



**Broken Wings:
The Breakdown of Animal Protection in the
Transportation and Slaughter of Meat Poultry
in Canada**

A report by
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Ethical Treatment of
Food Animals



CONTENTS

Executive Summary..... 3
Introduction..... 4
Genetic Problems of Meat Poultry..... 4
Cruel On-Farm Practices..... 7
A. Detoeing, Dubbing, Desnooding and Debeaking..... 7
B. Barn Conditions..... 11
Areas of Routine Violations..... 14
A. Transportation..... 14
A-1 Lack of Weather Protection..... 14
A-2 Overcrowding..... 17
A-3 Inability to Stand in Natural Position..... 19
A-4 Improper Crate Design..... 20
- Inability to Access and Euthanize Injured Birds..... 20
B. Catching, Carrying, Loading and Unloading Practices..... 24
C. Live-Hanging..... 28
D. Slaughter..... 32
D-1 Electrified Stun Bath..... 32
D-2 Pre-Stun Shocks..... 33
D-3 Neck Cutting..... 33
D-5 Scald Tank..... 33
Hygiene, Bacterial Infections, Antibiotic Resistance, Infectious Diseases and Other Human Health Issues..... 36
A. Listeria..... 36
B. Bacterial Infections..... 37
C. Antibiotic Resistance..... 38
D. Avian Influenza..... 38
Summary of Recommendations..... 40
Overall Recommendations..... 42



Injured broiler chicken en route to slaughter

Cover Photo: Live-hanging at Granny's in Blumenort, Manitoba
Report produced and released April, 2009

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Executive Summary

According to Canadian Food Inspection Agency statistics for the years 2001-2005, 580 million broiler chickens, 32 million egg-laying and breeding hens and 19 million turkeys are transported to slaughter in Canada annually. Approximately 2,420,000 poultry arrive at the slaughterhouse dead resulting in a mortality rate of 1.3% of egg-laying and breeding birds, 0.4% of broiler chickens and 0.1% of turkeys.

Breeding factors and on-farm conditions are responsible for some of the high mortality and morbidity rates found in poultry, but aggressive handling and improper transport practices and conveyances play a large role and can and should be improved.

While poultry are included under Canada's Health of Animals Act, which governs Canada's transport standards, the chronic and severe violations occurring daily are not, and historically have never been enforced. Poultry are regularly overloaded onto improper conveyances that do not afford them protection from the elements or enough headroom. The crate design is also improper, not allowing each bird to be accessible to be euthanized or removed should they become injured.

Similarly, Canada's Meat Inspection Act which dictates humane slaughter standards, is not being applied as it is for other monogastric (single-stomached) animals, such as pigs. Toms (male turkeys), may weigh in excess of 60 lbs (10-15 lbs more than a lamb which cannot legally be live-hung). Yet these large birds are routinely caught and carried upside down, putting enormous pressure on their leg and hip joints, when they are thrown or stuffed onto crates and taken to slaughter. They and all poultry are live-hung at the slaughterhouse which causes pain to already weakened and broken limbs (due to selective breeding for increased breast meat). This is exacerbated by violent catching and throwing, and having the loaded crates thrown onto moving conveyor belts where they are again roughly grabbed to be removed from.

The numbers of amputated legs due to a number of factors (from improper genetic selection to rough handling to the severe stresses put on their weakened legs), seen in poultry slaughterhouses and in transport, would never be accepted with any other species of farm animal. At one slaughterhouse in British Columbia, amputated legs continually fell from the upper leg shackles onto the still-live upside-down birds on the lower railing. These same birds, already suffering an amputated limb, are also at a greater risk for abuse such as punching, stomping, and kicking as they are at high risk of falling from the suspensory leg shackles – the metal shackles the birds are hung upside-down on.

Hygiene, human health issues and Avian Influenza continue to be a looming risk. As our investigation of a poultry facility in the Fraser Valley will show, it is not due to improperly applied biosecurity measures, but rather the unclean conditions of the barns, with bodies of dying and dead birds littering the floors.

It is no longer acceptable for Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to turn a blind eye to the suffering of these birds. Their protection is guaranteed under the Health of Animals Act and the Meat Inspection Act. The government has a legal obligation to ensure the birds' humane treatment and to prosecute offenders.



Introduction

This report documents current practices in the meat poultry industry in Canada, providing photographic and video evidence captured in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec during some 44 investigations between the years 2007-2009. It shows the rampant, systemic welfare problems in the meat poultry industry, particularly in regard to on-farm practices, transportation and slaughter.

Copies of all raw footage are available upon request. All photos are untouched except where it has been necessary to brighten or crop the image.

Genetic Problems in Meat Poultry

Poultry raised for meat have been genetically selected for a high rate of growth; as a result many develop physical disabilities, skeletal weaknesses and metabolic diseases resulting in a high rate of mortality (1% per week for broiler chickens) and morbidity (SCAHAW cited in Turner, et al., pp. 9, 28).

Leg disorders are a major cause of suffering in broiler chickens. Because the birds are slaughtered so young, there has been little motivation for the poultry industry to improve the genetics and welfare of these birds. In fact, a 2003 study showed that “The rate of broiler growth and final market weight continues to increase” (Bilgili, 2003, p.49 cited in Davis, K. Humane Treatment of Domestic Livestock 2003).

It is clear the birds are experiencing pain. Many studies have shown that lame birds - faced with a choice of feed treated with an analgesic or one without choose the treated feed, and the amount of treated feed they ate increased with the severity of the lameness. One study published in the Veterinary Record concluded: “lame broiler chickens are in pain and that this pain causes them distress from which they seek relief” (Danbury, et al., 2000: 310 cited in Davis, K. Humane Treatment of Domestic Livestock 2003).

Affected birds show a reduced activity level likely due to bone pain. Joints are also involved, as a wide variety of receptors exist in the joint capsule of poultry, including pain receptors (nociceptors).

The three most common bone problems experienced by poultry today are: angular bone deformities; tibial dyschondroplasia, and spondylothesis, where the vertebra dislocate and/or cartilage develops in the lower spine, pinching the spinal cord and lower back nerves (Schleifer, 1990, pp. 10-14 cited in Davis, K. Humane Treatment of Domestic Livestock 2003).

In addition to pain in their backs and legs, hips are also affected as selective breeding has caused increased breast-muscle meat to develop, which shifts the bird's center of gravity forward, placing added stresses on their hips and legs.

“Selective breeding has resulted in painful lameness and heart disease. These birds grow so fast that they are usually slaughtered at 6 weeks old and in fact would be unlikely to survive to adulthood because of problems with their legs, heart and lungs” (Smith, Summary, 2003 cited in Davis, K. Humane Treatment of Domestic Livestock 2003). [Of note – in Manitoba, broiler chickens are slaughter-bound at only 32-36 days of age (<http://www.chicken.mb.ca/facts.php>)].



Genetic Problems in Meat Poultry (cont'd)

“Most of the welfare issues specifically related to commercial broiler chicken production are a direct result of genetic selection for unnaturally fast growth. The modern broiler chicken’s body is forced to put all its resources into the two burdens of growth and feed conversion at the expense of achieving balanced growth and body maintenance” (Turner, et al., p. 9 cited in Davis, K. Humane Treatment of Domestic Livestock 2003).



Crippled turkey foot



Crippled and non-ambulatory broiler chickens



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Cruel On-Farm Practices

A. Detoeing, Dubbing, Desnooding and Debeaking (“Partial Beak Amputation”)

Detoeing is the cutting off or microwaving of the ends of toes of male broiler breeder chicks and turkey poults. Detoeing removes the toes up to the skin of the birds’ feet, which are of course innervated, thus causing enormous pain.

Dubbing refers to the cutting off of a male broiler-breeder chick’s comb. It is done with regular household scissors.

