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June 11, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been asked by Animal Outlook to review approximately 17 minutes of video footage taken at an unspecified time at a New Jersey slaughterhouse that produces meat for dogs and captive exotic animals. To introduce myself, I am an [REDACTED]-licensed veterinarian ([REDACTED] graduate of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] College of Veterinary Medicine) who practices clinical medicine with a range of species and consults on animal welfare issues. I am also an [REDACTED] [REDACTED], where I earned a master's degree focusing on animal and veterinary ethics. Through my work as a consultant, I have reviewed hundreds of USDA inspection reports regarding violations of the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (HMSA) at federally-inspected slaughterhouses. As part of this research, I have become familiar with the appropriate use of methods to rapidly render cattle insensible to pain, methods used to assess consciousness after a stun attempt, and humane methods of moving and killing non-ambulatory disabled cattle.

Briefly, the video shows a thin, non-ambulatory female cow being dragged off a trailer with a Maine license plate (3145231), after which she lies moribund in a pool of blood, water, and feces for an extended period while displaying clear signs of consciousness despite numerous ineffective and delayed attempts to stun her with a handheld captive bolt (HHCB). Her repeated distressed vocalizations and bodily movements, which clearly indicate distress, pain, and suffering, continue for most of the video.

Detailed Description of the Video

When the video begins, the trailer containing the cow is parked at the facility. The videographer is speaking with Worker #1. The footage suggests that the workers may have attempted to render the cow unconscious with a blow from a HHCB (i.e., effectively stun her) while she was still on the trailer, but this cannot be definitively determined from the footage. Starting at 0:19, the rear door to the trailer is first observed to open and close a small amount, potentially enough to admit a worker into the trailer. At 1:10, Worker #2 enters a door to the left, which later footage suggests is the location where the HHCB equipment is kept and reloaded in between stun attempts. He is empty-handed upon entering the room. At 1:36, both workers exit through this same door, but the camera's view of Worker #2 is obstructed by Worker #1, preventing determination as to whether he is carrying the HHCB. At 1:46, the door to the trailer opens slightly and it appears Worker #2 enters it, though the camera's view is obstructed. At 2:03, a loud noise, likely the discharge of the HHCB, is heard; it is not followed by the sound of a collapsing cow. At 2:16, Worker #2, now carrying a HHCB, again enters the door to the left.

A metal chain is then brought into the trailer. At 3:37, a mature, underweight female cow is dragged from the trailer by the chain. She is in right lateral recumbency (lying on her right side) and it appears the metal chain has been placed around her neck. There is no unloading ramp between the rear

of the trailer and the concrete floor below, so the cow falls approximately 12 to 18 inches. She lands on a surface on which a large amount of blood has pooled, presumably from the recently slaughtered animal whose hoisted, skinned carcass is visible through an open door. She is surrounded by manure which appears to have been swept out of the trailer by her body as she was being dragged.

The cow's forelimbs are rigidly extended and she is making clonic, paddling type movements with all four limbs. While such spasms can be seen in an animal effectively stunned with a captive bolt, typically for up to 15 seconds, it is evident the cow is conscious because she can be heard to vocalize within 3 seconds of landing on the concrete, at 3:40 and again at 3:44.¹ This indicates that she was conscious when dragged and dropped off the trailer and that her limb movements likely are expressions of pain and distress in an animal too debilitated to rise. It appears that Worker #2 recognizes the cow is conscious because, at 4:20, he enters the door to the left and emerges at 4:43 carrying the HHCB. At 4:52, Worker #2 administers a blow with the HHCB, resulting in an immediate vocalization by the cow. Accuracy of shot placement cannot be determined because the camera's view is partially obstructed by the open trailer door. Similarly, it is not possible to observe the methods, if any, used by the worker to assess consciousness and effectiveness of the stun attempt.

The cow's movements briefly decrease after the 4:52 stun attempt, but soon she begins trembling. From 5:24 to 5:32, four distinct grunting vocalizations can be heard, her eyes are open, she makes purposeful movements with her mouth, and her paddling increases in intensity and begins to involve forward kicking type movements, suggestive of a righting reflex; all of these are behavioral indicators of consciousness and an ineffective stun attempt. At 5:36, the trailer is moved, improving visualization of the cow. Her legs and underside are heavily soiled with what appears to be manure, and her movements persist with varying intensity. At 5:42 and again at 6:00, the cow vocalizes. Rhythmic breathing, another sign of persistent consciousness and ineffective stunning, can be observed when the cow's movements slow and three distinct complete breaths can be seen from 6:11-6:20.

Another shot with the captive bolt is administered at 6:20 by Worker #2. He appears to check for consciousness by kicking near the cow's face but her reaction cannot be seen due to the angle of the camera. The cow's movements initially slow to some slight twitches of her forelimbs, but starting around 6:47, rhythmic breathing can again be seen. The rhythmic breathing continues, and the left rear limb begins to move. At 6:58 and at 7:03, additional apparent vocalizations are audible but both workers have left the immediate area, making it impossible for them to monitor the cow. At 7:14, Worker #2 begins spraying the hoisted carcass approximately ten feet behind the cow with a high-pressure hose. Water begins splashing around the cow's face, resulting in increased limb movements. At this point, the camera pans to the departing red truck and trailer, returning at approximately 8:04 to the cow, who is still being splashed by Worker #2's hose.

