



THE UNCOUNTED DEAD:

Farming's unofficial victims

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KEY FINDINGS


Nearly one billion farmed animals are slaughtered for meat in the UK every year. There is a wealth of evidence to show that this vast enterprise of killing is accompanied by much chaos, incompetence and animal suffering. That's despite a regulatory framework whose declared purpose is to eliminate such failings.

In addition to these 'official dead', however, there are millions more annual farming industry victims – and these are the subject of this report. They are the animals who perish before they can be slaughtered. They are killed by disease, exposure, starvation, fire, flood, road crashes and plain wanton neglect. Neither the industry nor central or local government bother counting these victims. There is no credible system, either, of on-farm inspection or sanctions that would limit, for instance, the incidence and the impact of fires and floods. And a heartless farmer, as we show on page 37, can even persuade a court that he is a fit person to continue farming sheep, despite having caused the slow, agonising death from disease and starvation, of hundreds of animals.

The uncounted dead are what the farming industry regards as collateral damage. The sheer volume of casualties clearly denotes a large measure of systemic incompetence as well as indifference to animal suffering, but the important calculation for farmers relates to simple profit and loss. In making this calculation, both the official and unofficial dead are regarded as mere commodities. By way of illustration, one of this report's case histories relates to 700,000 chickens who drowned in their North Lincolnshire sheds last December as a result of a huge tidal surge. The local authorities and the Environment Agency were aware that the area was at a high and increasing risk of flooding. It was also clear that no chickens would survive when the inevitable deluge came. Yet, not only was permission granted for the sheds to be built in the first place, but following the death of the 700,000 – an event that merited no national media coverage – the owners announced that the units would be rebuilt and filled once again with chickens. It might be assumed that the company estimated that it is more profitable – as well as convenient in terms of the need for planning permission – to continue production on the same site and face another flood in what they hope will be some years' time, than start again elsewhere. The lack of proper concern for animal suffering that such judgements reveal is a theme running throughout our report.

Another case we highlight tells of a lorry carrying nearly 7,000 former egg-laying hens that crashed in May 2014 on the M62, leaving 1,500 birds dead and many more with devastating injuries. Crates were scattered over the three lanes of the motorway. Stricken hens were everywhere, some mutilated in broken containers. Workers from a local poultry farm were called. They caught handfuls of birds by their legs and brutally forced them back into the crates without checking for injuries, repeatedly causing them more severe harm. The traumatised chickens were eventually loaded onto a replacement lorry and sent for slaughter.





THIS PIG WAS EN ROUTE TO A SLAUGHTERHOUSE WHEN THE TRANSPORTER CRASHED ON A ROUNDABOUT NEAR YORK, KILLING 35 OF HER FELLOWS

The commodification of animals produced for meat, milk and eggs is the reason for such unhappy case histories. We could try to offer the reader some comfort by producing a raft of recommendations calling for inspections, inquiries, sanctions, training and multi-agency plans for dealing with emergencies. But while such measures might help reduce the sum total of animal suffering, they might simply keep more animals alive long enough for them to endure the nightmare of the slaughterhouse.

Pathological cruelty and neglect obviously have to be dealt with. Animals must not fall prey to the

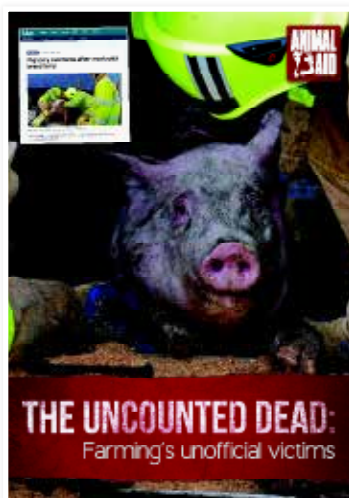
farming trade's worst practitioners. The meagre welfare laws and regulatory restraints currently in place must be strengthened and enforced. But no-one should imagine that either regulated or unregulated suffering can be banished from animal farming and slaughter. These are pitiless, bloody activities that are predicated on industrial-scale animal exploitation and killing.

Our report is intended to reinforce that point, while opening up to public scrutiny a rarely discussed aspect of the industry – the millions of sheep, chickens, cows, pigs and other farmed animals whose often chaotic, agonising deaths are unrecognised, uncounted and unlamented.

Andrew Tyler, Director, Animal Aid



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INTRODUCTION

In 2013, more than 989.6 million farmed animals were slaughtered for meat in the UK.^{1,2}

Of these, 2.6m were cattle, 10.3m were pigs, 14.5m were sheep³, 17.5m were turkeys and a staggering 944.7m were chickens.⁴ As sobering as these numbers are, they are a matter of public record – the same statistics can be found on the Defra website and anyone can request them by mail or telephone. What is not on record is the number of animals who die *before* they reach a slaughterhouse. These include the many sheep who die from exposure each year; the millions of ‘broiler’ chickens who succumb to dehydration, unable to reach water due to crippling leg deformities; and the multitude of pigs who perish due to infectious diseases and other ailments inside crowded sheds.



LAYING HENS IN AN ‘ENRICHED’ CAGE

Animal Aid asked Defra how many farmed animals die prior to slaughter on British farms each year. It was unable to tell us, as the department does not collate such information. Farmers are required to inform it of an animal’s on-farm death only if the fatality is caused by a notifiable disease, such as foot and mouth or BSE (mad cow disease).⁵ This is despite European Council Directive 98/58/EC⁶ requiring farmers to keep a record of all dead animals they find when carrying out inspections.⁷ Though handicapped by the lack of proper records, we have pieced together mortality statistics from a number of other sources.

In addition to the millions of disease-related deaths each year, this report also examines the often-devastating impact on farmed animals of adverse weather conditions, including flooding, as well as transport crashes and on-farm fires. We catalogue just some of these incidents over the past few years, but even so, the numbers are staggering. For example in 2013, on two adjacent Lincolnshire farms owned by the same company, 700,000 chickens drowned when the area flooded. Like many of the cases we list in this report, it did not make the national news. And when they do appear, articles about such incidents largely focus on the human impacts – notably, the financial costs incurred by the farmer, or the traffic delays caused by a vehicle collision.

When combined, these incidents account for tens of millions of animals dying prematurely every year – from disease, neglect, fire, punishing weather, traffic collisions and other causes. Our estimate for the annual total is 43 million. These fatalities are inevitable and predictable. They are the ‘collateral damage’ of British farming.

As noted above, processing animals as tradeable goods, rather than as sentient individuals, makes a high volume of pre-slaughter deaths inevitable. Among the lethal elements are: the confinement of vast numbers in crowded conditions, making individual care impossible; the siting of farms in areas prone to flooding; the lack of shelter to protect animals from the elements; the poor condition of farms’ electrical systems; and the transportation by road of millions of animals, often on long, stressful journeys.

As well as these structural problems, there are fundamental regulatory failings, including inadequate planning regulations, insufficient

welfare inspections, poor enforcement of welfare rules and a lack of contingency planning for large-scale catastrophes. These elements combine to ensure that there are more fatalities than would otherwise be the case and that the suffering is compounded.

The Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC) published, in 2012, a highly critical review of contingency planning for the welfare of farmed animals in the event of disasters and emergencies. It found that, while there are detailed national plans for an outbreak of an exotic animal disease, there are no national or EU-level contingency plans for farmed animals in the event of any other kind of emergency.⁸ On page 18, we examine the role of local authorities and the emergency services in dealing with farmed animal disasters.

Ultimately, however, the responsibility for these animals, in both normal and emergency situations, lies with the farmer or the person in charge of them at the time. Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, keepers have a legal duty to protect their animals from suffering, and the collective ‘Codes of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock’, published by Defra, outline the legal responsibilities farmers have for each species in times of emergency. But, as this report will show, this is weakly regulated and enforced, leaving farmed animals extraordinarily vulnerable.

That there is no central body tasked with thoroughly and independently regulating this industry, enforcing standards, developing contingency plans or even counting the ‘unofficial’ dead, is indicative of the abysmally low status afforded farmed animals.

A KID HUDDLES NEAR THE BODY OF HER DEAD MOTHER





ANOTHER TRAUMATISED SURVIVOR OF THE 2014
CRASH NEAR YORK THAT KILLED 35 PIGS

Deaths During **TRANSPORTATION**

Traffic incidents that cause the death of farmed animals can generally be divided into three types: vehicles colliding with animals; vehicles carrying animals colliding with something else; and animals dying as a result of conditions during transportation.

Incidents where animals are hit by vehicles tend to involve those who have escaped from fields, which usually means sheep and cattle. While such collisions may be the result of dangerous driving, they should also be considered as acts of neglect by those responsible for allowing the animals to escape. This might be the farmer, for failing to maintain enclosures; a vandal who has damaged a fence or wall; or a walker who has left a gate open. While such incidents rarely result in mass casualties, they occur sufficiently frequently to amount to a major problem, especially in areas where animals are permitted to roam freely.