Desnooding consists of the cutting off of a turkey poult’s snood. It is also done with scissors and like dubbing, is acutely painful.

“Male breeder chickens are detoed, beak-trimmed and their combs are dubbed (cut off). Turkeys used for breeding are detoed and beak-trimmed, and the male turkeys’ snoods are cut off (desnooded). All these “elective surgeries” involve pain, perhaps chronic pain. No anesthetic is ever given to the birds. These mutilations are crude solutions to the problems created by modern methods of raising chickens and turkeys. For example, broiler breeder males have been bred, consciously or unconsciously, for hyper-aggressiveness. They injure and cause fear in the hens, who cannot escape from these roosters in the breeder houses. Worse, to keep their weight down, meat-type breeder chickens are given only 40-50 percent of the amount of food they would normally eat. They are chronically hungry. Their abnormal behavior, such as compulsive pecking, shows they are obviously suffering” (Duncan, Farmed Animal Well-Being Conference, June 28-29, 2001 cited in Davis, K. Humane Treatment of Domestic Livestock 2003).

Debeaking is the removal of part of the beak. It is practiced in all meat bird species by way of a hot knife blade or laser.

“There is now good morphological, neurophysiological and behavioral evidence that beak trimming leads to both acute and chronic pain. The morphological evidence is that the tip of the beak is richly innervated and has nociceptors or pain receptors. This means that cutting and heating the beak will lead to acute pain. In addition, it has been shown that as the nerve fibers in the amputated stump of the beak start to regenerate into the damaged tissue, neuromas [tumors] form. Neuromas are tiny tangled nerve masses that have been implicated in phantom limb pain (a type of chronic pain) in human beings. The neurophysiological evidence is that there are abnormal afferent nerve discharges in fibers running from the amputated stump for many weeks after beak trimming—long after the healing process has occurred. This is similar to what happens in human amputees who suffer from phantom limb pain. The behavioral evidence is that the behavior of beak-trimmed birds is radically altered for many weeks compared to that which occurs immediately before the operation and compared to that shown by sham-operated control birds. In particular, classes of behavior involving the beak, namely feeding, drinking, preening and pecking at the environment, occur much less frequently, and two behavior patterns, standing idle and dozing, occur much more frequently. The only reasonable explanation of these changes is that the birds are suffering from chronic pain” (Duncan, 1993, p. 5 cited in Davis, K. Humane Treatment of Domestic Livestock 2003).



Cruel On-Farm Practices (cont'd)

The government advisory Farm Animal Welfare Council in Great Britain said in its 1991 Report on the Welfare of Laying Hens in Colony Systems, that beak trimming is “a serious welfare insult to the hens and can result in chronic pain for long periods after the operation,” and that beak trimming “should not be necessary in a well-managed system where the hens’ requirements are fully met” (Farm Animal Welfare Council, pp. 23-24 cited in United Poultry Concerns’ PoultryPress, Fall 2001, p. 2, online at <http://www.upc-online.org>). As such, the UK has enacted a ban on the practice; this is due to come into force in 2011.



Debeaked turkey
Unidindon
St-Jean Baptiste, Quebec
May, 2007



Debeaked ducks

Possible neuroma on duck's beak - BC

Fraser Valley Duck and Goose
Chilliwack, British Columbia
November, 2008

Ducks and Geese

The denial of water to aquatic birds such as ducks and geese will not be discussed here, but is clearly a welfare concern as it affects how the birds eat and drink, as well as their ability to express natural behaviours. Both Quebec and British Columbia have large duck and goose meat industries.



Cruel On-Farm Practices (cont'd)

Recommendations

CETFA recommends that:

- Detoeing, dubbing, desnooding and debeaking be prohibited. In the United Kingdom while these practices are being phased out, the severe trauma they inflict is recognized and the practices are rarely done. Rather than inflicting these clearly-painful procedures on poultry, living environment should be enriched with an appropriate space to enable the birds to express their natural behaviours of foraging, dustbathing and preening without coming into contact with another bird.
- In the case of ducks, the breeds raised should be moved away from the Muscovy species (*Cairina Moschata*) - as these have a higher incidence of feather pulling due to unnatural intensive confinement conditions, toward Pekin ducks from the Mallard family (*Anas Platyrhynchos*), which tend to be more docile. This has been done in the United Kingdom, making the transition away from the inhumane practices such as detoeing, dubbing, desnooding and debeaking, much easier.



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Cruel On-Farm Practices (cont'd)

B. Barn conditions

High levels of ammonia and dust in broiler chicken, turkey, duck and goose sheds damage the birds' health and welfare, causing a build-up of peritoneal cavity fluid, respiratory disease, inflammation of the eyes and trachea and weakening of the immune system.

In chickens and turkeys, the ammonia dissolves on their mucous membranes and eyes, producing ammonium hydroxide, an acid that causes ammonia-burns. These ammonia burns and ulcerations also occur on the birds' rears, breasts and feet.

“Birds with leg disorders sit more, and if the litter is wet and dirty with feces, which it is in standard commercial housing, they develop more burns and sores, causing them to walk less, sit more, and become more burned, in a continuous cycle of filth, pain, suffering, lameness, and disease” (Turner, et al., 2003, pp. 17-20 cited in Davis, K. Humane Treatment of Domestic Livestock, 2003).



Ammonia burns on chickens in transport crates
Olymel
Berthierville, Quebec
2007



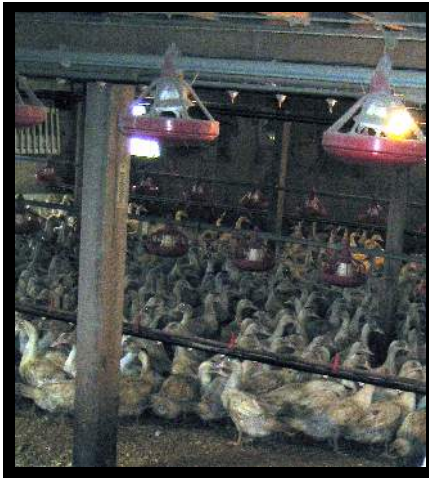
Cruel On-Farm Practices (cont'd)

Barns of the “tunnel ventilation” style lack windows and natural light and are kept dark much of the time.

“The walls are solid and the birds only have the dimmest of light, to allow them to eat and drink, but discourages moving around, because they want the birds to grow bigger faster. Birds at 5 weeks can hardly stand because their legs are so weak and with no natural light or exercise their joints are too soft to carry the weight” (Forsberg, 2003 cited in Davis, K. Humane Treatment of Domestic Livestock, 2003).

In some overcrowded sheds, birds are pushed onto their backs where, unable to right themselves, they starve to death. We witnessed this first hand at Fraser Valley Duck and Goose, a duck facility in British Columbia, on November 14, 2008 and again at the same facility some days later. Numerous ducks lay on their backs, some struggling to right themselves, some just lying still, some already deceased – their rotting carcasses left amid the living birds.

Avian Influenza of the H5N1 strain had affected this facility during the 2004 outbreak when some 140,000 water birds were killed at the facility by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) [slowly and cruelly as carbon dioxide was used, yet is known to be traumatic for birds such as waterfowl who have a diving reflex which allows them to withstand periods of reduced oxygen (hypoxia)], yet decomposing carcasses were left in the barns. Dying birds were left to suffer, and were not euthanized or culled from the flock. It was clear the suffering, downed birds were left for days as the mouth of one duck was full of feces and he was severely dehydrated. Given such a high-risk state, we question what level of follow up inspections have been conducted by the CFIA for this facility that caused the last outbreak of Avian Influenza.