Rhythmic breathing, bellowing, and kicking are noted at 8:15-8:19. The cow bellows loudly at 8:42 and again, with increased vigor, at 8:58. These distress vocalizations are ignored by Worker #2, who is now applying a fluid via a pump to the carcass. At 9:29, 10:07, 10:41, 11:04, and 11:10 additional bellowing can be heard, with occasional limb movements. At 11:11, having completed his work with the

¹ Grandin, T. (2017). How to Determine Insensibility (Unconsciousness) in Cattle, Pigs, and Sheep in Slaughter Plants. <http://www.grandin.com/humane/insensibility.html>

hanging carcass, Worker #2 turns his attention to the cow and appears to assess her for consciousness by kicking her near her face; we cannot see her reaction. At 11:14, he kicks the cow's left forelimb, which results in increased paddling.

At 11:55, Worker #2 administers a final stun attempt with the HHCB (the fourth one, assuming one was in fact administered in the trailer). A sound that is likely a vocalization is heard at 12:20. While some small movements are seen after this point, no further vocalizations are audible, nor is rhythmic breathing or purposeful movement noted.

At 13:36, the cow is repositioned with the use of a chain around her left hock, so we can see her face. She appears unconscious at this time, as her eyes are open, no rhythmic breathing, vocalizations, or movement are noted, and her tongue is limp and hanging out of her mouth. Due to how dirty the cow is and the distance from the camera, placement or number of the holes made by the HHCB cannot be assessed. At 16:01, the cow is hoisted and then stuck. She appears to be fully unconscious (and perhaps deceased) for this process, as she is hanging limp, her tongue is hanging limp, and no motion is noted.

Analysis of Video

From the available footage, it is not certain whether this cow arrived in a non-ambulatory, disabled condition at the slaughterhouse. She is certainly in this condition upon removal from the trailer. I suspect she was in this condition upon arrival to the facility based on her heavily soiled condition and the lack of the sound of a cow falling following the presumptive first stun attempt at 2:03.

Due to their large body size, cows who are unable to stand become rapidly compromised due to compression of muscles and nerves, which can result in severe pain. Numerous methods, including sleds, harnesses, and skid steers with modified buckets, are used to humanely move non-ambulatory cattle. If they fail to improve in 24 to 48 hours and aggressive treatment is not an option, euthanizing the cow on-farm is more humane than attempting to transport the animal to a slaughter facility. It is unclear when this cow became non-ambulatory, but the distribution of dirt and manure on her body suggests she might have been down for a prolonged period.

When a large, non-ambulatory animal arrives at a slaughterhouse, euthanizing on the trailer is typically the most humane approach. Non-ambulatory, disabled livestock are protected under the federal Humane Methods of Slaughter Act and the New Jersey Humane Treatment of Domestic Livestock Regulations, both of which recognize that dragging conscious, non-ambulatory, disabled livestock constitutes cruel treatment.

Review of the video footage suggest that the slaughterhouse workers likely attempted to stun (render unconscious/insensible to pain) the cow while she was in the trailer. However, it is clear that when she was dragged out of the trailer and dropped to the concrete, the cow was still conscious. This indicates the stunning attempt was ineffective. Captive bolt stunning can be ineffective for a number of reasons, including inaccurate placement for the bolt, inadequate size of the bolt, and inadequate size or storage conditions of the charge. Mature cattle have very thick frontal bones overlaying their brains, so captive bolt size and charge must be carefully selected, and stunning with a shotgun is typically more

reliable. Slaughter facilities typically have a back-up device readily available in the event the first stun attempt is ineffective. In this case, there was no evidence of a back-up stun device, and the worker had to exit the immediate area each time the HHCB needed to be reloaded.

Based on the video, I am unable to comment on the reason the first three stun attempts were ineffective, but it is clear that the workers both failed to adequately assess consciousness and failed to act immediately when signs of consciousness were apparent. Careful assessment of consciousness is essential, especially in a debilitated animal who is incapable of demonstrating more obvious signs of consciousness, such as rising to their feet. At no time did either worker squat down to closely examine the cow's face, test a corneal reflex or nose prick response, or evaluate the tonicity of the tongue, as is described in sensibility assessment training by industry groups, such as the North American Meat Institute.² As a result, the cow was unloaded from the trailer in a cruel and completely unacceptable manner and struggled helplessly for nearly ten minutes between the first and final stun attempts.

Based on my review of Humane Handling Enforcement Actions³ and the 2020 Directive by the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service on Humane Handling and Slaughter of Livestock,⁴ any one of several of the events depicted in the footage are severe enough to qualify as "egregious inhumane treatment." The following are examples of acts or conditions considered egregious by the USDA, that were suffered by this cow:

- Dragging of a conscious animal
- Failing to immediately (or promptly) render an animal unconscious after a failed initial stunning attempt
- Multiple ineffective stun attempts (2 or more)
- Driving animals off semi-trailers over a drop off without providing adequate unloading facilities (animals are falling to the ground). (Note: in this case, the cow was dragged rather than driven)

In addition, the wet conditions at the unloading site, caused by a mixture of blood and water from the kill floor, would likely merit issuance of a noncompliance record for non-egregious inhumane handling.

In conclusion, the footage I have reviewed depicts numerous instances of cruel and inhumane treatment of a cow in association with slaughter, leading to her protracted suffering and failure of the facility to meet widely accepted minimum standards for humane handling and slaughter of animals.

Sincerely,



² Grandin, T. (2016) *Handling, Stunning, and Determining Insensibility in Cattle and Sheep*, 2nd Edition. <https://www.meatinstitute.org/index.php?ht=a/GetDocumentAction/i/127635>

³ <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/inspection/regulatory-enforcement/humane-handling-enforcement>

⁴ United State Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service. (2020) *Humane Handling and Slaughter of Livestock* (6900.2 Revision 3). https://www.fsis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media_file/2021-03/6900.2.pdf