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Transporting animals by road, sea and air is an inescapable aspect of modern farming. They are transported to market, between farms, for live export and, ultimately, to slaughter. The noise, the crowding, the temperature, the movement of the truck, the smells and the weather conditions all combine to create a distressing experience. The risk of injury and death are also always present, even on seemingly unchallenging road journeys. Around 0.19 per cent of chickens die in transit each year. This amounts to around 1.7m birds.⁹ Disease, heart problems and trauma are common causes.¹⁰

Road transportation regulations vary according to the species, but all animals are supposed to be inspected before loading to ensure they are fit to travel under *European Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005*.¹¹ This same regulation also stipulates that journey times must be kept to a minimum.¹² This would imply that animals sent for slaughter, for example, should be transported to the nearest slaughterhouse. Yet Animal Aid is aware of

numerous cases of animals being transported from farms in Scotland to abattoirs in southern England. There is no requirement for animals to have access to food during transit and only certain species must have constant access to water. However, maximum journey times are stipulated, after which animals are supposed to have access to food, water and a period of rest before transport can begin again. Cows, for example, can be transported for 14 hours, before being 'rested' for one hour and then being loaded again for transport for another 14 hours.¹³ Pigs may be transported for 24 hours without any 'rest'.¹⁴

The most obviously shocking transportation incidents are traffic collisions. Some of the animal victims may die instantly, while others can be trapped or badly injured and left in pain and distress for extended periods. Euthanasia must be performed by a trained professional, which inevitably incurs a delay.

Stocking densities for live transport can be extremely high,^{15,16,17} with the number of animals who can be moved at one time limited only by the size of the vehicle. Seven thousand chickens, or more than 250 sheep, can be carried in a single, multilayered lorry. Inevitably, when these giant transporters are involved in collisions, there is more trauma, injury and death. Animals can crush one another on impact and in the ensuing panic. Those thrown from the vehicle may end up being hit by other vehicles. High stocking densities can also make it very hard for emergency responders to assist the animal victims.

Motorised transportation and farmed animals make for a terrible combination. Whilst more can be done to minimise the risk of such deaths and to ensure animals are better cared for when incidents do occur, they will remain a constant hazard as long as modern farming practices persist.

CASE STUDY: THE M62 CRASH

At 4.15pm on 14 May 2014, a lorry carrying 6,800 former egg-laying hens hit the central reservation of the M62 close to junction 12. Deemed to be no longer fit for producing eggs, the birds were destined for slaughter. Plastic crates holding them were scattered across the motorway, with hundreds of chickens dying on impact and many more being hit by cars soon afterwards. Around 1,500 hens died due to the crash, and many others were left with serious injuries.

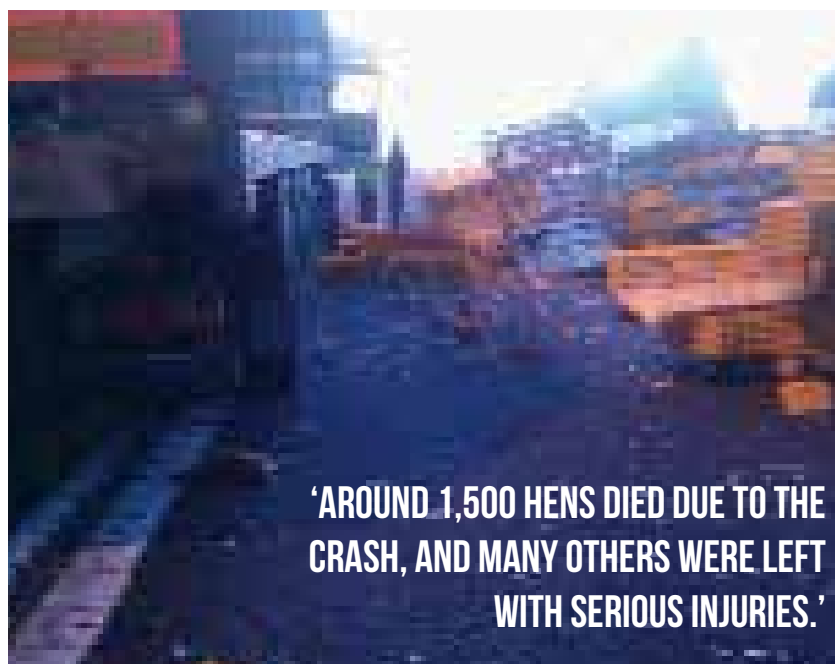
'We woke to the sounds of chickens screaming,' said Louise Fields, who runs an animal sanctuary close to the crash site. 'The motorway runs adjacent to our field and our first sight of it all was hens running terrified into our field. When we got to the crash there were massive stacks of crates scattered all over the three lanes and the verge.'

Louise and her partner Emma Billington, who co-own Dogs 4 Rescue, along with police and Highways Agency officers, spent the next three hours moving the hens onto the relative safety of the motorway verge and then into their adjacent field. 'We could hardly walk for injured and poorly hens all over the carriageway and verge,' said Louise. 'There were mutilated hens trapped in broken crates.'

After several hours, workers from a local poultry farm were called in to help round up the chickens. They caught handfuls of birds by their legs and forced them back into the crates from which they had escaped. The hens were not checked for trauma

and this led to some with serious injuries being manhandled and loaded into crates with other dead and dying birds. Some of the crates, which slot into large, metal, drawer-like frames, were stuck due to chickens' limbs and heads being caught between the frames and the crates. Some of the farm workers

chose to release these by ramming the crates back and forth, causing further injuries and deaths through severing body-parts. Those who were recaptured were left in crates at the side of the road throughout the heat of the morning until midday when a truck came to remove them.



'AROUND 1,500 HENS DIED DUE TO THE CRASH, AND MANY OTHERS WERE LEFT WITH SERIOUS INJURIES.'



The farm workers brought in to catch the escaped chickens violated several animal welfare regulations in the process of reloading the hens on to the replacement lorry. Under the European Union's *Council Regulation*

(EC) No 1/2005, Annex 1, 'Animals that are injured or that present physiological weaknesses or pathological processes shall not be considered fit for transport and in particular if: (a) they are unable to move inde-

pendently without pain or to walk unassisted; (b) they present a severe open wound, or prolapse.'¹⁸ No assessment of the birds was carried out before they were reloaded for transport, but from Louise's account of the crash and from photos taken of the birds at the time, it is clear that many were injured and therefore unfit to travel. The same EU regulation states: 'When animals fall ill or are injured during transport, they shall be separated from the others and receive first-aid treatment as soon as possible.'¹⁹

This is echoed by Defra's own *Laying Hens (England): Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock (PB7274)*, which states that 'birds that cannot be transported because they are unfit to travel due to being ill, injured, infirm or fatigued should be given prompt veterinary treatment...'²⁰ Clearly, this is how the injured hens should have been treated, but were not.



EMMA BILLINGTON AND HER PARTNER, LOUISE FIELDS, SAVED THOUSANDS OF HENS

The account of hens losing limbs and their heads caught between crates and the drawer-like frames is particularly disturbing. It should be obvious that ramming crates back and forth resulting in the dismemberment of chickens is cruel and unacceptable. There are specific regulations covering this. *Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005*, Article 3, states that people transporting animals should ensure that 'the loading and unloading facilities are adequately designed, constructed, maintained and operated so as to avoid injury and suffering and ensure the safety of the animals' and that 'the personnel handling animals are

trained or competent as appropriate for this purpose and carry out their tasks without using violence or any method likely to cause unnecessary fear, injury or suffering'.²¹ In *Laying Hens (England): Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock (PB7274)*, it also states that 'transport containers with large openings should be used to avoid damage to the birds; the design, size and state of repair of any container used to carry birds should allow them to be put in, conveyed and taken out without injury.'²² Some of the containers in this case had clearly been damaged in the course of the crash, making them no longer suitable. Therefore, new transporting crates and stacking frames should have been used and any birds trapped in the damaged ones carefully removed.

It may be argued that this was an emergency and that normal regulations should be suspended to deal with the crisis quickly. However, such arguments only highlight the current lack of provision for dealing with animals humanely in emergencies. At present, companies transporting live animals need to create a contingency plan for dealing with emergencies only if the journey is expected to be more than eight hours long.²³ It is likely, therefore, that no contingency plan was required for this journey and so none was created.

European Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005, Annex 1 states that 'No animal shall be transported unless it is fit for the intended journey, and all

animals shall be transported in conditions guaranteed not to cause them injury or unnecessary suffering.'²⁴ Clearly, it is impossible to guarantee the safety of animals during transportation, just as it is impossible to guarantee the safety of people on the roads. But cramming almost 7,000 chickens into a single vehicle is a recipe for disaster. Even when they are not involved in collisions, chickens often suffer injuries and death in the process of capture and transportation. The average mortality rate for laying hens transported by road in Great Britain is 0.27 per cent,²⁵ which means that, had the crash not happened, an average of 18-19 birds on the lorry would still not have survived the journey.

