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Coalition Opposes USDA's Dangerous High-Speed Slaughter Program

Washington, DC — February 6, 2018 — [Compassion Over Killing](#) (COK) joins a diverse coalition of 35 organizations strongly opposing the imminent nationwide expansion of the US Dept. of Agriculture's (USDA) controversial high-speed pig slaughter program. The New Swine Slaughter Inspection System (NSIS) revokes already fast maximum line speeds and puts animal welfare, worker safety, and food safety in jeopardy.

The [USDA is now accepting public comments](#) on its proposed rule, which the federal agency has misleadingly titled, "Modernization of Swine Slaughter Inspection." Formerly known as "HIMP," a pilot program that currently has five participating slaughterhouses, NSIS will expand this program nationwide. Under NSIS, food safety inspection will be largely placed in the hands of slaughter plant employees themselves, the number of government food safety inspectors on the line will be reduced, and the plants will be able to determine their own slaughter line speeds. This proposed rule is a step backward at a time when the public is hungry for transparency in the food industry and when reports show that workers are suffering severe injuries and being denied breaks in the fast-paced environment of slaughterhouses.

In a letter to US Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, the coalition [writes](#), "Although proponents have claimed that the high-speed pilot program was designed to 'yield improved food-safety and other benefits to consumers,' evidence shows that it undermines food safety and puts consumers in danger."

COK's former undercover investigator, **Scott David**, worked inside Quality Pork Processors (QPP). This facility is one of the fastest slaughter plants in the nation operating under the pilot program and kills approximately 1,300 pigs each hour. QPP is held up by the USDA as a model example, but [COK's video](#) reveals the horrors hidden behind closed doors — horrors that pigs at slaughterhouses nationwide will face under NSIS.

COK's undercover video documents:

- animals beaten, shocked, and dragged as workers take inhumane shortcuts to keep lines moving as fast as possible
- pigs covered in feces and pus-filled abscesses being slaughtered and processed for human consumption with a USDA inspection seal of approval
- numerous instances of improper stunning and slaughter, potentially leading to some animals entering the scalding tank while still alive

- a plant supervisor sleeping on the job when he should have been overseeing the stunning process to ensure workers were following protocol

“Anyone who has seen hidden-camera footage from inside a slaughterhouse knows that allowing these facilities to police themselves goes against common sense and the common good,” **says former Compassion Over Killing investigator, Scott David.**

Nearly a quarter of a million people have signed [a petition](#) to the USDA calling for an end to NSIS. To demonstrate mounting consumer objections, Scott David will be joined by others to hand-deliver a petition in person to the federal agency in Washington, DC, personally conveying the objections of hundreds of thousands of Americans.

There is also strong opposition to NSIS within the federal government, including USDA whistleblowers and members of Congress.

Even the USDA’s own Office of the Inspector General issued a report in 2013 [stating](#) that “*since FSIS did not provide adequate oversight, [pilot program] HIMP plants may have a higher potential for food safety risks,*” and a 2016 letter from [60 members of Congress](#) to the USDA stated “*the available evidence suggests the hog HIMP will undermine food safety.*”

“Only the meat industry stands to gain from the USDA’s so-called ‘modernization’ system. It’s shameful, and there is nothing modern about this program that increases dangers posed to animals, workers, and consumers alike,” **says Erica Meier, Compassion Over Killing Executive Director.**

To read the coalition letter in full, please [click here](#).

For investigative video, please visit: COK.net/Hormel

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Compassion Over Killing (COK) is a nonprofit animal protection organization working to end the abuse of farmed animals through undercover investigations, litigation, corporate outreach, public education, and other advocacy programs. <http://cok.net>