Crowded conditions at 2 duck operations: Quebec (2007); and British Columbia (2008) where dead and dying birds littered the ground



Cruel On-Farm Practices (cont'd)

These combined conditions – the improper selective breeding leading to lameness, the cruel cutting practices that result in long-term pain and suffering, and the dark, overcrowded and filthy barn conditions that scald the birds' skin and cause blisters and ulcerations, all result in a severely health-compromised bird.

Because these unhealthy practices are so rampant, all poultry should be considered as health-compromised as cull sows, boars and dairy cows. However, no additional consideration is given to their suffering and specific needs, which loading, transport and slaughter exacerbate.

Recommendations

CETFA recommends that:

- Forced rapid growth that severely compromises the birds' well-being, be prohibited;
- Birds must not be forced to live in darkness or near-darkness conditions;
- All poultry be provided reasonable access to outdoors or if this is not possible, be provided with an enriched, stimulating environment (such as scratch material and perches);
- All poultry be provided with enough space to be able to fully extend their wings (as this is required for cooling the body, shaking off after dustbaths, and preening); and
- All poultry be provided with enough space that the birds can be moved from one part of the building to another to allow for the change of floor bedding, the removal of dead birds and to allow for the treatment or euthanasia of injured and dying birds.

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Turner, J., et al. The Welfare of Broiler Chickens in the European Union. Compassion in World Farming Trust, 2003. www.ciwf.co.uk



Areas of Routine Violations

A. Transportation

A-1 Lack of Weather Protection

According to Canada's transport regulations, no birds or animals shall be transported without adequate protection from the weather. Many birds live their lives in temperature-controlled barns unconditioned to weather extremes or inclement weather. The day they are transported will be their first exposure to natural climate.

The effects of excessive cold are particularly severe on poultry. At temperatures of -9.4°C (15°F) combs and wattles of poultry are susceptible to freezing and frostbite causing painful tissue damage (Wilson, 1974, pp. 222). Further, excessive cold suppresses the birds' immune systems (specifically the thymus and bursal systems) (North and Bell, p. 755).

Cold

On January 15, 2009, with a severe weather bulletin issued and a temperature of -50°C (-58°F), birds were seen at Granny's Poultry in Blumenort, Manitoba, left on trailers fully exposed to the elements. The birds on one trailer were exposed to the biting cold and high winds for 17 minutes (left in the holding area at 11:51 am and finally moved into the live-hanging building at 12:08 pm).



Birds at Granny's Poultry, Blumenort, Manitoba
Exposed to -50°C temperatures for 17 minutes

On January 21 and 22, 2008 with temperatures of -40°C and -42°C respectively, turkeys were seen at Granny's Poultry (same location as above) completely exposed to the elements for an average period of between three to ten minutes. (Footage available here: <http://www.youtube.com/user/TwylaFrancois>)



January 21, 2008 Temp: -40°C



Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)



Granny's Poultry Cooperative
January 22, 2008 Temp: -42°C

Rain

On October 6, 2008, fully loaded and completely exposed Granny's turkey trailers were recorded traveling in excess of 100 km/hr on the north perimeter of Winnipeg, Manitoba. The trailers were followed to Granny's slaughterhouse in Blumenort, Manitoba, for approximately 45 minutes. The trailers had not been tarped. The weather was inclement with cool temperatures (10°C/50°F), strong winds and hard rain. The 4-corner rule was not followed (whereby the outside corners of the trailer are left unloaded as these birds are the most exposed and affected by inclement weather). The birds' feathers flapped heavily in the wet, wind and cold.



(Footage available here: <http://www.youtube.com/user/TwylaFrancois>)

Three trailer loads were recorded transporting turkeys to the slaughterhouse on this day. None was tarped or provided any protection from the inclement weather.

On October 23, 2008, another Granny's turkey trailer was spotted on the north perimeter outside Winnipeg en route to Blumenort. The temperature on this day was 7°C/45°F. Footage was taken showing the condition of the turkeys onboard the trailers. Most were in poor condition, missing large patches of feathers. Others had bloody rears and tails and some birds were caked in feces.



Turkeys in poor condition en route to slaughter



Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)

Violations

Federal Health of Animals Act Part XII Transportation of Animals

Protection of Animals from Injury or Sickness

143. (1) *“No person shall transport or cause to be transported any animal in a railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft, vessel, crate or container if injury or undue suffering is likely to be caused to the animal by reason of*

(a) inadequate construction of the railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft, vessel, container or any part thereof;

(d) undue exposure to the weather.”

143.(2) *Subject to subsection (3), every railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft or vessel used to transport livestock shall be*

(a) strewn with sand or fitted with safe and secure footholds for the livestock; and

(b) littered with straw, wood shavings or other bedding material.”

Recommendations

CETFA recommends that:

- Tarping systems be employed during all transportation of poultry in temperatures below -9°C. Tarping must not be removed from the trailers until the transported birds have entered the live-hanging building. While the trailers remain stationary, the tarps must be loosened (but not removed) to prevent overheating.

References

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Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)

A. Transportation A-2 Overcrowding

There are currently no loading density regulations for poultry in Canada. In practice, we see a majority of trailers overloaded to the point where the birds onboard are not allowed to move one step in any direction.

An added concern with turkeys is that many of the birds who die do so in a prone position, their bodies stretched diagonally across the crate, trapping the others into one small corner. Many of these birds become completely immobilized.



Granny's Poultry, Blumenort, Manitoba October, 2007



Granny's Poultry, Blumenort, Manitoba January 21, 2008



Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)

If these same overloaded crates also happen to be broken, birds are at a high risk of falling from them, often onto a busy highway where they may be hit by oncoming traffic.



Three chickens pushed from crates
about to be run over by trailer
Olymel
Berthierville, Quebec
2007



Chicken being pushed out of overloaded, broken crate
DunnRite Foods
Winnipeg, Manitoba
2008

Violations

Federal Health of Animals Act Part XII Transportation of Animals

Overcrowding

Prohibition of Overcrowding

140.(1) "No person shall load or cause to be loaded any animal in any railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft, vessel, crate or container if, by so loading, that railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft, vessel, crate or container is crowded to such an extent as to be likely to cause injury or undue suffering to any animal therein

140.(2) "No person shall transport or cause to be transported any animal in any railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft, vessel, crate or container that is crowded to such an extent as to be likely to cause injury or undue suffering to any animal therein."



Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)

A. Transportation

A-3 Inability to Stand in Natural Position

According to federal transport regulations, all animals MUST have the ability to stand in their natural position without coming in contact with a deck or roof.

Also according to federal transport regulations, provision must be made for the absorption of urine/feces from all levels. This is clearly not being done in the transportation of poultry, and birds are suffering because of it.

With the added protection of straw or bedding of some form, some weather protection would be afforded as well as ensuring the birds would not be forced to stand in their own waste.



Granny's, Blumenort, Manitoba September 4, 2008

Violations

Federal Health of Animals Act Part XII Transportation of Animals

Inability to Stand

Segregation

142. "No person shall transport or cause to be transported animals in a railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft or vessel unless

- (a) each animal is able to stand in its natural position without coming into contact with a deck or roof; and
- (b) provision is made for the drainage or absorption of urine from all decks or levels."

Recommendations

CETFA recommends that:

- Poultry crates be designed so that the federal transport regulations can be followed as the law requires them to be.
- Substrate that can absorb the waste of the birds as well as afford some protection from inclement weather must be used as required by law.



Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)

A. Transportation

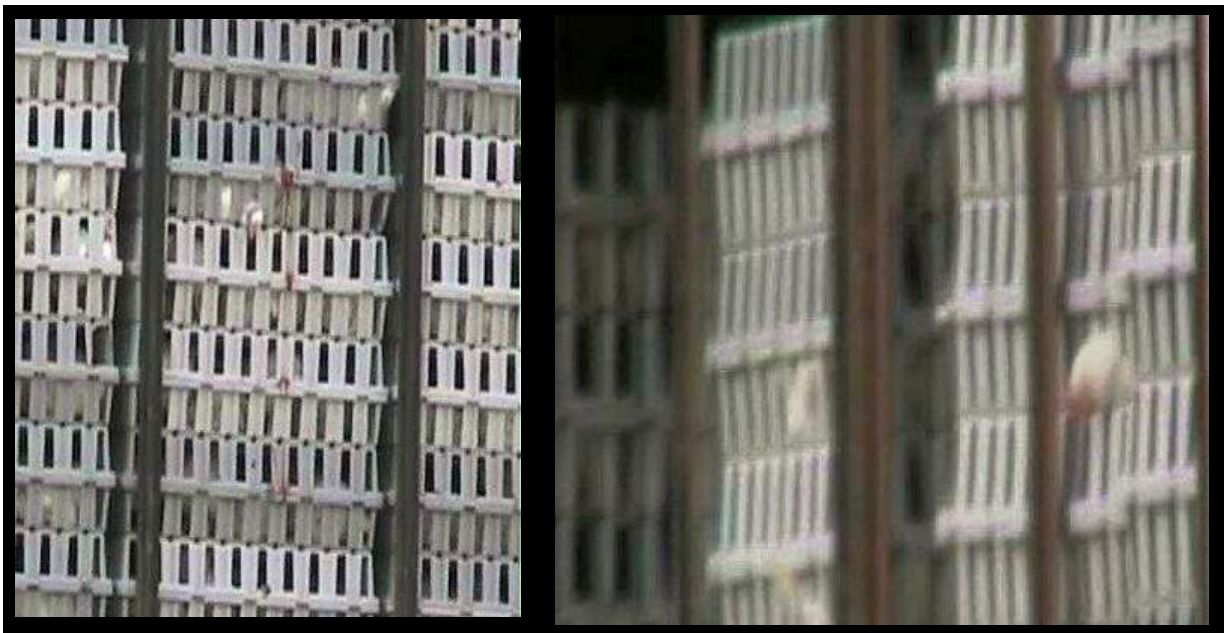
A-4 Improper Crate Design – Inability to Access and Euthanize Injured Birds

On August 28, 2008, we trailed a chicken conveyance to Dunn-Rite Foods on Hamelin Street in Winnipeg, Manitoba. A bird was clearly injured in one of the overloaded crates – its blood was running down the side of at least three crates below it. As with all poultry crates, accessing the bird for legally required euthanasia, was not possible as the crate was top-loaded and once stacked, completely inaccessible.

The head of another bird, now deceased, hung limply out the side of another trailer. According to federal transport regulations, this bird should have been euthanized on the trailer when it was noticed she had gone down. Instead, she was left to suffer and finally die en route to the slaughterhouse.



Example of poultry transport crate



Blood from injured and suffering chicken
Dunn-Rite Foods

Dead chicken hanging out of crate
August 28, 2008 Winnipeg, Manitoba

Below are numerous other examples of downer and dead poultry – photos courtesy of Animals' Angels Canada (taken by report writer in Quebec, 2007). The only method of dealing with a downer bird is to jab a pole with a metal hook into the crate to try to right the bird. This exacerbates the injured bird's pain and does nothing to alleviate its suffering. Yet, federal transport regulations dictate that any suffering or downer animals be, at a minimum, separated for their protection during transport, and euthanized as soon as possible after discovery on the spot where they lay. These animals are not to be manipulated as is currently being done with downer poultry.



Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)

Downer chickens on transport



Photos courtesy of Animals' Angels Canada – taken by report writer in Quebec, 2007



Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)

Dead chickens on transport



Living chickens forced to stand atop dead ones

Chicken likely suffocated due to overcrowding

Photos courtesy of Animals' Angels Canada – taken by report writer in Quebec, 2007



Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)

Violations

Federal Health of Animals Act

Part XII Transportation of Animals

Sick, Pregnant and Unfit Animals

138.(2) *“No person shall load or cause to be loaded on any railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft or vessel and no one shall transport or cause to be transported an animal*

(a) that by reason of infirmity, illness, injury, fatigue or any other cause cannot be transported without undue suffering during the expected journey;

138.(2.1) *“For the purpose of paragraph (2)(a), a non-ambulatory animal is an animal that cannot be transported without undue suffering during the expected journey.”*

138.(4) *“No railway company or motor carrier shall continue to transport an animal that is injured or becomes ill or otherwise unfit for transport during a journey beyond the nearest suitable place at which it can receive proper care and attention.”*

Inability to Attend to or Remove Downers

Containers

144.(1) *“No person shall load or transport or cause to be loaded or transported a container used in the transportation of animals unless the container is constructed and maintained so that*

(a) animals therein may, where required, be fed and watered without being removed therefrom;

(b) animals therein may be readily inspected”.

Recommendations

CETFA recommends that:

- Poultry crates be designed so that the federal transport regulations can be followed as the law requires.
- Crates must be designed in such a way that all birds are accessible for euthanasia should they become non-ambulatory or down.
- Mandatory training for poultry trailer drivers be required as it is in the United Kingdom. Certification would include training in proper methods of euthanasia for birds found to be injured or down during transport.



Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)

B. Catching, Carrying, Loading and Unloading of Birds

The vast majority of poultry in Canada are hand-caught in the production shed, manually carried, and manually loaded and unloaded at the slaughterhouse. Hand catching involves a standard crew of seven to eight unskilled workers catching approximately 7,000 birds an hour. (Shane, 2002, p. 44).

Young men are most often used which frequently leads to rough-housing, aggressive chasing, grabbing and punching of birds attempting to escape (footage available, taken by report-writer, 2007 and 2008).

These crews are paid not by the hour but by the number of birds loaded, pressuring the young men to work faster, thus compromising the care of birds.

Birds are grabbed and held upside down by one leg. Workers grab two birds per-hand with turkeys, and up to four or five per-hand with chickens. "In a study conducted to examine the effects of catching methods, researchers found that lifting birds up by one leg resulted in about three times more fractured bones than catching by two legs" (Rosales, 1994:205).

Birds are frequently injured during the process. Injuries sustained include fractures to the legs and pelvis, hip dislocation, tendon damage, ligament trauma, hemorrhaging, detached femurs, ruptured livers, crushed heads and dislocated necks.

"Hip dislocation occurs as the birds are carried in the broiler sheds and loaded into the transport crates. Normally the birds are held by one leg as a bunch of birds in each hand. If one or more birds start flapping they twist at the hip, the femur detaches, and a subcutaneous haemorrhage is produced which kills the bird. . . . Dead birds that have a dislocated hip often have blood in the mouth, which has been coughed up from the respiratory tract. Sometimes this damage is caused by too much haste on the part of the catchers" (Gregory 1998 cited in Turner, et al., 2003, p. 21).

It must be remembered that nearly all meat poultry in Canada suffer from some degree of degenerative joint disease because they have been genetically selected for fast growth at the expense of joint and bone health.

According to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's statistics for 2001-2005, of the 580 million broiler chickens, 32 million egg-laying and breeding hens and 19 million turkeys transported to slaughter each year, approximately 2,420,000 arrive at the slaughterhouse dead.

One UK study found 51 percent of dead-on-arrival birds died from heart failure: "Presumably the physiological responses associated with the stress of catching, loading and transporting the birds had been too much for the cardiovascular system to cope with" (Gregory & Austin, 1992, cited in Turner, et al., p. 22).

Another study found that of the broiler chickens who were dead-on-arrival at the slaughterhouse, 4.5 percent had dislocated hips (Gregory & Wilkins, 1990, cited in Turner, et al. p. 21).



Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)

The punching of the birds into crates, seen at the Granny's loading (pictured below), likely resulted in femur dislocation. A 1992 study showed that in one third of cases, the femur had actually been forced into the abdominal cavity. Rough shoving into crates also resulted in crushed skulls and wing damage (Gregory & Austin, 1992, cited in Turner, et al., p., 21).

On October 27, 2008, we recorded the brutal loading of turkeys by eight young men onto a Granny's poultry trailer in the Grunthal, Manitoba area. The birds were grabbed, two per hand, hung upside down by one leg and roughly shoved into the crates on the trailer. Birds who attempted to escape were pushed and punched back into the crates.

(Footage available here: <http://www.youtube.com/user/TwylaFrancois>)



On November 15, 2008, we observed the handling of chickens at the Fraser Valley Livestock Auction in Langley, B.C. There was intense time-pressure on the workers causing them to throw the birds, and drop them. Birds were grabbed by their heads, leg(s), neck, wing(s), and tails. This chaotic, brutal and mindless handling occurred during loading and unloading as well as in the sales ring. The animal advocacy organization, Liferforce, has thoroughly documented handling practices at Fraser Valley Livestock Auction (*Lives for Sale*: <http://www.liferforcefoundation.org/newsitem.php?id=70>).



Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)

At an Amish horse sale in Milbank, Ontario on July 19, 2008, handling of poultry was also conducted roughly. No feed, water or shade was provided by the organizers to any of the animals or poultry, yet the temperature was over 30°C/86°F.



Chicken with broken neck and wing which we took to a veterinarian to be euthanized



Dead chicken with feet caked in feces



Man about to break chickens' neck before Ontario Ministry Animal Welfare Inspector removed it from him



Brutal loading of Muscovy ducks at Amish Auction



Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)

Once at the slaughterhouse, the crates are removed from the trailer by hand, and tossed - without regard to the fragile and often injured birds inside, onto a moving conveyor belt. From here the crates will be opened, the birds grabbed by one leg, and live-hung in the metal leg shackles.



Violations

Federal Health of Animals Act Part XII Transportation of Animals

Loading and Unloading Equipment

139.(1) *"No person shall beat an animal being loaded or unloaded in a way likely to cause injury or undue suffering to it.*

139.(2) *No person shall load or unload, or cause to be loaded or unloaded, an animal in a way likely to cause injury or undue suffering to it.*

Recommendations

CETFA recommends that:

- Manual catching, carrying, loading and unloading be replaced with automated catching machines appropriately designed to minimize trauma to the birds.
- Birds not be removed manually from their crates at the slaughterhouse but rather that the entire crate be moved into a humane inert gas-stunning unit for stunning and slaughter.
- In the case of auctions, birds must be carried upright with their bodies supported.

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Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)

C. Live Hanging

The vast majority of poultry slaughterhouses in Canada use the electric stun-bath method of stunning. This requires that birds be suspended upside down by their feet while fully conscious. The stunning lines move very quickly – up to 200 birds per minute (Striffler S. 2002).

On November 17, 2008, we observed the live-suspension of turkeys at Lilydale in Abbotsford, BC. At this facility, two suspensory railings were used, one atop the other. We were stunned to see severed turkey legs literally raining down from the upper railing and hitting the live, fully conscious birds beneath. In just 2:45 minutes of filming we counted eleven amputated turkey legs, some of them even stuck between the legs of the live suspended birds.

(Footage available here: <http://www.youtube.com/user/TwylaFrancois>)



Amputated leg between legs of live, conscious turkey

Another amputated leg beside live, conscious turkey

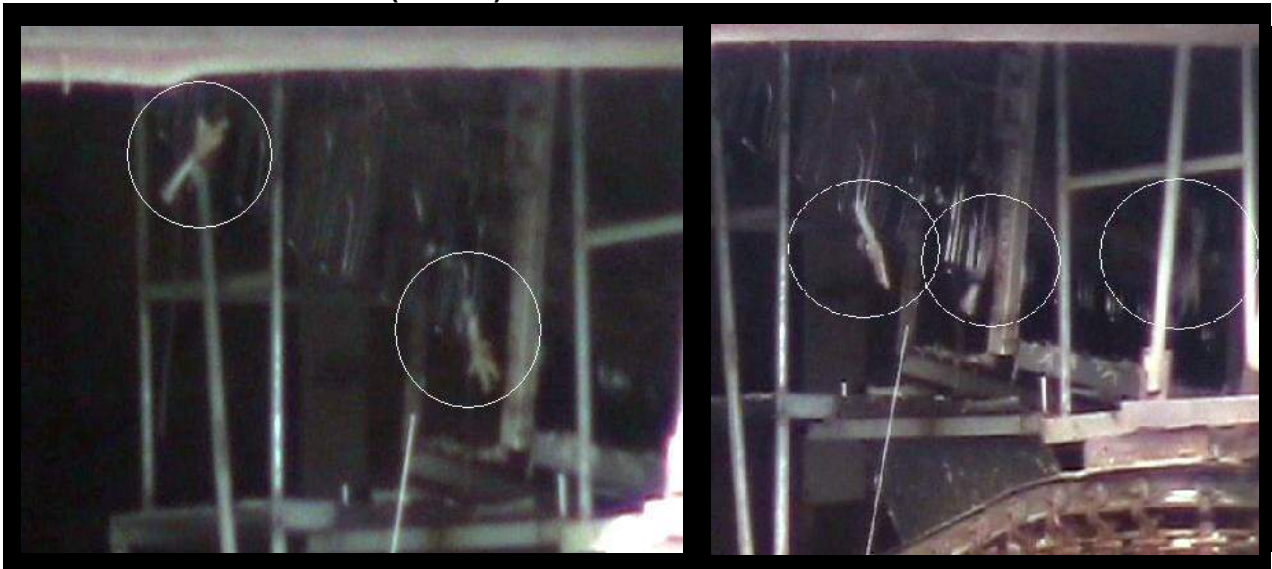
All photos taken at
Lilydale
Abbotsford, BC
November 17, 2008



Amputated leg falling down onto live, conscious birds



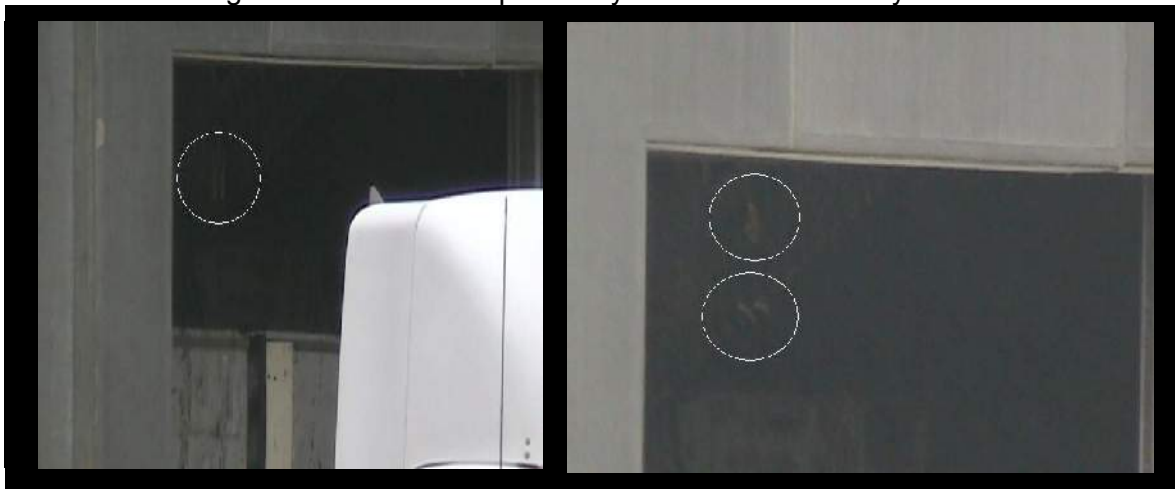
Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)



More examples of the many amputated legs on suspensory railing left behind, after being ripped off the birds
Lilydale
Abbotsford, BC
November 17, 2008

On October 6, 2008 we visited Granny's in Blumenort, Manitoba and recorded two full sets of turkey legs as well as at least three individual amputated turkey legs.