Unlike most of the incidents covered in this report, the M62 crash was reported in the national press.

Unfortunately, rather than focusing on the plight of the chickens killed and injured, many articles were concerned with the traffic problems caused by the incident^{26,27,28} and even resorted to making callous jokes about it.²⁹ This was often also the case with local media accounts of the other traffic incidents recorded in this report.

Louise and Emma managed to save at least 3,000 birds from the crash site and quickly re-homed most of them. They continued to find and rescue hens found wandering in the area, as long as seven weeks after the crash. Sadly, they couldn't save them all and more than a thousand 'survivors' resumed their traumatic journey to the slaughterhouse that day. Louise and Emma have since set up the organisation Justice for Hens to campaign for change.



Deaths caused by **TRANSPORTATION**

20 MAY 2014

LOCATION: SUNDORNE, SHROPSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 4

Four sheep were killed when the 4x4 that was towing them crashed on the A49, near Shrewsbury, causing their trailer to overturn. A number of other sheep ran into the road, but were safely rounded up. The article in the local newspaper mentioned 'traffic chaos' but not animal suffering.³⁰

2 MAY 2014

LOCATION: BRADLEY STOKE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 1

A cow was shot dead by a police officer after eight escaped from an overturned tractor-trailer and stampeded through Bradley Stoke, near Bristol. The cow was killed at the request of the farmer who believed she was 'distressed'; the other seven were rounded up safely.³¹



31 MARCH 2014

LOCATION: SUTTON BRIDGE, LINCOLNSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 3

After escaping from a field in the early hours of the morning, three sheep died when they were hit by cars in Sutton Bridge, near Spalding. The remaining escaped sheep were returned to their field without incident.³²

24 MARCH 2014

LOCATION: PICA, CUMBRIA

CASUALTIES: 60

Sixty sheep were killed when the trailer transporting them overturned on a remote, rural road between the villages of Pica and Arlecdon, near Whitehaven. Most of the sheep died instantly, but four were put down by vets due to their injuries.³³



4 FEBRUARY 2014

LOCATION: LLANFAIRPWLLGWYNGYLL, ANGLESEY

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

A lorry carrying 3,200 chickens overturned on a busy slip road near the Britannia Bridge, but the number of birds killed was not reported. The lorry was hauled upright with crates of live birds still trapped inside, causing them to spill out.^{34,35}

18 OCTOBER 2013

LOCATION: SOUTHWATE, CUMBRIA

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

Several cattle were put down after the heavy goods vehicle carrying them collided with another HGV on the M6, trapping them inside. The driver of the lorry also died in the collision.³⁶

OCTOBER 2013

LOCATION: PEMBROKESHIRE

CASUALTIES: 1

A sheep was killed when her head became trapped in the door of a cattle trailer transporting more than 100 animals. The trapped sheep went unnoticed for some time, until motorists flagged down the driver.³⁷

27 SEPTEMBER 2013

LOCATION: HEATHFIELD, DEVON

CASUALTIES: 2

A trailer carrying two pigs collided with the rear of a petrol tanker on the A28, becoming impaled on it. The trailer, which was being towed by a van, was described as 'wobbling' prior to the collision. Both pigs were put down.³⁸

10 JUNE 2013

LOCATION: UPPER HULME, STAFFORDSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 7

A motorist collided with a flock of sheep on a remote section of the A53, between Leek and Buxton, at around 11pm. Seven sheep died in the incident.³⁹

3 JUNE 2013

LOCATION: TIBSHELF, DERBYSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 1

An Aberdeen Angus cow died after being hit by both a car and a van on the M1 after escaping from her field through a damaged fence. Another cow also escaped on to the motorway, but crossed all six lanes of traffic unharmed.⁴⁰

3 FEBRUARY 2013

LOCATION: BRADFORD ABBAS, DORSET

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

Several vehicles collided with sheep on the A30 between Yeovil and Sherborne, when around 50 wandered on to the dual carriageway. A police spokesman stated that 'a number of sheep were injured and some were killed after being hit by vehicles'.⁴¹

12 SEPTEMBER 2012

LOCATION: ANSTEY, LEICESTERSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 2

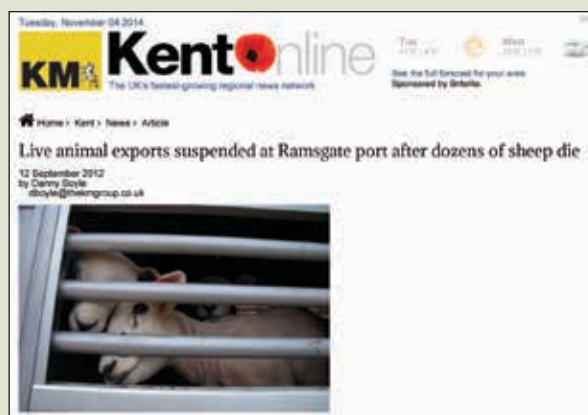
A cattle trailer carrying five cows overturned on the A46 while being towed by a 4x4 vehicle. Armed police were called to shoot one of the injured animals and another cow was also put down at the scene.⁴²

11 SEPTEMBER 2012

LOCATION: RAMSGATE, KENT

CASUALTIES: 45

Two sheep were put down and a further 41 were shot after they were found to be unfit for travel upon arrival in a lorry at the Port of Ramsgate. Another two drowned when the floor of their holding area collapsed. The incident led to a temporary suspension of live exports from Ramsgate.⁴³



12 AUGUST 2012

LOCATION: BROCKENHURST, HAMPSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 1

A pregnant black Angus cow being grazed on common land in the New Forest was struck by a car on the B3055 and was put down. The driver of the car stopped briefly, but failed to report the collision.⁴⁴

21 FEBRUARY 2012

LOCATION: PRESTWICH, GREATER MANCHESTER

CASUALTIES: 28

A Land Rover towing a trailer carrying 46 sheep crashed on the M60 near junction 17, killing 28 of the sheep on board. The 18 survivors were removed from the scene.⁴⁵

10 JANUARY 2012

LOCATION: MIDDLETON, HERTFORDSHIRE

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

A heavy goods vehicle carrying 5,000 chickens overturned on a private road in Middleton, killing an unspecified number of them.⁴⁶

29 NOVEMBER 2011

LOCATION: BLACKFORD, PERTSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 30

A train travelling from Aberdeen to Glasgow struck and killed a flock of 30 sheep who had strayed on to the line. It is believed the sheep had fled rising floodwaters and wandered on to the track via a nearby level crossing.⁴⁷

22 NOVEMBER 2011

LOCATION: NEWARK, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 1

A cow was struck and killed by a car on the busy A617 after escaping from Newark Livestock Market around two hours earlier. Prior to her death, the Nottinghamshire Police helicopter monitored the cow's journey.⁴⁸

26 SEPTEMBER 2011

LOCATION: LEGBOURNE, LINCOLNSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 50

50 pigs were killed when the lorry taking them to the slaughterhouse overturned on the A157. Twenty died on impact and 30 more were put down at the scene. 130 survivors were moved to another truck and continued to the abattoir.⁴⁹

19 SEPTEMBER 2011

LOCATION: YORK, NORTH YORKSHIRE

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

An unspecified number of 'broiler' chickens were left dead or injured when a lorry carrying 3,000 toppled over at a roundabout outside York. The RSPCA was called to assist with the birds.^{50,51}

9 AUGUST 2011

LOCATION: WORMALD GREEN, NORTH YORKSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 127

A large goods vehicle carrying 250 sheep and 17 cows overturned in Wormald Green, between Harrogate and Ripon, causing the deaths of 125 sheep and two cows.⁵²



24 AUGUST 2010

LOCATION: TEMPLE, MIDLOTHIAN

CASUALTIES: 155

Five cows and 150 sheep were killed when an agricultural lorry overturned on the B6372. Some of the animals died instantly, but an emergency vet was called to put down many others who were seriously injured. The fate of the 180 surviving sheep is not known.⁵³

22 MARCH 2010

LOCATION: CHIRK, CLWYD

CASUALTIES: 20

Seven cattle fell 30 metres (100 ft) to their deaths from the A5 viaduct when the truck carrying them collided with two other vehicles. A further 12 died inside the lorry and one was shot. The drivers of the lorry and of one of the other vehicles also died in the incident.⁵⁴



Deaths Caused by **NATURAL DISASTERS**

The immediate consequences of extreme weather for farmed animals include drowning, exposure, dehydration and starvation due to being stranded in fields or buildings.



