



BRIEFING: CCTV IN SLAUGHTERHOUSES

CAMPAIGN AIM

TO MAKE CCTV MANDATORY FOR ALL SLAUGHTERHOUSES,
WITH INDEPENDENT MONITORING OF FOOTAGE

The case for CCTV

- Animal Aid's fly-on-the-wall investigations (2009-2014) uncovered legal breaches in nine of the ten randomly chosen English slaughterhouses filmed. No one else – not even the slaughterhouse operators, who have the legal responsibility for safeguarding welfare, or the vets who are stationed there – picked up on these widespread and often very serious breaches.

- The abuses included animals being: punched and kicked in the head; burned with cigarettes; beaten with paddles and broom handles; picked up by their fleeces and thrown across rooms; smashed headfirst into solid structures; attacked with shackle hooks; and given powerful and deliberate electric shocks through their ears, tails, abdomens and open mouths. A very high percentage were improperly stunned (more than 99 per cent of all pigs killed in two slaughterhouses).

- Vets know they cannot have eyes everywhere at all times, and our evidence suggests that workers wait until they know they are not being watched to abuse animals. This is borne out by the words of one slaughterhouse vet: 'We have three cameras at the killing point because, if I come into the killing point, they will see me and everything will be OK... but I can check on the camera. It is better because they don't know.'

- In 2015, 23 per cent of slaughterhouse vets and meat hygiene inspectors reported to UNISON that they had witnessed mistreatment of animals where they worked. Since our evidence indicates that much abuse is hidden from vets, even this worryingly high statistic is likely to fall well short of reflecting actual mistreatment.

- While CCTV will not prevent all welfare breaches, it is an invaluable tool to help vets, slaughterhouse operators and auditors ensure best practice and compliance with welfare laws. If the cameras are properly monitored and robust action taken as appropriate, they are a powerful deterrent. If, in some cases, their presence fails to deter abuse, the footage provides evidence for prosecutions.

- The ten leading UK supermarkets, as well as Booker wholesaler and RSPCA Assured, all demand that their slaughterhouse suppliers have CCTV fitted.

- Independently monitored CCTV protects animals, but it also assists in training and retraining staff. Cameras can protect staff from bullying and false allegations. They may also deter workers from committing acts that lead to injuries and deaths, such as the shooting while 'messing about' at a Scottish slaughterhouse in 2011, and the deaths of various slaughterhouse workers across the country. Cameras may also have deterred the theft of firearms from a number of slaughterhouses. Captive bolt guns (designed to stun cattle) have been used in a number of suicides and at least one murder in the UK.

- Animal Aid filmed workers watching abuse but not taking part. They did not report the violence, perhaps because they were nervous of making an official complaint where it was just their word against that of a colleague. With CCTV, workers can discreetly direct the vet or the monitoring body to view a specific section of the footage in order to ensure the abuse is addressed, without creating inter-personnel tensions.

The case for independent monitoring

- While it is encouraging to see many slaughterhouses install cameras, such a voluntary system does not work precisely because there is no independent monitoring.

- Animal Aid has filmed in two slaughterhouses where our fly-on-the-wall cameras were placed beside the slaughterhouse's own cameras, and recorded terrible abuse. Either the slaughterhouse did not properly monitor the footage or it ignored the abuse, as both times it was left to Animal Aid to report the workers to the authorities. By proper monitoring of its own cameras, Animal Aid obtained the evidence that led to two men being jailed from one slaughterhouse (for beating and burning pigs), and there is a prosecution pending of workers from the second.

- The government has argued for a number of years that the voluntary scheme does not work because there was still abuse at these two slaughterhouses even though they had cameras installed. We agree that the voluntary scheme does not and cannot work. Independent monitoring and robust action are essential - without them, the presence of cameras is worthless. **In order to ensure the monitoring is thorough right across the sector, regulations must set out the details of how the footage is to be gathered and stored, who will monitor it, how much they will view, and how often.**

Evidence

- The evidence that properly monitored CCTV cameras work rests with Animal Aid's fly-on-the-wall investigations. As a result of the footage obtained being properly monitored and acted upon, thousands of abuses were uncovered, around ten licences were revoked from slaughterhouse workers, and some of the most abusive have been successfully prosecuted. Other slaughterhouses have used the footage Animal Aid obtained to retrain their staff and to encourage best practice.