Footage available here: <http://www.youtube.com/user/TwylaFrancois>



On October 25, 2006 this amputated chicken foot was seen on a just-washed Maple Leaf transport trailer in Toronto, ON.



Photo courtesy of Animals' Angels Canada – taken by report-writer

Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)

On September 30, 2008, we recorded the live-suspension of turkeys at Granny's in Blumenort, Manitoba. Many of the birds were trying to right themselves, flapping their wings and struggling in the metal leg shackles. The majority of the birds were panting. Some hung lifelessly, their eyes closed. They appeared already dead.

Footage available here: <http://www.youtube.com/user/TwylaFrancois>



Overcrowded turkeys on transport, unable to stand



Suspended turkeys

Two of the many turkeys struggling to right themselves

All images taken at Granny's
Blumenort, Manitoba
September 30, 2008

Given the high percentage of leg deformities, crippling injuries from the rough and chaotic loading, the unprotected transport to the plant (where some birds may have developed frost bite or heat exhaustion), along with the selective breeding that has forced their bodies to develop massive breasts, the stress that this upside-down hanging position places on the birds' legs and hips is enormous.



Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)

A 1990 study found a 44 percent increase in newly broken bones in hens post-shackling (Gregory and Wilkins, 1990), reflecting the stress and trauma caused by this practice.

Turkeys are at particular risk, as some may weigh up to 28 kg (60 lbs) when slaughtered. These birds weigh 10-15 lbs more than lambs, yet it is illegal according to Canadian slaughter standards, to live-suspend a conscious lamb for slaughter (even for halal or kosher ritual killings).

“Shackling: The force of this hanging procedure [birds are hung upside down and clamped in the shackles at their ankles on a conveyer belt] causes pain because the affected bone surface is enriched with pain receptors causing over 90 percent of birds to flap their wings due to pain. There is enough scientific evidence to suggest that shackling live birds increases the prevalence of dislocated joints, broken bones and muscle bruising in conscious birds.”
(www.upc-online.org/slaughter)

"Hanging upside down on metal shackles is a physiologically abnormal posture for all poultry, including turkeys and is painful and distressing. Under this situation, compression of their legs by metal shackles is known to be an extremely painful experience to all poultry, especially heavy turkeys." (Dr. Mohan Raj, Senior Research Fellow, Department of Food and Animal Science, University of Bristol)



Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)

D. Slaughter

D-1 Electrified Stun Bath

Electric stunning whereby the upside-down shackled birds have their heads dragged through an electrified saltwater stun bath is the most frequently used form of “stunning” in Canadian poultry slaughterhouses. The use of electric shock water replaced traditional debraining through the birds' mouth or eyes in the 1930s and 1940s.

The purpose of the electrified water is not to render the birds unconscious or even pain-free, but rather to slacken their neck muscles and contract the wing muscles for proper positioning of their heads for the automatic neck-cutting blades. The electrical current also immobilizes the birds, preventing excessive struggling as the blood drains from their necks, and loosens their feathers for easier removal.

While the bird's head is submerged in the electrified water-bath, currents shoot through their skin, breast muscles, cardiac muscles and leg muscles causing spasms and tremors, reducing heartbeat and breathing, and increasing blood pressure. When the birds exit the stun-bath, their necks are arched, their eyes are open, their wings are tucked, their legs are extended and rigid, their tail feathers are turned up and shuddering, and a number of them will have defecated (Bilgili, 136, 142 cited in Davis, K 1996).

Research indicates that acceptable and necessary electric current levels must be a minimum of 120 mA per bird and that currents under 75 mA per bird should never be used (Gregory and Wotton, 219). In fact, commonly used levels in European poultry slaughterhouses are even higher at 140 mA. However, because high levels of current are costly and are believed to cause damage to the meat by breaking capillaries resulting in “bloody bird” (Kuenzel cited in Davis, K 1996), low currents are used in North American poultry slaughterhouses. Our own experience confirms this as CETFA investigators visiting Canadian poultry slaughterhouses noted that the electric current used was far lower than what research has indicated as necessary. Some researchers in the United States are finding even lower “stunning” levels in use: “Industry is trying to stay at 25mA and below due to hemorrhaging” (Webster 2002 cited in Davis, K 1996).

“Low voltage is Cheap: CETFA's Investigative Team has managed to witness all “accepted” methods of slaughter, noting that electric stunning voltage in Canada is far below that used in Britain (generally 70 amps compared to 140 amps). (Canadians for the Ethical Treatment of Food Animals. Rethink the Way We Live...2004)

“The complexity of multiple bird waterbath stunning is not conducive to maintaining good welfare. Effectiveness of the stun cannot be determined. The method, widely practiced because it is simple and cheap, cannot be controlled. You can't control the amount of electrical current flowing through a bird. You can't harmonize electrical resistance in broiler chickens. The waterbath has to be replaced.” (Dr. Mohan Raj, USDA Seminar, December 16, 2004).

Even under “ideal” conditions, birds who are stunned (rendered unconscious) and those who are merely paralyzed look the same (Gregory 1986; Boyd 224). Nobel laureate, Professor A.V. Hill, stated of the electrified stunbaths used for dogs and cats in the 1920s that the baths “were likely to cause great pain although this would be masked by muscular paralysis.” The animal who appeared unconscious was likely to be “fully conscious and in agony for some time before unconsciousness and death supervened” (WFPA, 12 cited in Davis, K 1996).



Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)

D-2 Pre-Stun Shocks

Pre-stun electric shocks occur with surprising frequency. These shocks occur when the birds are splashed before being submerged or when the tips of their wings dip into the electrified water. Turkeys are especially prone to pre-stun shocks as their wings hang lower than their heads when suspended (see photo to right). In a survey conducted in the U.K. In 1991, the average number of turkeys receiving pre-stun electric shocks was 43%, with some slaughter plants showing a rate as high as 87% (Wooton and Gregory, 1991).



D-3 Neck Cutting

Neck cutting is done by way of an automated spinning blade, but welfare problems abound here as well as some still-conscious birds continue to move by lifting their heads or flapping their wings. By doing so they “dodge the knives, some completely, some partially” (Gregory, 1991) with such frequency that “problems associated with inefficient neck cutting [are] only too common in poultry processing plants.”

The length of time required for a bird to bleed out is dependent on the effectiveness of the cut and whether both carotid arteries are cut or not. “Failure to cut both carotids can add two minutes to the time taken for brain failure to occur in birds. Worst is the severance of only one jugular vein, which can cause birds to retain consciousness while in severe pain for up to 8 minutes” (Gregory, 1984 cited in Davis, *Prisoned Chickens*, 119; Stevenson, 3.2.2 cited in *The Need for Legislation and Elimination of Electrical Immobilization*, Dr. Karen Davis, *United Poultry Concerns*).

D-4 Scald Tank

To facilitate feather removal, birds are dunked into a scalding hot water tank. Those that fail to properly exsanguinate enter the scald tank before breathing has stopped. Numerous studies (Griffiths, 1985; Griffiths and Purcell 1984; Heath et al. 1983) have determined that the red discoloration of the skin, referred to as “cherries” or “red skins” by slaughter line workers, is in fact the result of live birds entering the scald tank as the dead birds do not develop this skin discoloration. According to the United States Department of Agriculture’s own statistics for 2002, more than 3.7 million chickens were classified as “cadavers” that had been either scalded to death or drowned in the scald tanks.