'IN A 2012 REPORT, THE FARM ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE STATED THAT EXTREME WEATHER POSED A PARTICULAR HAZARD TO FARMED ANIMAL WELFARE.⁵⁵ THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE OF SHEEP AND CATTLE, WHO SPEND MUCH, IF NOT ALL, OF THEIR LIVES OUTSIDE WITH LITTLE OR NO SHELTER. THIS IS IN SPITE OF EUROPEAN COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 98/58/EC, ANNEX 12, WHICH STATES THAT "ANIMALS NOT KEPT IN BUILDINGS SHALL WHERE NECESSARY AND POSSIBLE BE GIVEN PROTECTION FROM ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS".'⁵⁶

While extreme weather, such as heavy snow or flooding, is responsible for many fatalities, it can cause additional problems that may impact on the long-term wellbeing of farmed animals. Disease caused by slurry and sewage contaminating drinking water and animal feed is a serious hazard. Even grazing land can remain contaminated with pathogens and pollution after flood waters have receded.⁵⁷ Feed and bedding stores can also be severely damaged by flooding, whilst simultaneously cutting off fresh supplies by blocking roads. Future food crops, such as silage and hay, can be damaged by many kinds of adverse weather. The result can be long-term shortages that, in turn, lead to culling to prevent

starvation or reduce costs for farmers. Those animals who are rescued from adverse weather also face the prospect of prolonged confinement while their fields recover.

While adverse weather events and natural disasters are frequently viewed as 'acts of God' – unfortunate and unpredictable occurrences that are outside of human control – there is often a great deal that farmers and local authority officials can do to prevent the deaths of farmed animals during such events. Farmers can, and should, prepare contingency plans for outbreaks of extreme weather. They are often forecast, allowing sufficient time for animals to be moved to safer areas or to ensure that they have adequate provisions to see them through the difficult period. Yet, even in areas where flooding has occurred repeatedly, many farmers do not take simple steps to safeguard their animals, including ensuring that feed and water are stored above flood level.

Animals, such as pigs and chickens, who are usually reared intensively inside sheds are not immune to the effects of the weather. While they might be protected from the immediate impacts of wind, rain and snow, they are often just as vulnerable – if not more so – to flooding, and can suffer terribly during heat waves. The large numbers of animals on intensive farms also makes evacuation extremely difficult, if not impossible. As a consequence, huge numbers of them can die at a single location when natural disasters strike. And, like free-ranging animals, those who are shed-reared can be cut off from essential supplies.

Farmers, like anyone who is responsible for animals, have a duty to ensure they have sufficient food, clean water, shelter and medical care and that they are free from suffering at all

times. In fact, it is an offence under Section 4 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to fail to act to prevent unnecessary suffering caused by something one could have reasonably known would cause that suffering.⁵⁸ So, by failing to take steps to save animals from the effects of forecast adverse weather, a farmer may be committing a criminal offence.

Of course, local authorities can and should step in to protect animals at risk by deploying the Animal Welfare Act 2006. It should not be left solely to the RSPCA, a registered charity, to enforce the law. And local planning officers should not permit 'livestock' buildings to be built in areas that are likely to flood. In each of the years between 2004 and 2009 there were an average of 27 extreme weather events in the UK.⁵⁹ As a result of climate change, these weather events are likely to occur more often and with increasing severity. Protecting farmed animals must therefore be recognised as a priority. Failure to take this step is likely to result in the death of thousands of animals in comparatively short periods, such as occurred in the freezing conditions during the spring of 2013.⁶⁰





THE ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE EMERGENCY SERVICES

Local authorities have the power to enforce provisions and institute proceedings under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 where animals are at risk of suffering, including during emergencies. But they are not legally obliged to do so. This has led to a huge disparity in the way councils deal with the welfare of animals. Local authorities in some rural areas, such as Somerset, Surrey and Hampshire, have been proactive in advising farmers on preparing for and coping with disasters.⁶¹ In many other areas, even this simple step has not been taken.

In terms of the emergency services, only the Fire and Rescue Service has focused specifically on animal welfare⁶², and many fire authorities now have dedicated animal rescue units with specially trained staff. Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, who are seen as national leaders in terms of animal rescue, attended 172 incidents involving animals between April 2012 and March 2013.⁶³ A Freedom of Information

request sent to 56 fire services revealed that they had rescued 17,000 animals in the three years to 2011,⁶⁴ although this also included wild and domestic animals. The Department of Communities and Local Government has even published guidance for fire services on rescuing large animals.⁶⁵

The police, on the other hand, regard their role as relating only to animal movements and keeping the peace during animal emergencies.⁶⁶ This is despite the fact that they are often the first responders to emergency calls and, therefore, best placed to provide assistance in dealing with animals in distress. In fact, section 18 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 provides powers for the police to remove animals to a place of safety if they are considered to be in distress in order to alleviate suffering, and section 18(5) provides powers to remove an animal if 'it is likely to suffer if its circumstances do not change'.⁶⁷

CASE STUDY: THE 2013 LINCOLNSHIRE FLOODS

On 5 December 2013 a huge tidal surge hit the Humber estuary, overwhelming flood defences and causing widespread flooding in North Lincolnshire. Flood warnings were issued, giving local residents enough time to evacuate, but there would be no escape for the birds on two adjacent chicken farms in the Winterringham area owned by the same company. A staggering 700,000 birds drowned in the 20 broiler sheds spread across both farms,⁶⁸ making it by far the single largest loss of life found during the research for this report. Whilst at first this may seem like an unfortunate and unforeseeable natural disaster, records show that local authorities were aware that the area was at a high and increasing risk of flooding and that local residents were warned about this.

The two farms in question are Ogg Farm on Composition Lane and Winterringham Farm on Sluice Lane, both just outside the village of Winterringham.^{69,70} They are both currently part of the 2 Sisters Food Group,⁷¹ one of the largest producers and processors of meat products in the UK. The sheds at both sites are less than 300 metres from the Humber estuary⁷² and, according to the Environment Agency, lie in an area at high risk of flooding.⁷³

This area was prone to repeated tidal flooding up to the mid-1950s⁷⁴ until an exceptionally high flood in 1953 – which caused the deaths of hundreds of people and thousands of farmed animals – prompted the construction of flood defences.⁷⁵ These barriers prevented further tidal flooding on several occasions, most notably in 1976 and 1978⁷⁶, although local floods have occurred since then, as a result of heavy

rainfall. However, at a public meeting held in Winterringham on 23 July 2008, an Environment Agency representative described the defences as ‘not high enough and... in poor condition’. It was also announced that a lack of funding would make upgrading the flood defences unlikely, putting many local properties at increased risk of flooding. At a further public meeting held seven months later, another representative of the Environment Agency reiterated these points and went on to state that ‘if there were to be any high flood tides then the banks could be breached at any time. Global warming may bring more stormy weather which would result in more surges of the water.’⁷⁷



11/12/2013
700,000 chickens killed by floods at poultry units near South Ferryby and Winterringham
Scunthorpe Telegraph
• Your Life, Your Future (YourLifeYourFuture)

700,000 chickens killed by floods at poultry units near South Ferryby and Winterringham

By Scunthorpe Telegraph (people/Scunthorpe Telegraph/profile.html) | Posted: December 12, 2013



Swamped: A flooded chicken farm on the A1077 between Winterringham and South Ferryby

Comments (15)
HUNDREDS of thousands of chickens died in the tidal surge which swamped North Lincolnshire a week ago.

The flood-wrecked farms on the outskirts of South Ferryby and Winterringham supplied poultry to the 2 Sisters plant in Scunthorpe.

Nick Murray, the spokesman for 2 Sisters, confirmed the number of birds killed had been 700,000. Mr Murray said: "Our hearts go out to our farmers who faced the full force of last week's tidal surge."

Related content

- **FLOODS VIDEO:** Watch remarkable operation to pump seven acre lake created by floods back into Humber and Trent (FLOODS-VIDEO-Watch-remarkable-operation-pump/story-20308133-detail/story.html)
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<http://www.scunthorpe Telegraph.co.uk/700-000-chickens-killed-floods-poultry-units-near-south-ferryby-20131208.html>

In November 2011 North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire Councils published their combined Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. This document stated that, given the height and condition of the existing defences in the Winterringham area, it was likely that they would be overwhelmed by a flood event approximately once every 10-20 years.⁷⁸ It also stated that sea levels are expected to rise by more than a metre in the next century, with rainfall and off-shore wind speeds also expected to increase⁷⁹, making tidal flooding even more likely in coming decades.

The local authorities and the Environment Agency were certainly aware of the flooding risk to the farms, and it is likely that the farm owners were alerted to the risk in 2008, which begs the question: why was nothing done to prevent the inevitable deaths of these chickens in 2013? While it may not have been possible to predict exactly when a flood would strike, it was clear that one would occur at some point, and there should have been no doubt that a flood would kill any chickens in the sheds at the time.

