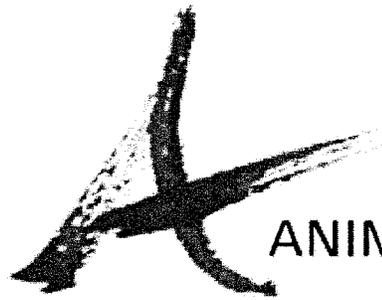


EXHIBIT 19
DATE 2/12/09
NO 418



ANIMALS' ANGELS

we are there with the animals

Press Release
November 2008

Animals' Angels
phone: 410-848-3153
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www.animals-angels.com

Animals' Angels, an animal welfare organization based in Maryland, last week received over 900 pages of documents and photographs from the United States Department of Agriculture taken during part of 2005 at the Beltex horse slaughter plant in Texas. Documents received 36 months after making a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, reveal an appalling number of incidences and an equally appalling degree of suffering sustained by horses. Evidence indicates alarming cruelty corresponding directly to horse slaughter.



The large FOIA document contains hundreds of photographs that graphically depict horses with open fractures, legs missing, battered and bloody faces, eyeballs dangling and what appears to be horses left to bleed to death. The document provides unimpeachable evidence for the immediate ban on the slaughter of American horses.

The photographs included in the FOIA document were taken between January 17, 2005 and November 17, 2005 at Beltex, the Belgian owned plant in Fort Worth, Texas. Beltex was forced to close this plant in 2007, after courts upheld Texas law that has banned horse slaughter since 1949. Beltex has since focused on its operations in Fresnillo, Mexico where it



continues to slaughter American horses. In addition, Beltex still runs the second largest slaughter horse feedlot in the U.S. Horses from all over the country are transported to the feedlot in Morton, TX before being sent to the Beltex slaughter plant in Mexico.

The FOIA request was submitted by Animals' Angels investigator Julie Caramante in November 2005 "I've been an equine cruelty investigator for a number of years," said Caramante, "and I've witnessed many horrific incidents of animal cruelty. But nothing could prepare me for the images contained in the FOIA. These pictures shocked me to the core. The pain and terror these horses endured is criminal. This just should not be, no excuses."

In commenting on the photographs, Sonja Meadows, Executive Director of Animals' Angels USA said:

"The pro-horse slaughter lobby continues to lobby for the domestic slaughter of horses, railing that transportation and slaughter of horses inside the United States is ever so much better, so much more humane than what happens in Mexico. These people say that U.S. humane laws protect the horses, that Mexico has no such laws. But this rhetoric is now exposed as nothing but disingenuous talk. The FOIA reveals unimaginable suffering was being perpetuated upon large numbers of horses on a long-term basis here in the U.S. We can only shudder at the scale of the suffering over the years. Animals' Angels will be investigating what actions were taken against those responsible for this horrific abuse."

Meadows is firm in her support of a Federal ban of horse slaughter. "From our own weekly investigations at auctions, feedlots and slaughter plants, the barbaric and inhumane treatment of horses goes on and will continue to do so until a Federal law is passed to end once and for all, the transportation and slaughter of horses for human consumption. The horse has played such an important part in the history of the United States and continues to be such an integral part in the lives of millions of its citizens. It is well overdue, past time for Congress to act and to pass a law to bring this miserable trade in horses for human consumption to an end."

Animals' Angels continues to send out its investigators to expose the abuse and suffering of horses and to ensure that those responsible within this brutal industry are held accountable for their actions. "However difficult and traumatic these investigations are," said Meadows, "Animals' Angels will remain true to its motto - *'We are there with the animals'*"

[Further information, video and pictures....](#)

Notes to Editors:

1. In 2007, the slaughter of horses on US soil came to an end when a court ruling upheld a Texas law banning horse slaughter, and similar legislation was passed in Illinois. However, failure by the US Senate to pass the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act into law has resulted in American horses still being slaughtered for human consumption abroad. Tens of thousands are shipped to Mexico and Canada annually, where they are killed under inhumane conditions so their meat can be sent to markets in Belgium, France, Italy and Japan.

Additionally, without the federal law, there remains the threat of horse slaughter plants being established in states that have no laws against the practice. In the beginning of 2008, unsuccessful attempts were made to open a horse slaughter plant in South Dakota. It is likely that pro-horse slaughter organizations will try again elsewhere in the United States.

