



**2 September 2019: For immediate release**

**Incompetence and chaos run rife at Welsh slaughterhouse**

Animal Aid investigators have revealed hidden animal suffering at Farmers Fresh lamb slaughterhouse in North Wales. They obtained four sets of film on visits between March 26<sup>th</sup> and June 3<sup>rd</sup> of this year.

The group were horrified to find the following:

- A worker fails to properly stun a sheep, who surges forwards onto the cutting table. Two workers pin her down, and whilst she would appear to be fully conscious, her throat is cut.
- A sheep thrashing so strongly on the shackle line following a brief stun, that both legs break free of the shackles and she drops into the blood pit. She is hauled out by the workers and simply hung back up with no attempt to re-stun her.
- Workers were seen misapplying tongs to the necks, snouts, faces and even the leg of an animal on one occasion. Many stuns appeared very brief, often just a second or less.
- Animals pulled along by their legs, dragged along by their throats, kneed, kicked, had hands clamped over their muzzles and on one occasion a worker even sits on a sheep. The abuse continued even in the presence of the Official Vet.
- A stun-man roughly picks up a sheep and hurls her down the slaughter conveyer line, whilst shouting. Another worker grabs sheep by their throats or fleeces and throws them backwards into the conveyer, often with an audible crash.

This damning footage challenges earlier claims by the Welsh Government of there not being evidence of serious legal breaches nor cruelty inside Welsh slaughterhouses, which has led them to deny the need for mandatory CCTV as a necessary safeguard.

The Welsh Government has so far refused to make CCTV compulsory for slaughterhouses in Wales, despite it being law in England and promised for Scotland. Animal Aid continue to push for the introduction of mandatory CCTV in Wales and for the government to take this a step further and introduce independent monitoring of footage.

Work was fast-paced with a very high number of animals being 'processed' at this large volume slaughterhouse. A lamb appeared to be stunned every 10-12 seconds.

Says Tor Bailey, Animal Aid Campaign Manager: *'At this fast-paced killing factory the issues were extensive and across the board. There were numerous failings by workers, but we believe that management and the slaughterhouse vet are hugely culpable too, in that they failed to prevent these shocking incidents from taking place. Without our covert cameras in place, this horrendous situation may have continued, unchecked for some time. We're calling on the Welsh Government to introduce independently monitored mandatory CCTV without delay across Wales.'*

*'Yet again our cameras have brought to light disturbing farmed animal suffering at the point of slaughter. It is terrible enough that animals should find themselves being needlessly killed, let alone with basic welfare standards being neglected. But even when regulations are being followed, slaughterhouses are violent, merciless places and we'd encourage all who care for animal welfare to adopt a vegan diet.'*

#### Notes for Editors

- Animal Aid conducted undercover filming at Farmers Fresh, Maelor Abattoir, Bedwell Road, Wrexham, LL13 0TS between 26<sup>th</sup> March and 4th June 2019.
- Animal Aid has a strict investigations policy which adheres to biosecurity measures, obtains access to premises without causing any damage to property and seeks to ensure that no stress is caused to animals at sites visited.
- In order to induce insensibility tongs should make good contact and span the brain. Further information about stunning can be located here: <https://www.hsa.org.uk/electrical-stunning/electronarcosis>
- The slaughterhouse had CCTV installed but without rules pertaining to its placement, use, operation and storage it wasn't an effective safeguarding tool. For example, the camera in the stun/ kill area was effectively blocked by a worker's head.
- Images and footage are available on request.
- For more information, please contact Tor Bailey on 01732 364 546 Extension 227.