Most broiler chickens will drown in less than 30cm of water, making them much more susceptible to dying in floodwaters than many other species of farmed animal. A large proportion of broiler chickens also suffer mobility problems.⁸⁰ And so it would be impossible for them to

‘WHILE IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE TO PREDICT EXACTLY WHEN A FLOOD WOULD STRIKE, IT WAS CLEAR THAT ONE WOULD OCCUR AT SOME POINT, AND THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN NO DOUBT THAT A FLOOD WOULD KILL ANY CHICKENS IN THE SHEDS AT THE TIME.’

reach any perches or elevated areas within the sheds. In fact, most intensive sheds do not provide such areas and those that do cannot accommodate all the birds at once.

Evacuation of the chickens would have been impossible, due to the huge numbers involved. Under normal circumstances, it takes several hours to empty a single broiler shed of chickens – and there were ten sheds on both of the flooded farms. Even if multiple catching teams were deployed, more than a full day would have been

required. The logistics look even more daunting when it’s considered that – at very short notice – approximately 140 lorries would have been required⁸¹ together with suitable temporary accommodation for 700,000 chickens.

Essentially, this incident was predictable, and action should therefore have been taken to prevent the huge loss of life. But who is culpable? Under Section 4 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006, in England and Wales it is an offence for someone who is responsible for an animal to allow that animal to suffer unnecessarily if that person knew or ought reasonably to have known that their actions or failure to act would cause unnecessary suffering.⁸² This would appear to place responsibility squarely on the farm owners.

However, by allowing the sheds to be built in an area at high risk of flooding, it could be argued that the local authority was also at fault. A Freedom of Information request for planning documents sent to North Lincolnshire Council yielded numerous documents relating to how manure would be dealt with at the units, but none on flood risk assessments, despite their proximity to the Humber estuary.⁸³ (It should be noted that in 1987, when planning permission was granted,



**A TYPICALLY PACKED
'BROILER CHICKEN' SHED**

the local authority was Humberside County Council, which was abolished in 1996.)

In addition to planning powers, local authorities can also employ the Animal Welfare Act to protect animals at risk.⁸⁴ Under that statute, the chickens could have been removed from the sheds when the approaching flood danger became apparent – although there is no legal requirement for the local authority to take such precautionary action.

Ultimately, it appears that the principal reason for not closing the sheds and moving operations to a safer area is money. Despite the enormous loss

of life that would come from a flood every 10-20 years, the financial impact of such an event would most likely be more than offset by the revenue generated during a decade of uninterrupted farming at the site. This could largely explain the owners' decision to repair and restock the sites at a cost of £500,000,⁸⁵ despite the clear risk of further flooding and more chicken deaths in future.

Planning law is another important consideration. It is becoming increasingly difficult for farmers to build new broiler sheds in the UK. A number of planning applications for such units have been defeated by local campaigns in recent

years^{86,87,88,89} adding further incentive for the owners to keep the site running. With such a high risk of flooding, it is also likely that selling the sites for any other use would be extremely difficult.

Ultimately, the 700,000 chickens who drowned in the sheds in Winterringham on 5 December 2013 lost their lives because, like all farmed animals, they were treated as commodities rather than as sentient individuals. It seems that their lives were valued in terms of the profits they would produce, and for that reason they weren't worth saving in the eyes of many of the people with the power to do so.

'MOST BROILER CHICKENS WILL DROWN IN LESS THAN 30CM OF WATER, MAKING THEM MUCH MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO DYING IN FLOODWATERS THAN MANY OTHER SPECIES OF FARMED ANIMALS.'



Deaths caused by **FLOODING AND WEATHER EVENTS**

20 DECEMBER 2013

LOCATION: DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

What has been described as ‘dozens’ of sheep drowned in their fields at two farms when the River Nith burst its banks during heavy storms. Many more farmers were also affected, but moved their animals to higher ground.^{90,91}

24 DECEMBER 2013

LOCATION: PADDOCK WOOD, KENT

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

An unspecified number of rabbits, chickens, goats and other small animals drowned when the River Medway burst its banks, flooding The Hop Farm, despite flood warnings.⁹²

5 DECEMBER 2013

LOCATION: ALKBOROUGH, LINCOLNSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 107

107 lambs drowned at Walcot Hall Farm during tidal flooding in North Lincolnshire. 1,500 sheep were safely moved to higher ground and an unspecified number of cattle survived the flooding.⁹³

5 DECEMBER 2013

LOCATION: SPURN POINT, EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 30+

More than 30 Hebridean sheep kept in a fenced field on Spurn Point – a remote and narrow spit of land that juts out into the North Sea – drowned when a severe storm surge overwhelmed them. The sheep belonged to Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.⁹⁴

26 APRIL 2013

LOCATION: BURRY PORT, CARMARTHENSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 9

A very high tide swept a herd of 30 cattle off Cefn Sidan beach in Wales, causing nine to drown near Burry Port harbour. It is thought that they escaped from their field through a damaged fence.



MARCH 2013

LOCATION: NATIONWIDE

CASUALTIES: 100,000+

In the spring of 2013, freezing weather and heavy snow across the UK led to the deaths of more than 100,000 animals, according to the farming press.⁹⁵ Many died from exposure to the extreme conditions, while others died of starvation when stranded in fields. Among the casualties were ‘several hundred lambs’ at a farm in High Barlay, Scotland;⁹⁶ 300 pregnant ewes at a hill farm in Llechrydau, Wrexham;⁹⁷ 600 lambs at a farm in the Ceiriog Valley, Wrexham;⁹⁸ and 16,000 animals on the Isle of Man.⁹⁹

OCTOBER 2012

LOCATION: BOW STREET, CEREDIGION

CASUALTIES: 3

Three cows died at an Aberystwyth University farm in October 2012 after being fed silage that had become contaminated with lead during flooding in the area in June of the same year.¹⁰⁰

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18 February 2014, last updated at 15:58

Ceredigion floods caused lead poisoning cattle deaths

The silage was used as cattle fodder from October 2012

Cattle have been killed by lead contamination after flooding in Ceredigion two years ago, new research has found.

A paper published by Aberystwyth University scientists details how livestock died at a university farm in 2012 following the floods.

Storm water washed high levels of lead from disused lead mines onto grass which was then cut for silage.

It was then fed to 40 animals, three of which died from lead poisoning.

Aberystwyth University's director of farms, Professor Will Hartsign, told BBC Radio 4's Farming Today the problem arose when cattle on the university's farm near Bow Street became ill in October 2012 after being fed silage cut after heavy floods in June that year.

Parts of north Ceredigion had 5ft (1.5m) of standing water, with caravan parks, hotels and businesses all suffering from the effects of the torrential rain on 8 and 9 June 2012.

Related Stories

- Concern over repeat flooding threat
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6 FEBRUARY 2011

LOCATION: BANGOR-ON-DEE, CLWYD

CASUALTIES: 230

Twelve hours of flash flooding resulted in the deaths of 230 sheep on a farm near Wrexham. Most of the sheep drowned in the incident, but eight were shot. A further 70 were saved by fire and rescue services. The same farm lost 40-50 sheep in a similar flash flood in November 2009.¹⁰¹

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Farmer devastated as prize flock dies in freak weather

Published date: 06 February 2011 | Published by: Phil Robinson
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A FARMER says he is "devastated" after seeing more than 250 of his prize sheep drowned in a flash flood.

It is the second time in just over a year that Eryl Morris has been hit by the River Dee bursting its banks.

The flood, early on Sunday, has cost him many thousands of pounds and the pride of his flock.

Mr Morris was away in Buckinghamshire helping a sheep farmer there when millions of gallons of water poured on to the rich Bangor-on-Dee grazing land he has farmed for more than a decade.

Almost too upset to speak from the south of England yesterday, he said: "I am really devastated by this - I have had a hell of a lot sheep."

6 FEBRUARY 2011

LOCATION: BANGOR-ON-DEE, CLWYD

CASUALTIES: 30

In a separate incident nearby, around 30 sheep drowned or were put down during flooding next to Bangor-on-Dee racecourse. About 60 were rescued by fire crews, the RSPCA and a vet, but as many as 100 others were unaccounted for.

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Sheep drown as floods hit North East Wales

Published date: 07 February 2011 | Published by: Andrew Boyd
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ABOUT 30 sheep have drowned after severe flooding in Bangor-on-Dee.

A huge rescue operation was launched yesterday after a flock of sheep became stranded in a flooded field.

Fire crews, the RSPCA and a vet carried out the recovery operation in the British Overseas Road area.

A spokesman for North Wales Fire and Rescue Service said: "Crews from Deeside and Bangor were mobilised to the incident at 8.15am and deployed water rescue techniques, including using a boat, to transfer sheep to dry land."

"About 60 sheep have been rescued, and between 20 and 30 sheep have drowned or have had to be put down."



