



SUFFERING IN SILENCE

An idyllic picture? You might think so but, by the time you receive this newsletter these lambs will have been callously taken from their mothers and slaughtered. Their body parts will by now, probably be displayed on a meat counter - maybe somewhere near you!

For four years we have monitored sheep on the above field and have twice reported incidents to Trading Standards and at least four to the RSPCA. This year alone we have recorded the following cases of neglect:

- 1. A ewe, with two lambs, dragging a severely infected vaginal prolapse.
- 2. Lambs left staggering around with painful swollen joints due to infection contracted through their navel, 'Joint ill'.
- 3. Pregnant ewes, were left to die in agony while experiencing difficult births without necessary assistance. (see below)



- 4. Ewes and lambs alike in urgent need of veterinary attention, were left with painful aggressive foot rot. (see our letter to the RSPCA opposite following our report and below, we treat a lamb with severe foot rot while her mother looks on.)



- 5. One lamb was suffering with foot rot and a broken front leg.
- 6. Many orphaned lambs left to fend for themselves.

- 7. Lambs straying loose on a busy country road due to inadequate fencing.

- 8. A terrified mother and lamb drowning in a fast flowing dyke. (below, we pull them to safety)



Taken from video footage ...

- 9. Sheep with serious flystrike over large areas of their bodies heaving with maggots. (see below)



- 10. Young lamb born with a 'shaking affliction' deteriorating day by day.

- 11. Worm-egg counts from sheep faeces confirmed a high parasite burden.

- 12. Decaying sheep and lambs left for days and weeks in fields and dykes, often until they disintegrated. (see letter opposite)

- 13. A ewe so noticeably ill who died right in front of us leaving two orphan lambs.

- 14. Main flock of sheep moved from one field to another leaving very young lambs behind without their mother.



This lamb was desperately trying to suckle from her dead mother. Her brother had also perished.



It was too late to save this lamb who we found soaking wet and bleating for her mother. Sadly, she had died in a dyke at least



Our letter to the RSPCA following our last report to them in July 2004:

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for your prompt response to our report regarding severely lame sheep in a field near Norwich. However, we did suggest that for you to assess properly the severity of those with prolonged foot rot, the whole flock would need to be penned and individually examined. Despite the fact that we had seen at least forty badly limping sheep, your inspector, who simply walked amongst them, told me that out of around two hundred and fifty animals, he saw 'only' six that were lame and that he was 'only really concerned about two of them'. He felt that, taking into account the size of the flock, this was an acceptable amount and also that the RSPCA continuously received reports about other lame sheep in Norfolk. Your inspector also suggested that the sheep in question may just have had stones wedged in their feet. I know this wasn't generally the cause as we managed to catch and treat four sheep on site, whose foot rot had been so severely neglected, that some had lost hooves, leaving the animals hobbling with bleeding, maggot-infested stumps. We are sure that if a horse or a donkey had been found in this appalling condition due to lack of veterinary attention, a prosecution would almost certainly have ensued.

This recent report is the fourth time during the last three years that we have informed you about sheep on this particular field, and despite your talking to the owner or leaving him a note, as you did on this last occasion, the care of these animals never seems to improve. Despite also reporting to Trading Standards this farmer's usual practice of leaving sheep to decay for weeks in fields and ditches, we are still coming across decomposing carcasses!

I know that unfortunately your inspectors are already fully stretched in their work and that the problem of the immense suffering endured by farmed animals is much bigger than both our organisations can deal with. However, if only more cases were **properly** brought to justice this would send out a strong message to the thousands of other offending farmers. We have proved time and time again that reporting such cases to DEFRA or Trading Standards is mostly a waste of time as they so rarely prosecute. Although reluctant to take any follow-up action, Trading Standards will at least visit soon after they receive a report, whereas DEFRA seem to ignore any such request or wait months before making an investigation!

You have told us that in your experience, courts view suffering caused to animals reared for food as a much lesser offence than cruelty inflicted on their domestic counterparts, and that only around fifteen per cent of your convictions involve farm animals. This is surprising, due to the fact that millions more farm animals are suffering compared to domestic pets. But it is not surprising bearing in mind that food animals are conveniently reared behind closed doors out of the public's gaze. You have in the past criticised us for advocating a meat-free diet, but we do feel that by promoting animal-friendly food, while showing the public how the animals they eat continue to suffer with little intervention from the authorities, is the most positive way forward. Owing to the aforementioned lack of action taken, ultimately it is only the public themselves who can make the difference!

Finally, you have often written to our supporters, *"it is easy to forget that the RSPCA has no special entitlement to bring prosecutions. Anyone at all with enough evidence can initiate a prosecution. As far as I am aware, Hillside have never chosen to prosecute anyone despite their on-going criticism of the Society for this apparent failure."* We consider this unfair as although at Hillside our strength is in exposing hidden cases of farm animal abuse, it is your Society with over a 100 years' experience and a well set up legal department, that has the expertise to bring these animal abusers to justice.

We await your response with interest.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Valentine



Close to slaughter weight, this lamb still suckles from her mother. When they are separated, the distressed ewes bleat in vain for days, lingering by the pens where they last saw their offspring. Although of course these practices are not illegal, it is hard to understand how some human beings can cause so much pain to another living creature. To give an insight into the sordid reality of the meat industry, we have filmed these pitiful scenes, which are all part of the overall process to produce 'lamb', once advertised as 'the food of love'.

Videos giving an insight into Hillside's undercover investigations are available FREE on request

**Ducks in Despair
Pigs Behind Bars
The Christmas Turkey
Chicken Supreme
Factory Farming Today**

These videos shows the commonplace suffering of animals in the intensive factory farming industry

To order please use the website

If you would like to make a donation to help us continue with our animal investigations

please visit the donation page on our website

On a happier note - here are some rescued lambs enjoying life in the safety of Hillside.

An in-depth report on sheep welfare entitled 'SILENT LAMBS' compiled by Advocates for Animals is available by post priced £4.95

