

Animal Protection Organization Alleges Torture, Abuse In Major Pork Industry Breeding Facility

Undercover footage reveals pigs kicked, hit, subjected to botched castration and gassing, fed intestines of dead piglets, and neglected

August 5, 2023 - LOS ANGELES, Calif. and UTICA, Minn. -- Today, Animal Outlook, a national animal protection charity, [released footage obtained via hidden camera at Holden Farms](#), one of the largest producers of pork in the country, in Utica, Minnesota. Holden breeds pigs to supply pork to some of the largest pork companies in the U.S. Holden Farms has been [linked to](#) Tyson Foods and to JBS, the largest meat processing company in the world.

The video, filmed by an Animal Outlook investigator who worked inside the facility, shows repeated and routine abuse and neglect, including numerous instances of methods and practices inflicting suffering on countless animals. Animal Outlook believes that Holden Farms has violated multiple state laws and has asked law enforcement officials to prosecute for cruelty and neglect, which these enforcement agencies declined to do. Video documentation includes:

- Often-botched attempts to gas to death sick or injured piglets using carbon dioxide poisoning. Piglets are seen writhing and gasping for breath inside the gassing chamber box.
- Piglets subjected to castration via testicles being ripped out by hand without any pain relief, causing some to suffer ruptured internal organs and later die. Piglets vocalize in distress from the castration while some of the workers tease one another by throwing the testicles at each other. This is done so often there is a wall covered with testicles stuck to it.
- A practice known as “feedback” in which workers blend the intestines of dead piglets together with pig feces into a slurry and feed it to pregnant pigs. A worker is seen retching and nearly vomiting as she blends the intestines.
- Dozens of incidents of hitting, kicking, slapping, punching, beating with a paddle, or roughly handling pigs.
- Widespread neglect, including open sores and prolapses where internal organs hang

from live pigs' bodies.

- Pigs injured or killed by cage systems, including one animal who was trapped between bars and died there due to neglect. Her body was then sawed in half and made the subject of jokes.
- Many animals died - in one month alone, Animal Outlook's investigator removed hundreds of dead piglets.
- Pigs subjected to cruel, yet standard, industry practices including cutting off piglets' tails without pain relief with clippers or pliers and confining pregnant and nursing pigs in metal crates so small they cannot turn around.

[Holden](#) is part of the industry-developed [We Care](#) program, which claims to uphold the "highest standards" of animal well-being. However, Animal Outlook says its footage shows that the agriculture industry continues to commit horrific violence despite claims that it is possible to produce meat humanely.

"Pigs trapped in this cruel industry are born into a world of suffering," said Cheryl Leahy, Executive Director of Animal Outlook. "The cruelties we documented at Holden Farms are so rampant and so extreme, this is how this facility does business. Holden should not be allowed to continue this rampant abuse. Though we were not able to secure state animal cruelty charges here, the public stands with us in demanding an end to this large-scale cruelty and the industry that profits from it, and each of us has the power to refuse to support it."

[Investigative footage is available here.](#)

The release of this investigation, documenting an intensive confinement U.S. pork facility, comes in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court upholding California's Proposition 12 this spring and as the animal agriculture industry works aggressively to enact a new federal bill called the EATS Act, which would nullify Proposition 12 and many other animal protection laws nationwide. The investigation shows in depth the kinds of cruelty and related harms the industry is fighting so hard to be able to continue perpetrating.

ABOUT ANIMAL OUTLOOK

[Animal Outlook](#) is a national nonprofit 501(c)(3) animal advocacy organization based in Washington, DC, and Los Angeles, CA. It is strategically challenging animal agribusiness through undercover investigations, legal advocacy, corporate and food system reform, and disseminating information about the many harms of animal agriculture, empowering everyone to choose vegan. <https://animaloutlook.org/>

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