Deaths in **FARM FIRES**

Farm fires are extremely common. According to NFU Mutual, the UK's largest farming insurer, there were 15,667 agricultural fires across the UK between 2011 and 2013.¹⁰² Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, for example, attended 25 agricultural fires in the space of just five weeks in the summer of 2014.¹⁰³ The annual cost of farm fires now stands at £50m, even higher than for rural thefts.¹⁰⁴ But for animals caught in these fires, the cost is immeasurable.



‘NATIONAL AND EU-WIDE REGULATIONS THAT PERMIT HUGE NUMBERS OF ANIMALS TO BE KEPT INSIDE SINGLE BUILDINGS MAKE EVACUATION IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE.’

It is not known just how many farmed animals are injured and killed in fires each year – such numbers are not recorded – but as our catalogue of incidents shows, it is at least in the tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands.

It is not hard to see why farm fires occur so frequently. There are few fire regulations covering farms, and those that do exist are rarely enforced. Defra, as well as some local authorities and fire services, provide advice for farmers on avoiding fires and how to respond to them, but these guidelines are voluntary and farmers often fail to heed such recommendations. For example, they regularly store huge quantities of flammable material, such as straw and hay, in the same buildings as animals. This resulted in the deaths of animals in several of the incidents we recorded.

Also, there is no legal requirement for farms to install smoke detectors,¹⁰⁵ as is the case in other workplaces,¹⁰⁶ due to their potential to be activated by other farm activities. This is despite the fact that smoke is the biggest cause of both human and animal deaths in farm fires.¹⁰⁷

Faulty equipment and wiring also present a serious fire risk on some farms. There is a legal requirement under Schedule 1 of The Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007 for any electrical equipment that is essential for the health and wellbeing of farmed animals to be checked every day and for there to be provision for failure, such as back-up systems or alarms.¹⁰⁸ But for non-essential electrical systems there is no such requirement, despite the potential for faults to cause significant harm. Instead, Defra provides a series of unenforced recommendations on how to prevent electrical fires.

National and EU-wide regulations that permit huge numbers of animals to be kept inside single buildings make evacuation in the event of a fire almost impossible. This is especially true of pigs and chickens, who are largely intensively farmed in the UK and die in huge numbers in farm fires, as shown in this report. As noted above, removing tens of thousands of chickens from a broiler shed even under ideal circumstances takes several hours with a team of catchers. Releasing similar numbers of caged hens from intensive egg farms presents a still greater challenge. Trying to do this during a fire, while confronted with intense heat, smoke and panicking animals, would be inordinately more difficult and perilous. This was recognised by the Farm Animal Welfare Committee in its 2012 report, which stated that the trend towards intensification of farming presented a particular hazard to animals in the event of emergencies.¹⁰⁹

CASE STUDY: THE 2014 ARMAGH FIRE

At 5:41am on 26th April 2014 a fire was reported at a pig farm on Derrywilligan Road in Mullaghglass, County Armagh. Fire crews arrived at the scene shortly afterwards, but a 100m x 100m pig shed was already 'well alight... and very intense', according to a statement from the Fire and Rescue Service. A neighbouring farmer raised the alarm but other locals claimed that the fire had been burning for as long as three hours before the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) was alerted.¹¹¹ It took six appliances more than seven hours to bring the blaze under control.

It is not clear exactly how many pigs died in the fire, but it is known to be in the thousands. The NIFRS said that three sheds were destroyed and it estimated that 800 sows and 3,500 piglets were killed. But a statement issued later by the farm owner claimed that the death toll could be lower.¹¹²

The chief executive of the Ulster Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (USPCA), Stephen Philpott, visited the farm after the fire had been put out. He described what he saw as 'a scene of utter destruction with many pigs incinerated in the blaze'. He added that the fire would have brought 'confined creatures unspeakable suffering'.¹¹³ David Wilson, also of the USPCA, said that 'This must have been huge suffering on a huge scale'.¹¹⁴

It was initially suggested that arson had been the cause of the fire but the NIFRS later said that they were not treating it as suspicious. Whilst the NIFRS were unable to confirm the cause of the fire when we contacted them, the latest reports on the incident suggest that an electrical fault was the cause.¹¹⁵

The farm belongs to Malcolm Keys, a prominent figure in the Northern

Ireland pig farming community and a member of the Ulster Farmers Union pig committee.¹¹⁶ His company, M Keys Farms Ltd, is registered to an address in Fivemiletown, County Tyrone,¹¹⁷ more than an hour's drive away from the farm. It was reported at the time of the fire that Mr Keys did not live at the farm, but that there were CCTV cameras on site for security purposes.¹¹⁸ Animal Aid contacted the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), which is responsible for animal welfare in the region, to enquire as to whether the CCTV provided a live feed to monitor the pigs, or whether a member of staff remained on site overnight. Whilst DARD declined to answer our question, a member of its Veterinary Service informed us that there was no legal requirement for CCTV to be installed or monitored, or for the animals' keeper to live on the premises.¹¹⁹ Under European Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998, Annex 2, animals kept in husbandry systems in which their welfare depends on frequent human attention need only be inspected once a day.¹²⁰

The way in which animals are kept – pigs and chickens in particular –

Farm blaze saw thousands of pigs face 'unspeakable suffering'



By Philip Brinkford and Adam Kola

A huge number of animals would have undergone "unspeakable suffering" before perishing in a massive blaze. The Fire Service said up to 4,300 creatures died as flames engulfed the site at Derrywilligan Road in rural Co. Armagh, so the number of weaners, although definitive figures are thought to be unknown.

USPCA chief executive Stephen Philpott visited the aftermath, and described it as "a scene of utter destruction with many pigs incinerated in the blaze", adding that it would have brought "confined creatures unspeakable suffering".

makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to evacuate them safely in the event of a fire. On most pig breeding farms, hundreds of sows will be kept in individual farrowing crates that must each be opened by hand. Each sow may have a dozen or more piglets, who must also be safely herded out. Add to that hundreds of weaners – young pigs being fattened for slaughter – who are often kept in crowded indoor pens and will be extremely frightened in the event of a fire, and you have a literally volatile mix. The high number of sows with piglets present in the sheds at the time of the Mullaghglass farm fire was, in fact, cited as the reason why the death toll was so high.¹²¹



WHOSE DUTY IS IT TO INSPECT FARMS FOR SAFETY?

Health and safety provision on UK farms is notoriously bad. According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), agriculture has one of the highest human fatality rates of any industry in the UK, being responsible for around 15-20 per cent of work-related deaths each year.¹²² But, as we have seen, it is not just humans who are affected by the hazards on farms. Animals are at considerably more risk. The welfare of animals on farms is notionally the responsibility of local authority inspectors but, in practice, their remit is invariably limited to food and hygiene issues. A former Trading Standards Officer told us that inspectors will often take the opportunity to look out for obvious hazards to animals, but they are not expected or qualified to identify factors like faulty wiring, fire hazards and structural problems. He also informed us that, due to central government budget cuts, farm inspections in many areas are being severely curtailed. According to official figures from Defra, of the thousands of animal farms that could be subject to a welfare inspection in 2013, only 1.12 per cent actually underwent a check, and for pig farms that figure fell to just 0.84 per cent.¹²³ At that rate, a farm may be inspected for welfare just once per century.

Deaths caused by FIRES

23 SEPTEMBER 2014

LOCATION: HAWKWELL FARM, BICESTER, OXFORDSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 1

One bull was put down and an unspecified number 'scorched' by flames when a fire broke out in a Bicester dairy farm that also destroyed thousands of tons of hay. 'It could have been a lot worse', said one of the two brothers running the farm. 'At least no-one was hurt.'¹²⁴

10 SEPTEMBER 2014

LOCATION: GREAT SHODDESDON, HAMPSHIRE

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

An unknown number of pigs and piglets were killed in a single-storey farm building by a fire that took 24 firefighters three hours to extinguish. The cause of the blaze is unknown.¹²⁵

28 MAY 2014

LOCATION: WREXHAM, CLWYD

CASUALTIES: 24,000+

More than 24,000 chicks died in a poultry shed fire in Marford, near Wrexham, that took 20 firefighters four hours to put out. The shed was destroyed and no chicks are known to have survived.¹²⁶



10 MAY 2014

LOCATION: SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

Firefighters were called to a burning barn in the village of Ashdon, near Saffron Walden, Essex. While some animals were rescued from the building, an unspecified number perished.¹²⁷

5 APRIL 2014

LOCATION: GOUDHURST, KENT

CASUALTIES: 8

Two chicken coops at allotments in Goudhurst were set alight in a suspected late-night arson attack, killing eight chickens. The incident followed another arson attack at the same allotments two weeks earlier.¹²⁸