Areas of Routine Violations (cont'd)

Violations

Meat Inspection Act – Part III

62.(1) *“No food animal shall be handled in a manner that subjects the animal to avoidable distress or avoidable pain.*

63.(2) *“Every food animal that is obviously diseased or injured shall immediately be segregated from apparently healthy food animals.”*

64. *“Every holding pen that is used for food animals awaiting slaughter shall be provided with adequate ventilation and shall not be used in a manner that results in their overcrowding.”*

65. *“Every food animal in a holding pen awaiting slaughter shall be provided with access to potable water and shall, if held for more than 24 hours, be provided with feed.”*

77. *“Despite subsection 79, every food animal that is ritually slaughtered in accordance with Judaic or Islamic law shall be restrained and slaughtered by means of a cut resulting in rapid, simultaneous and complete severance of the jugular veins and carotid arteries, in a manner that causes the animal to lose consciousness immediately.*

79. *“Every food animal that is slaughtered shall, before being bled,*

(a) be rendered unconscious in a manner that ensures that it does not regain consciousness before death, by one of the following methods:

(i) by delivering a blow to the head by means of a penetrating or non-penetrating mechanical device in a manner that causes immediate loss of consciousness,

(ii) by exposure to a gas or a gas mixture in a manner that causes a rapid loss of consciousness, or

(iii) by the application of an electrical current in a manner that causes immediate loss of consciousness

80. *“No equipment or instrument for restraining, slaughtering or rendering unconscious any food animal shall be used by any person for those purposes*

(a) unless the person is, by reason of the person’s competence and physical condition, able to do so without subjecting the animal to avoidable distress or avoidable pain; or

(b) where the condition of the equipment or instrument or the manner in which or the circumstances under which the equipment or instrument is used might subject the animal to avoidable distress or avoidable pain.

Recommendations

CETFA recommends that:

- Controlled-atmosphere killing be adopted as a replacement for the electrified stun bath for poultry slaughter. Controlled-atmosphere killing (using a mixture of inert gases, such as nitrogen or argon in air with less than 2 percent residual oxygen), has been proven to be effective and humane in the killing of all poultry. The gases are non-aversive to the birds (can be breathed undetected) and cause no sign of respiratory discomfort. According to a regulatory impact analysis statement posted on Canadian Food Inspection Agency’s website in 2000: “The procedure is fast, painless, efficient and there is no recovery from unconsciousness because the birds are also killed by exposure to the gas mixture. Rapid gassing also reduces the incidence of broken bones, bruises and haemorrhages in muscle, all of which are associated with electrical stunning.” An added benefit for both the birds and workers is that the birds are taken directly from the transport vehicles in their crates, which are put into a chamber where the killing occurs. There is no need to handle the birds.
- Until the controlled-atmosphere killing is implemented, that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency inspectors enforce the laws and lay charges where violations occur.



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Human Health Issues (Hygiene, Bacterial Infections, Antibiotic Resistance, and Infectious Diseases)

A. Listeria

Events during the summer of 2008 resulted in the largest meat recall in Canadian history. Processed meat products (including poultry) from a Maple Leaf-owned plant in Toronto were found infected with *listeria monocytogenes*. In the end, thousands of Canadians became sick and at least 20 people died.

Again in late January 2009, meat from Cappola – a wholly owned subsidiary of Maple Leaf in Toronto tested positive for listeria pathogens. And again just before publication of this report, a Maple Leaf-owned plant in Hamilton, Ontario accidentally released listeria-infected wieners into the marketplace.

While the public learned about these cases, we were not told about other food safety problems in recent years. In 2007, meat from Cappola exported to the U.S. tested positive for listeria in a random test done by the USDA. The meat was turned back by U.S. officials and destroyed. Audit documents obtained by CBC, however, also revealed that U.S. inspectors raised health concerns three times about the Cappola plant. Included in the U.S. officials' concerns was that Cappola's employees' work boots were covered with "residues of products from the previous day's production" (CFIA Investigates After Listeria Found in Meat from Toronto Plant, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, January 24, 2009. www.cbc.ca). In addition, Cappola was also forced to recall over 1,000 kilograms of sausage due to salmonella infection in 2002.

A Toronto Star/CBC investigation, reported in 2008, revealed that regulations compelling companies to report positive bacteria tests to CFIA inspectors were dropped four months prior to the Maple Leaf listeria outbreak. After this was exposed, CFIA officials claimed the duty to report positive tests would be re-established but whether this has been conveyed to companies is unclear.

In January, 2009, the federal government finally announced that a confidential investigation would be conducted into the listeria outbreak. However, food safety experts, politicians and inspectors have rightly criticized the investigation, claiming it falls far short of a full public inquiry in which evidence must be produced and witnesses are compelled to testify. The investigation is being conducted under media blackout and like the environment which fostered the outbreak, continues to be secretive.

Canadian Food Inspectors Speak Out

Shortly after the listeria outbreak, Canadian food inspectors began speaking out with their concerns, (see www.FoodSafetyFirst.ca). These concerns mirrored what CETFA inspectors had been hearing in the field during meetings with CFIA inspectors and veterinarians, namely that: the system of food inspection was increasingly moving towards industry policing itself, inspectors were spending more time on paperwork than on actual inspections, most inspectors had double the work load than was manageable, their working environments were inhospitable, their authority was not respected and most did not have time to conduct ante-mortem inspections on live animals. If there was any doubt about the veracity of what the inspectors said, all that was needed was to walk with them through the facility where bloodied men sneered at or heckled them, witness how many did not know the way to the live holding areas for the birds or animals and once arriving there, see their shock at how young the live poultry were or that electric prods were being used on the animals in the kill line.

Regarding the February, 2009 release of listeria-infected wieners, Bob Kingston, President of the agriculture union that represents federal meat inspectors, stated: "In the old days, if a CFIA inspector had placed a hold tag on the product, it wouldn't have moved until they were told it could move. Now, 1,100 cases go out the door. The more control industry has, the more we see this crap happen. It's inevitable" (Cribb, Robert. Maple Leaf Foods sends tainted meat in 'error'. Healthzone.ca).



Human Health Issues (cont'd)

B. Bacterial Infections

The U.S. Centre for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that food-borne diseases are responsible for approximately 76 million illnesses, 325,000 hospitalizations and 52,000 deaths in the U.S. each year. The numbers in Canada are very similar (Powell, D. 2009). High-density, overcrowded farms render the animals more susceptible to illness and become breeding grounds for bacteria such as campylobacter, salmonella and E. coli.

In November 2008, a study conducted by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health indicated a novel pathway for potential human exposure to antibiotic resistant bacteria from intensively raised poultry. Researchers found increased levels of pathogenic bacteria, including drug-resistant strains, on surfaces and in the air inside vehicles traveling behind transport trailers carrying broiler chickens. The strains of bacteria collected were found to be resistant to three antimicrobial drugs widely used to treat bacterial infections in people, but also approved for use as feed additives for broiler chickens (Rule, A.M., Silbergeld, E.K., Evans, S.L. 2008).

Other studies have shown extraordinarily high rates of pathogenic bacteria collected during the poultry slaughtering process. In 1997 Geornaras et al. isolated salmonella from 100 percent of samples, listeria from 33 percent, and Staphylococcus aureus from 20 percent of skin and feather samples collected prior to scalding.

As a clear example of the connection between compromised animal welfare and compromised food safety, and therefore a connection to human health and welfare, Cason et al. (2000) found that 75 percent of scald tank water samples were salmonella positive. The salmonella was found to have been introduced through the excreta of still-live birds who entered the scald tank.