While a handful of horses are purposely sold into slaughter by irresponsible owners, most arrive at the slaughter plant via livestock auction, where unsuspecting owners sell the animals to slaughter



plant middlemen known as "killer buyers". Despite the fact that the US plants are no longer in operation, killer buyers continue to purchase and haul as many horses as possible from livestock auctions around the country to the slaughterhouses that have now relocated to Mexico and Canada.

On the 24th July 2008, the Prevention of Equines Cruelty Act of 2008 (H.R. 6598) was introduced to the 110th Congress by Rep. John Conyers and Representative Dan Burton. H.R. 6598 prohibits the slaughter of horses for human consumption in the United States and the export of slaughter horses to Canada and Mexico.



2. Animals' Angels is a 501 (c)(3) non profit organization incorporated in Maryland with fulltime investigators working in the United States and Canada. Our focus is on improving conditions for farm animals. We work primarily in the field, trailing livestock trucks on highways, visiting markets, collecting stations and slaughterhouses.

We seek to cooperate with auction managers, transport companies and other authorities, including the police, veterinarians and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Contact:

Sonja Meadows
Executive Director
Animals' Angels USA
410-848-3153

www.animals-angels.com

Further information, video and pictures can be found here:

[TRANSPORT VIOLATIONS AT BELTEX WARNING - GRAPHIC CONTENT!](#)

Submit to Committee Secretary

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Animals' Angels USA
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ANIMALS' ANGELS

we are there with the animals

Investigation at the "slaughter" horse feedlot in Shelby, MT – External Report

1. General Information

Date:

5/6/08-5/13/08

Location:

The Bar S feedlot is located off Highway 2, east of Shelby, MT. The feedlot is not visible from the road, because railway tracks block the view.

Owner:

The "BAR S" feedlot is operated by Bouvry Exports Calgary, owned by Claude Bouvry. The company also owns several feedlots and two horse slaughter plants in Canada.

Feedlot Manager:

Don Donahue

Veterinarian:

Maria's Vet Clinic
Dr. Hardee Clark DVM
434-5176

Feedlot:

The large feedlot is located in a vast, open area. It is fenced in and the gates are closed between 4.30pm and 7am. There is a small, wooden office building and next to the building are the loading ramps.





2. Observations

5/6/08

We arrived at the feedlot at 9am. The gates were open and there were several cars parked in front of the office building. The horses were divided into several large pens. The holding pen in the front contained mothers with their foals. Some foals were only a few days old.



Inside the pen area are two long rows of feed troughs, so that all the horses can be fed at the same time. Every pen has water troughs as well. However, there is no shelter for any of the horses. There is no water spraying system to keep the dust down in dry weather.

MT ST 45-8-211. Cruelty to animals

(1) A person commits the offense of cruelty to animals if, without justification, the person knowingly or negligently subjects an animal to mistreatment or neglect by:

(c) failing to provide an animal in the person's custody with:

(ii) minimum protection for the animal from adverse weather conditions, with consideration given to the species;

The horses are not sorted by gender; stallions are put in the pens together with mares and geldings, which results in frequent fights. In addition, we saw several very pregnant mares mixed in with the others.

Many of the horses are very young and in good condition. They are very trusting to humans, when we approached the fence several came right to us and started nibbling on our jackets.



We observed that many of them were branded with "S" on the shoulder. Some brands appeared to be fresh.

Information obtained in regards to the "S" brand:

We were informed by the Montana Department of Livestock that the Bouvry feedlot is considered a quarantine lot. All animals inside the lot are bound for slaughter and therefore the state does not require them to be tested for EIA (Equine Infectious Anemia), a contagious and incurable disease. In return, all horses have to be branded with a "S" brand within 48 hours of their arrival at the lot – indicating that their EIA status is unknown. However, during our visit we found several horses without this brand.

32.3.1405 DISPOSITION OF REACTOR HORSES

- (1) Equids found to be infected with EIA shall be quarantined to the premise...
- (2) The EIA reactor shall remain under quarantine until it is:
 - (a) consigned to slaughter at a USDA approved equine slaughter establishment;
 - (b) euthanized (or dies) and is buried or incinerated; or
- (3) Movement of any reactor must be accompanied by a USDA, APHIS VS form 1-27.
- (4) The quarantine premise or area for EIA reactors shall provide no less than 200 yards separation from all other equids. The quarantine area and quarantined animals therein may be monitored periodically by a representative of the department of livestock to ensure that provisions of the quarantine are being met. Any EIA reactor not held in quarantine may be ordered euthanized or sent to slaughter.
- (5) All equids found to be infected with EIA shall be identified with a brand on the left neck or left shoulder which will be followed by a number issued by the state veterinarian's office. Identification as an EIA reactor shall be accomplished within 15 days of notification that the animal is infected with EIA. The 81A brand shall be at least 2 inches high and may be either a hot iron brand or a freeze brand. The 81A brand will be assigned in sequence from the state veterinarian's office.