4 APRIL 2014

LOCATION: THOVERTON, DEVON

CASUALTIES: 3,500

3,500 chicks died when around half of a 180m-long shed was destroyed in a fire on a farm in Thoverton near Exeter. Several gas cylinders had to be removed from the area.¹²⁹

26 MARCH 2014

LOCATION: TELSCOMBE, EAST SUSSEX

CASUALTIES: 4

A building fire at Stud Farm in Telscombe Village near Brighton resulted in the deaths of four sheep.¹³⁰

24 MARCH 2014

LOCATION: ORMESBY, NORTH YORKSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 20+

Almost 30 sheep, including pregnant ewes and those who had recently given birth, were culled due to injuries they sustained in a fire at Hirst Farms in Ormesby. The sheep were in barns to give birth when arsonists attacked. Some of the survivors required ongoing treatment for burns.¹³¹

23 MARCH 2014

LOCATION: PERKINS VILLAGE, DEVON

CASUALTIES: 6,000

While a small number of birds were rescued, the majority of the 6,000 free-range hens engulfed by a poultry shed fire at Rosamund Turkey Farm, near Exeter, perished in the blaze. The farm owner claimed she had been in the shed just an hour before the fire was discovered.^{132,133}

6 MARCH 2014

LOCATION: MALTBY, SOUTH YORKSHIRE

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

An unspecified number of geese and chickens died in a blaze at Highfield Road allotments in Maltby, near Rotherham, which took more than three hours to put out. A pony and goats were also kept at the allotments, but it is not known if they were harmed.¹³⁴

14 JANUARY 2014

LOCATION: FORRES, MORAY

CASUALTIES: 2,000

All 2,000 chickens on a poultry farm in Moray, Scotland, perished when a farm building containing propane cylinders caught fire. The building was already well alight by the time fire crews arrived.¹³⁵

4 JANUARY 2014

LOCATION: TORRINGTON, DEVON

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

An unspecified number of pigs died during a blaze at a farm in Yarnscombe, near Torrington. The fire affected two barns accommodating pigs, with one building being completely destroyed and the other severely damaged.¹³⁶

17 DECEMBER 2013

LOCATION: OSWESTRY, SHROPSHIRE

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

Six fire appliances and 45 firefighters were called to a roof fire at a poultry shed containing 16,000 egg-laying hens in Middleton, near Oswestry. While the majority of the hens in the shed were rescued, an unspecified number perished.^{137,138}

13 DECEMBER 2013

LOCATION: LLANYRE, POWYS

CASUALTIES: 12,000

A blaze at Cerrigroes Farm in Llanyre, near Llandrindod Wells, killed around 12,000 chickens. Only 30 are known to have survived the fire, which took firefighters more than six hours to bring under control.¹³⁹

16 NOVEMBER 2013

LOCATION: DUNGIVEN, COUNTY LONDONERRY

CASUALTIES: 8

A suspicious fire in a barn containing hay and live animals resulted in the deaths of eight sheep at a farm in Northern Ireland. One cow was rescued from the barn, which was completely destroyed despite six fire appliances attending the scene.¹⁴⁰

3 SEPTEMBER 2013

LOCATION: PERSHORE, WORCESTERSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 600

Around 600 pigs are thought to have perished when a 50m x 20m wooden barn packed with 1,000 pigs caught fire at Lincolns Farm in Besford, near Pershore. Four fire crews tackled the blaze and assisted with moving survivors to safety.¹⁴¹



20 AUGUST 2013

LOCATION: HEPWORTH, WEST YORKSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 5

A fire at Martins Nest Farm in Hepworth, near Huddersfield, resulted in five pigs being put down due to injuries sustained. Although fire crews were handicapped by a shortage of water, they were able to prevent nearby buildings containing pigs and chickens from also catching fire. Another blaze at the same farm in 2011 claimed the lives of 200 pigs (see 15 June 2011).¹⁴²

21 JULY 2013

LOCATION: STRADBROKE, SUFFOLK

CASUALTIES: 500

A blaze at Barley Brigg Farm in rural Suffolk claimed the lives of 500 pigs crowded into a 10m x 50m shed. It took 40 firefighters two hours to bring the fire under control.¹⁴³

4 MAY 2013

LOCATION: LIVERSEDGE, WEST YORKSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 10

Local people were able to save around a dozen chickens from a fire at a small chicken shed in Liversedge, near Dewsbury, but at least ten died what eyewitnesses described as 'a horrible death'.¹⁴⁵

29 MARCH 2013

LOCATION: BEAMINSTER, DORSET

CASUALTIES: 900

900 pigs were killed when fire ripped through a farrowing unit at Seaborough Manor in Beaminster. There were no survivors, but the pigs in adjacent piggeries were saved.¹⁴⁶



27 DECEMBER 2012

LOCATION: STALBRIDGE, DORSET

CASUALTIES: 20

While 60 were rescued, 20 sheep and lambs lost their lives in a barn fire at Spire Hill Farm in Stalbridge, near Yeovil. The barn, which also contained 500 tonnes of straw and hay, was completely destroyed.¹⁴⁷

18 OCTOBER 2012

LOCATION: OAKFORDBRIDGE, DEVON

CASUALTIES: 1,000

Around 1,000 chickens died when fire tore through a poultry shed at a farm near Bampton. Eight fire engines attended the scene and firefighters were able to save 2,000 birds.¹⁴⁸

24 JUNE 2012

LOCATION: HOLCOMBE ROGUS, DEVON

CASUALTIES: 5,000

It is thought that around 5,000 chickens died in a fire at Ridgeway Farm near Tiverton. It took firefighters two hours to tackle the blaze in the 40m x 10m poultry shed.¹⁴⁹

24 MAY 2012

LOCATION: FRIAR WADDON, DORSET

CASUALTIES: 198

18 sows and 180 piglets all perished in a fire at a large farrowing unit at Corton Farm near Weymouth. An animal rescue appliance was dispatched to the scene from Poole, but the pigs died before it could reach them.¹⁵⁰



20 MAY 2013

LOCATION: TIPTREE, ESSEX

CASUALTIES: 300

A blaze in one of six 'industrial coops' at Elmwood Farm in Tiptree caused the deaths of around 300 broiler chickens. The fire scene commander described it as 'a very severe fire'.¹⁴⁴



26 APRIL 2012

LOCATION: NAIRN, HIGHLANDS

CASUALTIES: 18

A total of four ewes and 14 lambs died in a fire at a farm steading near Nairn in Scotland. The fire is believed to have involved burning straw.¹⁵¹

14 APRIL 2012

LOCATION: CLAVERING, ESSEX

CASUALTIES: 8

A blaze in several farm buildings at a farm in Clavering, near Saffron Walden, resulted in the deaths of eight sheep. It took more than two hours to extinguish the fire.¹⁵²

27 FEBRUARY 2012

LOCATION: CLYST ST MARY, DEVON

CASUALTIES: 250

250 pigs and piglets died during a barn fire at a free-range farm near Exeter. The farmer, who won the *Farmer's Weekly* Pig Farmer of the Year award in 2008, believes the fire was caused by an electrical fault and that his animals died from asphyxiation.¹⁵³

11 JANUARY 2012

LOCATION: CRANBROOK, KENT

CASUALTIES: 140,000

Around 140,000 caged, egg-laying hens were burnt to death in a huge blaze in two large barns at Knoxbridge Farm near Cranbrook.¹⁵⁴

27 SEPTEMBER 2011

LOCATION: ARDSLEY, SOUTH YORKSHIRE

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

A fire, believed to have been started in bales of straw and pig manure, spread to a brick barn holding 500 pigs. Many of the pigs died but the exact number is not known.¹⁵⁵

8 SEPTEMBER 2011

LOCATION: CHESWARDINE, SHROPSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 60

About 60 pigs died during a huge fire in a farm building in the village of Cheswardine, near Market Drayton. Twenty-five firefighters attended the scene and remained there for most of the day.¹⁵⁶

12 JULY 2011

LOCATION: HICKLING, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

A fire in a poultry shed housing 10,000 chickens caused the deaths of 'hundreds if not thousands' of birds, according to a fire and rescue spokesperson.¹⁵⁷ It was also reported that 'a number of them were distressed' by the smoke and flames.¹⁵⁸

15 JUNE 2011

LOCATION: HEPWORTH, WEST YORKSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 200

Around 200 pigs died in a barn fire at Martins Nest Farm in Hepworth, near Huddersfield. It is thought that the fire was caused by a machinery fault.¹⁵⁹ Another fire at the same farm killed five pigs in 2013 (see page 29).¹⁶⁰

2 MAY 2011

LOCATION: STOCKSBRIDGE, SOUTH YORKSHIRE

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

A barn fire at a farm in Stocksbridge, near Barnsley, is known to have killed 'dozens' of animals, including four horses, 20 pigs and 'scores' of chickens. A fire service spokesman said: 'Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of the crews at the scene, the animals could not be saved.'¹⁶¹