Clouser et al. (1995) found a greater than 200 percent increase in salmonella-positive turkey carcasses, following feather removal. Russell and Walker (1997) found feces on 10 percent of carcasses post-viscera extraction and 19 percent post-crop removal, while Jimenez et al. (2003) found feces on 11 percent and 5 percent of carcasses post-viscera extraction.

At the end of the processing line, Clouser et al. (1995) found salmonella on 60 percent of poultry carcasses pre-chill, and 57 percent of carcasses post-chill.

Dead, mangled chicken in front of live

Prairie Pride – Saskatoon, SK

September 25, 2008



Human Health Issues (cont'd)

C. Antibiotic Resistance

The ever increasing use of sub-therapeutic levels of antibiotics in animal feed (American Health Institute cited in AVMA journal, February 2009), has led to increased antibiotic resistance, creating super-bugs that can withstand medical treatment in humans.

A study conducted by Montreal-based researchers found that many livestock who appeared healthy, were in fact carrying strains of bacteria (salmonella, in the case of this research). Some of these bacterial strains were resistant to at least some antibiotics and could be harmful to humans. The researchers stated: "The abundance of infected but asymptomatic hosts in all provinces represent a serious threat to food safety. Asymptomatic carriers can [also] have a significant role in the contamination of the environment and other animals, since large volumes of the bacterium can be excreted during fattening, transport and slaughter" (Perron GG, Quessy, S, Bell G cited in National Post. 2008). The salmonella strains also included a number that were resistant to one or more antibiotics. It was found that treatment of patients with ampicillin, a "broad-spectrum" antibiotic commonly prescribed in such cases would result in treatment failure in 50% of patients.

Andrew Potter, head of the University of Saskatchewan's Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization, stated that changing what livestock are fed and keeping their living conditions more hygienic will be necessary in the battle against bacteria-borne-illnesses in humans (Blackwell, Tom. Healthy Livestock can carry harmful bacteria, National Post, 2008).

D. Avian Influenza

In 2004, a massive bird-flu outbreak in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia led to the culling of 17 million birds. In response, the federal government and poultry producers developed mandatory biosecurity rules for producers, such as keeping gates closed to reduce foot and vehicle traffic. By January 2009, Ron Lewis, B.C.'s chief veterinarian stated that well over 90 per cent of all poultry farms in the province had been biosecurity certified, and that the remaining farms had only minor problems left to fix (Shelton, Chad. Vancouver Sun. 2009).

The rest of the world, however recognizes that the primary cause of the development and spread of Avian Influenza is from high-density poultry farming and its resultant hygiene issues. In 2005, a United Nations task force recognized this and even the poultry industry trade journal *World Poultry* listed factors creating the ideal breeding grounds for disease as: "inadequate ventilation, high stocking density, poor litter conditions, poor hygiene, high ammonia level, concurrent diseases and secondary infections" (Hafez HM. 2003). Because the birds are in such closed, crowded and unsanitary conditions, the virus is able to move quickly from one bird to the next.

Back in Canada, in late January 2009, CFIA again confirmed the presence of H5 avian influenza in a commercial poultry operation in southern B.C. Thousands of birds were again culled in an attempt to control spread of the disease, and again the barns and equipment were cleaned and disinfected as had been done in 2004. However, while the government attempts to quell fears by insinuating that producers in the area must not have observed biosecurity measures, the true cause – overcrowding, filthy conditions, dying birds left to suffer, and dead corpses left to rot in the barns – continue unabated.

Recommendations

CETFA recommends that:

- Density restrictions be enforced in barns;
- Regular cleaning of barns be required, including corpse removal and care of injured birds; and
- Sub-therapeutic antibiotic use be banned.



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Summary of Recommendations

1. CFIA's lack of enforcement of regulations
CFIA **must** begin enforcing the transport regulations when violations such as those noted in this report are reported. Poultry are monogastrics and all regulations applying to monogastrics must be applied to poultry under the Health of Animals Act.
2. Cruel On-Farm Practices
Detoeing, dubbing, desnooding and debeaking must be prohibited.
3. Barn Conditions
Forced rapid growth that leads to debilitating conditions in poultry must be prohibited. Birds must be allowed access to outdoors or be provided with enriched environments, with enough space to fully extend their wings without coming into contact with another bird.
4. Catching, Carrying, Loading and Unloading
Manual catching, carrying, loading and unloading must be replaced with automated catching machines designed to minimize trauma to the birds. Birds at auctions must be carried by both feet.
5. Weather Protection
Tarping must be provided at temperatures below -9°C, and must remain on, but loosened, until birds have entered the live-hanging building.
6. Downers
Transport crate design must be altered to meet the standards of the Health of Animals regulations. Currently, only birds in the top layer are accessible, due to top-loading crates. Drivers are unable to euthanize downer poultry and remove the body. The only option is to jab a long hooked pole into the crate to attempt to right the bird, which does not relieve the bird's suffering but rather, furthers it.
7. Inability to stand
As per 142.(a) of the Health of Animals Act, all birds must be able to stand in a natural position without coming into contact with the ceiling of their crates during transport. Currently, this is violated on **every** poultry conveyance, except for hatchlings. Some birds are onboard for hours – during loading, transport, and including wait time at the slaughterhouse - which may be lengthy. This is in clear violation of the regulations, and causes severe and unnecessary distress.
8. Overcrowding
Many trailers are overloaded, some to the extent that the outside bird remains pressed against the side of the crate, unable to seek shelter from the elements. Some birds are suffocated in this way. Others, already with very little space, are forced to stand atop dead cage-mates or are squeezed into one corner if another died in a prone position (as seen with turkeys). Standards must be set which allow each bird room to sit comfortably without touching birds on either side.



Summary of Recommendations (cont'd)

9. Mandatory Training for Poultry Haulers
Mandatory training for all poultry trailer drivers should be required as it is in the United Kingdom. Certification would include training in proper methods of euthanasia for birds found to be injured or down during transport.
10. Live-Hanging
Poultry must no longer be live-hung. Given the size of many of these birds, it is simply unacceptable to submit them to such unnecessary suffering, pain and pressure on their joints. Because of the routinely rough handling (due to the large numbers of birds that must be processed in a limited time), far too many birds are experiencing the severe pain of forced amputation. In the randomly selected 165 seconds of recording of the live-hanging area at Lilydale in Abbotsford, BC, 11 amputated limbs were counted. This contravenes the Humane Slaughter Act.
11. Electrified Stunning
Electrified stunning must be replaced with controlled-atmosphere killing using inert gases (nitrogen and argon). The continued use of the electrified stun bath is unhygienic, inhumane and has implications for the workers' health. It is simply no longer acceptable.
12. Lack of CFIA veterinarians and inspectors
CFIA inspectors and veterinarians stationed inside slaughter facilities must be given the authority to speak out when regulations are violated, animals are abused or food safety is at risk. More inspectors are needed to ensure ante-mortem inspections, oversight of animal unloading, and downers are humanely killed onboard, as the law requires.
13. Transparent full public inquiry into tainted meat and infectious disease outbreaks
During and after cases of tainted meat and infectious disease outbreaks, there must be no media blackout but rather a full and transparent public inquiry. This applies to the current listeria crisis in Canada. Anything less will simply foster an environment of more human health crises.



Overall Recommendations

- 1. CETFA is calling for an immediate performance review of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency by the Office of the Auditor General;**
- 2. CETFA is calling on the Poultry, Turkey and Duck Producers of Canada to consider the issues raised in this report when drafting their upcoming amendments to the Recommended Code of Practice; and**
- 3. CETFA is calling on poultry slaughterhouses – particularly those mentioned in this report – to improve poultry transportation practices and to adopt Controlled-Atmosphere Killing.**

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Turkeys live-hung at Granny's Poultry Cooperative

