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National animal protection group are hugely disappointed that the cruelty case against a Kent slaughterhouse has been dropped

Secret footage taken over the course of three days in Spring 2017 inside Forge Farm slaughterhouse by Animal Aid, revealed serious cause for concern over the way the animals were treated prior to slaughter, including stunning methods.

The group were horrified to see:

- Deliberate abuse. One animal was smacked in the face and sworn at.
- Incompetent stunning of animals. They suspect that many animals may have simply received painful electric shocks and gone to the knife fully conscious.
- Disregard for the welfare of animals, with slaughterhouse workers sometimes standing on the backs of animals, a sheep being thrown to the floor and a sheep being dragged along by her fleece.
- One animal fell from the kill line and was simply hung back up on the line without being re-stunned. She appeared to be blinking, a sign of consciousness.
- A sheep brought into the slaughterhouse in a wheelbarrow. The group suspect that she must have been too sick or lame to walk.

The damning footage was processed and promptly handed over to the Food Standards Agency (FSA), the body that regulates slaughterhouses, for further investigation. The case was referred up to the Crown Prosecution Service before being finally brought to court. The case was heard from 20 January at Sevenoaks Magistrates Court. Sadly, the judge decided not to proceed with the case.

The group have filmed in sixteen slaughterhouses to date from 'higher welfare' to conventional stun and non-stun slaughterhouses and have revealed illegalities and brutal treatment in almost every premises investigated.

Says Tor Bailey, Animal Aid Campaign Manager:

'Animal Aid is deeply disappointed to learn that the cruelty case against Forge Farm slaughterhouse in Tunbridge Wells has been dropped. We feel that the British justice system has woefully failed defenceless animals, who were subjected to some horrendous incidents of callous cruelty by workers at the slaughterhouse. Investigating and exposing animal cruelty is a vital part of our work, and we will not be deterred by this terrible injustice. The very best way to safeguard farmed animal welfare is to leave them off the plate and adopt a vegan lifestyle.'

'Forge Farm Meats was the fourteenth slaughterhouse that Animal Aid investigated, and we have now filmed inside two others. Time and time again we have revealed shocking scenes that dispel the "humane slaughter" myth. We would urge anyone who feels moved by the footage to consider going vegan, as this is the only way to be assured of animal welfare.'

Notes for editors:

- Animal Aid conducted undercover filming at Forge Farm Meats Ltd, Powder Mill Lane, Tunbridge Wells, over three days between 12 April and 15 May 2017 inclusive.
- 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.
- Images are available on request. Film footage can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/ivkVmF_j3Fg
- Animal Aid's free vegan information pack can be ordered at: Animalaid.org.uk/veganpack
- For more information, please contact Tor Bailey on 01732 364546 Ext. 227 or via email tor.b@animalaid.co.uk