Behind the large pen area is nothing but open farm land and hills. Here, the feedlot maintains its dead pit. Inside the pit were countless horse corpses. The smell was overwhelming. **The decaying bodies were not covered with soil, sawdust or straw – providing easy access for scavengers.** As a result, the hills around the feedlot were covered with horse bones and decaying body parts of horses.



Mont. Admin. R. 32.3.125 DISPOSAL OF CARCASSES

(1) Carcasses of animals that have died from other causes than anthrax must be disposed of in a satisfactory manner so as not to become a public nuisance or a menace to livestock or poultry. Carcasses of dead animals may not be disposed of along public highways, streams, lakes, or rivers, or allowed to remain on the ground surface so as to become a public nuisance or a menace to livestock or poultry.

MC 75-10-213. Unlawful disposition of dead animals It is unlawful to:

(1) place all or any part of a dead animal in any lake, river, creek, pond, reservoir, road, street, alley, lot, or field;

(2) place all or any part of a dead animal within 1 mile of the residence of any person unless the dead animal or part of a dead animal is burned or buried at least 2 feet underground

5/7/08

7.12am:

The feedlot manager arrives and opens the gate to the premises.

Information received from feedlot manager Don Donahue:

- No horses or foals will be sold to rescue organizations or private persons. The lot is a quarantine lot, which means every animal inside the lot will be shipped to slaughter.
- The foals remain in the lot until they are old enough (six months) to be legally slaughtered.
- There are 1600 horses inside the lot.

We observed that the green USDA slaughter tags had been attached to the horses in the pen close to the loading ramp.

9.50am:

A red truck with a single deck trailer pulled into the feedlot and backed up to the loading ramp.

Trucking Company: 1238387 Alberta LTD

Milk River, Alberta

DOT: 1618115

10.20am:

The driver and someone else from the feedlot start loading the horses. Both used moving paddles and the handling of the horses was calm and without any unnecessary hitting. Dividers were placed.

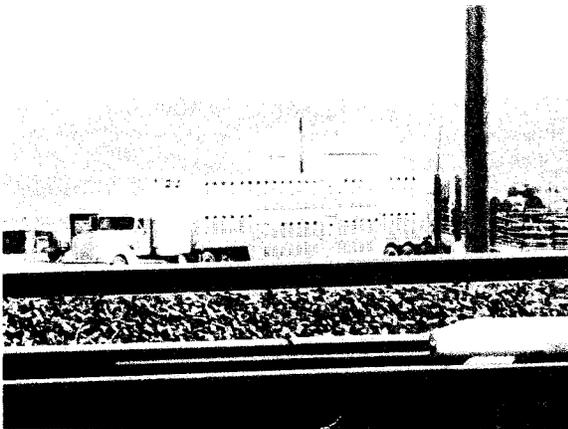
10.40am:

The truck left the premises and started driving towards I-15 north. At 11.20am, he arrived at the Sweetgrass border crossing. The driver entered the USDA inspection station and presented the owner/shipper papers to the USDA official. Then he crossed into Canada, parked and informed the CFIA veterinarian that he "has a load of horses" that needed to be inspected. Together, they walked out to the truck and the veterinarian briefly checked if all the horses are standing and sealed the trailer. At 12.30pm, the truck continued to the plant in Fort Macleod, Alberta. We turned around and continued observing the feedlot.