- The only difference between Animal Aid's cameras and CCTV is that the former were covert, and did not, therefore, have an additional deterrent effect. Cameras that are filming openly would help prevent abuse by deterring it, as well as being able to detect it.

How can CCTV be made mandatory?

- 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.

- We would expect a public consultation on the proposal.

- We would expect appropriate phase-in times to allow slaughterhouses of all sizes to comply.

Has this been done before?

- Despite evidence of widespread abuse inside English slaughterhouses, it is Israel that is likely to be the first country to make externally



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monitored CCTV cameras mandatory for all slaughterhouses. The cameras will be installed in 2016 and will stream live to a central ministry control room. A supervisory team from the ministry's Veterinary Services will be tasked with monitoring the footage.

- The Agriculture Minister Uri Ariel said: 'Installation of cameras in slaughterhouses is a critical step that will increase control and deterrence. I have no doubt that the move will protect animals and prevent cases of abuse that should not happen in a Jewish state.'

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

What would it cost?

- The Agriculture Minister in the UK, George Eustice has said that the cost of installing cameras is 'relatively modest'.

- The cost of monitoring would depend on the way that monitoring was set up and conducted. A Sheffield Hallam University report into costs of monitoring and how that might be funded is due out in summer 2016.

- These 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 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 Food Standards Agency. The cost of independent monitoring is very little compared with the immediate and longer-term costs arising from such scandals.

Who would pay?

- There are several options for how an independent monitoring scheme could be funded.

- Currently, the industry and taxpayer jointly fund the delivery of official monitoring but it is clear that this system is not working when it comes to preventing animal welfare breaches. The money invested in this scheme could be re-distributed to include the independent monitoring of CCTV.

- Industry could support it via a modest levy on each animal killed. One pence per 'red meat animal', for example, would pay for the monitoring of all red meat slaughterhouses. The pig industry already pays a levy of 105 pence per pig, with the majority of those funds being spent on marketing the end product.

- Government could pay. Between 2011 and 2014, Defra gave £900,000 in funding to slaughterhouses. This would have paid the salaries of ten staff to independently monitor slaughterhouses over that three-year period.

Since the majority of slaughterhouses have already installed cameras, why do we need a law?

- Although many slaughterhouses have fitted CCTV cameras, they are often not installed throughout their premises. The cameras 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. A law would set out all of these requirements, as well as details of how the footage would be monitored.

- At the June 2015 FSA Board Meeting it was announced that, while 53 per cent of red meat slaughterhouses and 71 per cent of white meat slaughterhouses have 'some form of CCTV', there is 'inconsistency in usage, retention periods vary, and not all businesses are currently willing to share footage with officials.'

- As long as it remains voluntary to install cameras, not all slaughterhouses will do so. One FSA Board Member suggested that the slaughterhouse operators who resist CCTV are probably those we should be most concerned about.

Support for mandatory CCTV with independent monitoring

- The campaign for mandatory CCTV in slaughterhouses has attracted the support of more than 150 of the current MPs and more than half of all Welsh Assembly Members.

- Morrisons, Waitrose, the Co-op, Sainsbury's, Aldi, Tesco, Lidl, Asda, Marks & Spencer and Iceland, along with wholesalers Booker, 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'. The level and robustness of the monitoring, however, 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 British Veterinary Association supports mandatory CCTV with independent monitoring of the footage.

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

- 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.

**Respondents gave their answers after being shown the following statement: 'All the leading supermarkets now insist that their slaughterhouse suppliers install CCTV cameras to help prevent cruelty to animals. This means about half the animals killed in the UK are filmed on CCTV and half are not. Those who oppose installing cameras object because of the cost of installing them and say workers don't want to be filmed. Those who support the installation say that the protective benefits to both animals and workers outweigh these concerns.'*

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2406 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 2nd and 3rd June 2014. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

For more information, visit

www.SlaughterhouseCCTV.org.uk



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