen suspended following secret filming,' *Meat Trades Journal*, 14 December 2009

'Think going organic lets you eat meat with a clear conscience? This shocking investigation into a "humane" slaughterhouse will make you think again,' *Daily Mail*, 12 January 2010

'Slaughtermen suspended in animal rights film probe,' *This is Devon*, 17 December 2009

'Devon slaughtermen have licences revoked,' *Meat Trades Journal*, [date unspecified]

'Slaughtermen lose licences after undercover probe by animal group,' *Plymouth Herald*, 21 January 2010

'Abattoir workers accused of cruelty,' *Mid Devon Advertiser*, 29 January 2009



**This bovine slaughterhouse in Derbyshire was filmed for three days in June 2009. It is the only slaughterhouse not found to be breaking animal welfare laws when cameras were covertly placed to monitor their work, although there were incidents of concern that might be considered breaches. This slaughterhouse has since moved premises.**



## **OF CONCERN**

- Even when workers abide by the law, a fast death cannot be guaranteed. 2.5 per cent of cows filmed here had to be stunned twice before they were unconscious. This means they were shot in the head with a captive bolt gun twice.
- One worker, presumably frustrated at a cow hiding his head beneath the head shelf, took an ill-advised shot which left the animal kicking on the ground, out of reach but still conscious. The stun operator then had to suspend himself from the cross beam in order to take a second shot.
- After being stunned and rolled out for slaughter, one bull could be seen to blink as he lay on the ground, indicating that the stun was not effective. That cameras placed some distance away could pick this up but the stun operator did not is a real cause for concern. If animals are not fully stunned, this is a breach of the law.
- The tail gate was brought down on the backs of cows to encourage them into the box. While it often had the desired effect, for one cow it was disastrous. The gate almost knocked her over,

which caused her to panic as she struggled to retain her footing. She ended up with her front hooves on the head shelf, from which position she was stunned.

- The sloped floor in the stun box caused additional suffering to animals who struggled to retain their footing while in the box.

## **ACTION**

Staff at the slaughterhouse were provided with refresher training.

This Somerset slaughterhouse was filmed over three days in April 2009.

### BREACHES OF THE LAW

- The slaughterman appeared to show a callous disregard for properly stunning the animals. He routinely failed to span the brains of sheep with the tongs, rendering the 'stun' at best incomplete, at worst a painful electric shock. One sheep was 'stunned' with electrodes on either side of one ear only.
- His stunning technique for the pigs was illegal. All the pigs were given an initial brief head stun, which was just enough to make them collapse but not enough to render them unconscious. A number of pigs fell to the ground screaming and convulsing. It was difficult to shackle animals in such a condition, and he took out his frustrations on them, swearing, shouting and kneeling on them.
- Only after they were shackled did he stun the animals.
- The slaughterman regularly left partially stunned animals to recover while turning his attention to another animal instead of doing as the law requires and prioritising them.

- Of 100 sheep who were consecutively stunned, just 22 per cent were stuck within 15 seconds, which increased the likelihood of them regaining consciousness.

### ALSO OF CONCERN

- Other workers witnessed the actions of the slaughterman and yet did nothing to stop him.
- Sheep were stunned while lambs were suckling them.

“ PIGS FELL TO THE GROUND SCREAMING AND CONVULSING. ”

## **ACTION**

The slaughterman was suspended from working with live animals and had his slaughter licence revoked. The prosecution against him fell apart when the statutory time for bringing cases expired.

## **IN THE MEDIA**

'Abattoir in video nasty', *Somerset County Gazette*, 10 September 2009

'Inquiry into cruelty at abattoir,' *BBC News*, 11 September 2009

'Abattoir response to undercover report,' *Veterinary Times*, 11 September 2009

'Covert footage reveals Somerset abattoir scandal', *Somerset Live*, 11 September 2009

'Action at abattoirs after secret filming reveals abuse,' *Bath Chronicle*, 2 November 2010





This Cornish slaughterhouse was filmed over five days in January 2009.

## BREACHES OF THE LAW

- Pigs were routinely kicked in the face.
- Poor stunning was commonplace. Partially stunned animals would get up and hide while the slaughterman turned his attention to other animals.
- Almost 15 per cent of the 824 consecutively stunned sheep had to be stunned more than once, indicating the first stun was not effective (and therefore likely to be no more than a painful shock). One sheep was stunned five times; four were stunned four times.

- When the slaughterman worked alone, just one per cent of animals were bled within the 15-second timeframe recommended to ensure they do not regain consciousness.
- The slaughterman stood on a partially stunned calf to make shackling him easier. He then administered a second head stun.

## ALSO OF CONCERN

- Animals were brought into the stun pen and left there for prolonged periods. One group of sheep was left there for almost 20 minutes.

“

**PARTIALLY STUNNED ANIMALS WOULD GET UP AND HIDE WHILE THE SLAUGHTERMAN TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO OTHER ANIMALS.**

”

- Animals were so frightened that they ran in circles, climbed the walls and leapt into the blood pit.

## ACTION

Despite offering evidence of legal breaches, no prosecution was brought, and no licences were revoked. The MHS instead identified areas for improvement, and ordered retraining of staff members.

## IN THE MEDIA

‘Shocking footage identifies failings at Cornish abattoir’, *This is Cornwall*, 9 September 2009

‘Humane slaughter a “sham” activists claim,’ *Meat Trades Journal*, [date unspecified]



---

## ENDNOTES

1. ‘FSA: 4,000 major breaches of animal welfare laws at UK abattoirs in two years’, *The Guardian*, 28 August 2016
2. Animal Aid analysis
3. ‘Vets are denied access to abattoir footage’, *The Times*, 12 May 2016
4. ‘Abattoir worker jailed for “shocking” animal cruelty’, *Farmers Weekly*, 25 August 2016
5. ‘FSA: 4,000 major breaches of animal welfare laws at UK abattoirs in two years’, *The Guardian*, 28 August 2016
6. Animal Aid analysis
7. FSA Board Meeting, 18 May 2016

**ANIMAL AID CAMPAIGNS  
PEACEFULLY AGAINST  
ALL ANIMAL ABUSE,  
AND PROMOTES A  
CRUELTY-FREE LIFESTYLE.**

Animal Aid

The Old Chapel, Bradford Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1AW

**01732 364 546 | [info@animalaid.org.uk](mailto:info@animalaid.org.uk) | [www.animalaid.org.uk](http://www.animalaid.org.uk)**

Published by Animal Aid May 2017