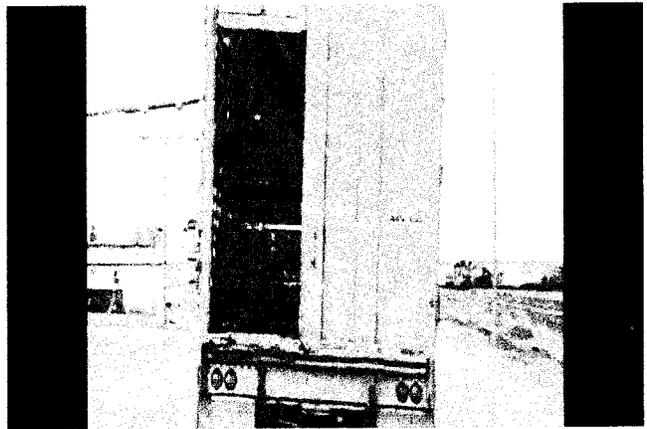
5/12/08

10.20am: A truck with a double deck trailer loaded with horses arrived at the feedlot. He immediately backed up to the ramp and started unloading the horses.

Trucking Company: D+J Trucking
729 Vaughn Frontage Road
Great Falls, MT
DOT: 053541



Double deck trailer unloading



inside view

A visit to D+J Trucking in Great Falls revealed that the company also owns a livestock facility with large pen area. During our visit, the pens were empty, but the ground was covered with horse manure.

5/13/08

We returned to the feedlot at 5am. Walking along the hills and the railway tracks made it possible to take a closer look at the horses inside the lot. There **were several animals that needed medical care.**



Carlos

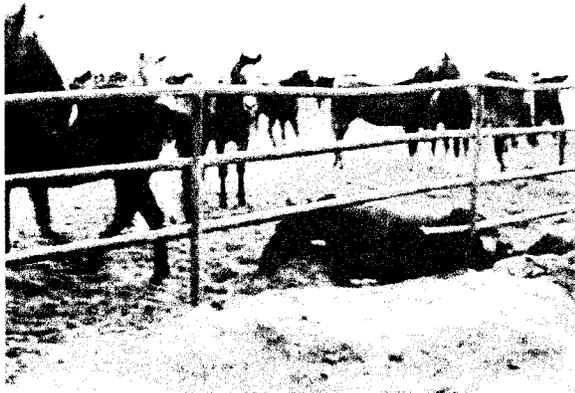


45-8-211. Cruelty to animals

(1) A person commits the offense of cruelty to animals if, without justification, the person knowingly or negligently subjects an animal to mistreatment or neglect by:

(c) failing to provide an animal in the person's custody with:

(iii) in cases of immediate, obvious, serious illness or injury, licensed veterinary or other appropriate medical care;



During the week long investigation, we never saw more than 3 people working at the feedlot. We never saw anybody checking the pens for injured or sick animals either, the only activity observed was feeding and watering. It is obvious that this is not enough to guarantee appropriate care for 1600 horses, especially not for the many pregnant mares.

9.30am:

A single deck truck with Alberta plate entered the feedlot.

Trucking company: Vanee Livestock LTD
Fort Macleod, Alberta
DOT 014138

In addition to 22 moving violations, the company's drivers also violated the Federal Motor Carrier Regulations 19 times (all violations occurred inside the United States):

Driver OOS Violation Summary (within 30 months)			
<u>Violation Number</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Number of OOS Violations</u>	<u>Number of Inspections</u>
383.51(A)	Driving a CMV (CDL) while disqualified	1	<u>1</u>
395.3(A)(1)	11 hour rule violation (Property)	8	<u>8</u>
395.3(A)(2)	14 hour rule violation (Property)	4	<u>4</u>
395.3(B)	60/70 hour rule violation (Property)	1	<u>1</u>
395.8(E)	False report of drivers record of duty status	5	<u>5</u>



Most of the violations are in regards to excessive driving time, which is a serious concern. Overtired truck drivers are a danger to the public on the busy US roadways.



Horses on loading ramp



Horses inside the trailer on their way to the slaughter plant

The horses were loaded with plastic paddles and sticks. The handling was satisfactory and 30 minutes later the truck left the feedlot and started driving towards I-15 north. Again, we observed the driver stopping at the USDA office and handing in the paperwork. All 26 horses had the green USDA tag attached and were heading to the plant in Fort Mcleod, Alberta.

Conclusion:

- ***The conditions at the feedlot are poor. There is no shelter and not enough personnel to check 1600 horses for sickness or injuries. As our documentations shows there are several horses in need of medical care inside the pen area.***
- ***Stallions are not separated from mares and geldings which results in frequent fights. Pregnant mares are kept in between the other horses.***
- ***The horses in the dead pile are not covered with soil or straw and scavengers carry horse parts to the surrounding areas. This is a public health risk and an environmental concern.***
- ***The feedlot does not follow the branding requirements for EIA positive horses.***