



July 14 2011

Mr. Paul Mayers
Associate Vice-President, Programs
Policy and Programs Branch
1400 Merivale Road, Tower 1, Floor 4, Room 104
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0Y9

Dear Mr. Mayers,

The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) and the Canadian Coalition for Farm Animals (CCFA) received video footage of pigs that appear to be suffering from heat exhaustion in overcrowded trucks arriving at Toronto Abattoirs (also known as Quality Meat Packers, Establishment 14). The footage has been posted online at:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=UMfEjCQoU6c.

The video footage was taken on July 12 by two Toronto residents, Teresa Ascencao and Anita Krajnc. Ms. Ascencao was passing by the trucks on her bike when she noticed the pigs in distress. She immediately asked to speak to the Plant Manager but was not granted this opportunity and instead asked to leave. Fortunately, Ms. Ascencao contacted a local animal protection group which is how we then learned of the problem.

Representatives from the Canadian Coalition for Farm Animals (CCFA) made several attempts to call CFIA enforcement staff that night but nobody seemed to be able to help. CCFA was told that the CFIA "after hours" hotline does not consider welfare-related complaints to be an "emergency". We understand that Ms. Krajnc and Ms. Ascencao have submitted a formal complaint along with the footage to Dr. Anco Farenhorst, Program Specialist in CFIA's Ontario office.

In the footage you will see that some of the pigs appear to be panting and foaming at the mouth and there is excessive vocalization. Ms. Ascencao witnessed approximately 10 trucks waiting in line to get onto the slaughterhouse's property and unload their animals. The temperature that day was in excess of 30°C and extremely humid. Some of the pigs had bloody snouts, which the witnesses suspect to be the result of the pigs struggling to get air from the ventilation holes. These issues point to the dire need for revision of the federal transport regulations. In this case, water on board vehicles and clear density specifications, which include specifications for travel during high temperatures, are needed. In addition, effort should be made to space out the arrival of the trucks so the animals do not have to wait so long before being unloaded. It takes only minutes for a stationary vehicle to reach

temperatures in excess of 50°C, far beyond that which cause pigs to experience severe heat stress. Pigs are more susceptible to heat stress because they lack sweat glands.

On the issues raised above, I refer you to the *Health of Animals Act*, Part XII, specifically, sections 140 (1), 140 (2) and 142 (1) (d) & (e) which state:

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.

(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.

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:

(d) undue exposure to the weather; or

(e) inadequate ventilation.

In addition, according to the Recommended codes of practice, transport should be avoided in hot and humid weather or:

- animals should be transported at night and in the early morning,
- vehicles containing animals should not be parked in direct sunlight
- if it is necessary to stop, the duration of the stop should be minimized to prevent the build-up of heat inside the vehicle,
- and the loading density should be reduced by 25%

We consider this to be a serious animal welfare problem and want confirmation that CFIA is investigating and taking the necessary enforcement action. We are further concerned because, in 2009, we received copies of CFIA animal transport inspection reports for this particular plant through an Access to Information request. Those reports, completed during the winter of 2008, indicated that a number of pigs were found dead on the trucks over a short time period and we don't believe any enforcement action was taken.

This particular incident highlights why we continue to encourage CFIA and the Minister of Agriculture to strengthen our federal animal transport regulations and increase the number of inspectors that are specifically trained to respond to animal welfare problems and have the

authority to relieve animals that are in distress. Furthermore, this experience demonstrates a need for a specific number set up to report animal welfare concerns after hours.

We suspect that there are many more animals suffering from heat exhaustion during transport on extremely hot days like today. That is why WSPA and CCFA recommend mandatory loading densities to ensure all animals have the ability to lie down or stand in their natural position, with lower densities in the summer to prevent overheating. We have also been encouraging improvements to transport vehicles such as automated cooling and onboard watering systems and temperature probes linked to an in-cab alarm system. With summer temperatures expected to rise in the coming years due to climate change, the need for automated ventilation becomes more pressing.

We look forward to your prompt reply on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Melissa Matlow".

Melissa Matlow, Campaigns Manager, World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA)
(416) 369-0044 x108, Melissa@wspa.ca

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lynn Kavanagh".

Lynn Kavanagh, Director, Canadian Coalition for Farm Animals (CCFA)
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