



For immediate release: 14th June

Animal Aid reveals the shocking reality of sheep farming

A leading animal rights organisation has uncovered shocking scenes of dead and decomposing sheep. An investigator for Animal Aid found the bodies on May 24 in the Llanbister area, Powys (Wales). 15 bodies of lambs and ewes were found strewn about fields and footpaths in three different locations.

It is not clear why the animals died, but Animal Aid believes that they had been seriously neglected. If the sheep had been properly monitored, argues the campaigners, then welfare issues could have been dealt with. The animals may have faced a slow, painful death from illness, injury, starvation or exposure. One picture shows a sheep with her head through a feeding device, who may well have starved to death. Contrary to what some farmers say, fox predation would have been highly unlikely. Official figures show that foxes take less than one per cent of lambs and those they do take are likely to be already ailing.

New figures from the National Fallen Stock Company (NFSCo), as reported by Farmers Guardian on 13th June, 'show a 30 per cent increase on the yearly average, with around 250,000 "fallen stock" during the months of March, April and May this year.'

NFSCo chairman Michael Seals stated "The data from this year shows that the 2018 lambing season was certainly the worst season since 2013, and probably ever, even factoring in a large allowance for the shortcomings of the data," he said.

The shocking sights uncovered by Animal Aid are far from a one-off. Each year one in 20 adult sheep die of cold, starvation, sickness, pregnancy complications or injury, before they can be slaughtered. Selective breeding has altered the sheep's natural breeding patterns meaning that they often lamb twice a year and produce more lambs at the wrong time of year. Multiple births are the rule rather than the exception. A number of lambs annually die from a variety of causes: exposure, starvation, congenital defects, predation and infectious diseases. The average lamb who does survive is killed for food at just four months old.

A sizeable number of lambs are routinely subjected to painful and distressing mutilations such as tail docking, often without anaesthetic. Males not killed before sexual maturity may be castrated with a tight rubber ring to cut off

blood supply. This is often performed without suitable pain relief (if done at an early stage). Both procedures can result in ongoing pain.

Says Animal Aid Campaign Manager, Tor Bailey:

'When it comes to sheep farming, many people have a rose-tinted view of animals peacefully grazing in the rolling green hills. Now we have pulled back the veil and revealed the disturbing truth – these animals are often the victims of shocking neglect. They may appear to be free-ranging but their control over their own lives ends there. Wild animals do not stand about in fields in fierce weather as sheep are forced to do; they take cover. But there is invariably little adequate shelter for sheep. Such negligence is an outrageous betrayal of those animals' dependence on us. It also serves a reminder that there is no kind way to farm and kill animals who just want to live.

*'We would encourage anyone who is shocked by this terrible suffering to join our **Summer Vegan Pledge today**. A vegan diet is the kindest and most compassionate choice you can make.'*

Notes for Editors

- **For more information about the issues facing farmed sheep:**
<https://www.animalaid.org.uk/the-issues/our-campaigns/animal-farming/suffering-farmed-sheep/>
<https://www.animalaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/UncountedDead.pdf>
- **Fallen stock at highest levels 'probably ever' following tough lambing season**
<https://www.fginsight.com/news/news/fallen-stock-at-highest-levels-probably-ever-following-tough-lambing-season-63184>
- Animal Aid's Summer Vegan Pledge gives people the chance to try veganism for a month whilst getting all the help and support they need:
<https://www.animalaid.org.uk/the-issues/our-campaigns/vegan/summer-vegan-pledge/>
- For more information, please contact Tor Bailey:
Tor.b@animalaid.co.uk, 01732 364546 Ext 227
- Photos available upon request