6 FEBRUARY 2011

LOCATION: LLANGOLMAN, PEMBROKESHIRE

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

What was described as 'a small number of animals' was burnt to death in an arson attack on a smallholding in the village of Llangolman, near Haverfordwest.¹⁶²

27 AUGUST 2010

LOCATION: MARKET RASEN, LINCOLNSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 670+

In the second fire at the same farm in less than a year, more than 500 piglets and 170 sows died. Just as with the first fire, which killed more than 2,000 pigs (see below),¹⁶³ the blaze was blamed on an electrical fault.¹⁶⁴

7 AUGUST 2010

LOCATION: KIRBY MUXLOE, LEICESTERSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 62,000

According to a fire service spokesman, 62,000 egg-laying hens died in a blaze at a battery farm near Leicester that is believed to have been caused by an electrical fault. None of the chickens survived and the 150m x 20m shed eventually collapsed.¹⁶⁵

9 JULY 2010

LOCATION: EAST WELLOW, HAMPSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 6,000

A fire at Greenwood Farm, near Southampton, claimed the lives of around 6,000 chickens. A few managed to escape, but most were trapped inside the wooden barn by the ferocity of the blaze.¹⁶⁶



16 JUNE 2010

LOCATION: OCCOLD, SUFFOLK

CASUALTIES: 288

Almost 300 pigs died in a fire at Poplar Hall Farm in rural Suffolk, which was started by an electrical fault in the piggery's wet feeding system. Only a small number of animals were saved by firefighters.^{167,168}

6 FEBRUARY 2010

LOCATION: MARKET RASEN, LINCOLNSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 2,000+

Around 2,000 piglets and 166 sows died when a fire broke out in a farrowing unit at Northmoor Farm. The fire was blamed on an electrical fault.¹⁶⁹ A similar fire at the same farm killed more than 600 pigs less than seven months later (see above).¹⁷⁰



Deaths Through

DISEASE AND NEGLECT

Animals die prematurely on farms in their millions. Disease, injury, squalor and lack of individual care contribute to the massive and unreported death toll.

For egg-laying hens, average on-farm mortality ranges from 5.39 per cent for caged hens, and up to 9.52 per cent for free-range systems.¹⁷¹ Egg-laying hens are often kept in flocks of thousands if free-range or in sheds with tens of thousands of birds if caged or barn-reared. For 'broiler' chickens reared for meat, mortality ranges from 3.5 per cent for intensively reared birds, up to 4.7 per cent for free-range chickens.¹⁷²



Government advice is for farmers to inspect birds daily and look for 'early signs of ill health which may include changes in food and water intake, in preening, in "chatter" and in activity'.¹⁷³ But with 30,000 birds to a shed and, often several sheds to inspect, it is not possible for farmers to check each bird during his or her lifetime, let alone every day. As a result, early signs of illness or disease are missed. Only when the death toll exceeds what is expected do alarm bells ring. When avian influenza was detected at a Bernard Matthews farm in 2007, the first victims went unnoticed, despite their severe suffering, because the attrition rate in intensive poultry sheds is always so high.



EGG-LAYING HENS IN AN 'ENRICHED' CAGE THAT IS HERALDED AS A GREAT IMPROVEMENT ON THE BATTERY SYSTEM



In 2010, pig mortality on British farms ranged from 2.7-3.6 per cent, but this figure rose to 12.7 per cent for live-born piglets.¹⁷⁴ Further to this, around eight per cent of piglets are stillborn every year.¹⁷⁵ There are a range of conditions and disease that can and do affect farmed pigs, from pneumonia

and wasting syndrome to notifiable diseases such as anthrax and foot-and-mouth. Again, the advice is to check animals daily, but farmers accept losses as part of the job. If it is not cost-effective to treat an ailing animal, that animal may not be treated. Animal Aid's investigations at many UK pig farms have revealed large numbers of dead animals littering the shed floor and yard and piled up in bins.

‘WHILE HUGE NUMBERS OF ANIMALS DIE ROUTINELY THROUGH LACK OF INDIVIDUAL CARE ON FARMS, IT IS RARE FOR CASES OF NEGLIGENCE TO COME TO COURT.’



For dairy cattle, eight per cent of calves are either stillborn or die within 24 hours of birth.¹⁷⁶ A further 14 per cent of heifers fail to reach their first calving and 15 per cent either die or are culled during their first lactation.¹⁷⁷ For beef cattle, around eight per cent of calves are stillborn or die within their first 24 hours, while a further eight per cent die during rearing.¹⁷⁸

Mortality amongst pre-weaned lambs is especially high, ranging from 10 to 30 per cent,¹⁷⁹ and is around 5 to 7 per cent for adult ewes.¹⁸⁰ Again, these losses are factored into the industry's profit calculations and are deemed acceptable. While huge numbers of animals die routinely through lack of individual care on farms, it is rare for cases of neglect to come to court.



CASE STUDY: NORTH YORKSHIRE CRIMINAL NEGLECT

In 2014, a North Yorkshire farmer, James Linsley, was jailed after the RSPCA found 350 dead and dying animals at his farm. Linsley was sentenced to 16 weeks for causing unnecessary suffering to 53 sheep, 10 horses, four cows and a dog, and for two charges of neglect involving 300 sheep, 17 horses, four cows and a dog.¹⁸¹ He was also disqualified from keeping cows and horses for 10 years, but successfully argued that he should be allowed to continue farming sheep.¹⁸²

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07/08/2014

Farmer jailed for 'appalling' animal neglect

A farmer has been jailed after an animal welfare group found 350 dead or dying animals on his property in North Yorkshire.

James Linsley, from Barnard Castle in County Durham, was sentenced to 16 weeks in prison after the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) found he was causing unnecessary suffering to animals in his care.

In a case that cost more than £100,000 in vet, investigation and prosecution costs, Linsley was found guilty of three charges at Bishop Auckland magistrates' court on August 5 – the first for neglecting 53 sheep, 4 cows, 10 horses and a dog.

He admitted two further charges of neglect, involving 300 sheep, 17 horses, 4 cows and a dog.

RSPCA officers were called to the farm in North Yorkshire in March last year, where live animals were found knee-deep in faeces alongside dead animals.

A collie-type dog was found living off the remains of a horse.

Linsley was due to stand trial last month, but pleaded guilty to the three offences instead. He was also disqualified from keeping cows and equines for 10 years.

RSPCA chief inspector Mark Gent said: "It was a scene of horror of huge proportions. There were dead and dying animals all over the place, and some of the suffering had been going on for months. It is the worst case I have ever been involved with due to the sheer number of animals.

"The RSPCA had officers there for a week and it was a traumatic experience for all involved."

In mitigation, the court heard Linsley had found it difficult to get food to the animals because of poor weather conditions.

Mr Gent said: "The weather was poor, but this situation took a long time to take hold and we were able to get to the animals and attend to them.

"Mr Linsley is a farmer – he is making money from animals and he treated them appallingly."

Inspector Mark Gent said: 'Mr Linsley is a farmer – he is making money from animals and he treated them appallingly. There can be absolutely no excuse for what happened here.'¹⁸⁶

During the court case, Linsley moved to a smaller farm where it was claimed he was 'successfully' farming sheep. The magistrate's ruling meant that Linsley would be allowed to continue to farm sheep, even though District Judge Adrian Lower noted that this was not the first time that Linsley had appeared in court on charges relating to the treatment of animals.¹⁸⁷

In December 2011, he was convicted of disturbing a badger sett and leaving a dog in a car in hot weather.¹⁸⁸ According to news reports, officers at the scene found Linsley and another man in possession of terriers and dog collar transmitters and locators. The two men were instructed to pay £775 each and were sentenced to 80 hours unpaid community work.¹⁸⁹

'THE RSPCA LAUNCHED A PROSECUTION AFTER DISCOVERING "A SCENE OF HORROR OF HUGE PROPORTIONS".'

RSPCA inspectors had found animals knee-deep in faeces, a dog living off the carcass of a dead horse and 'dead and dying animals all over the place'. They described the farm as a 'scene of horror of huge proportions' and confirmed that some of the suffering had been going on for months.¹⁸³

The reason for the neglect is unclear. In mitigation, Northallerton Magistrates' Court was told:

'Linsley's method of buying inferior animals cheaply and raising them for a profit meant that many of the animals were more vulnerable to the weather'.¹⁸⁴ The RSPCA confirmed that there was food and veterinary medication at the farm but that it was not given to the animals.

In all, RSPCA inspectors were at the farm for a week and the veterinary bills alone totalled more than £100,000.¹⁸⁵ RSPCA Chief

Deaths caused by **DISEASE AND NEGLECT**

JUNE 2014

LOCATION: MAGUIRESBRIDGE, CO FERMANAGH

CASUALTIES: 20

A farmer was banned from keeping and owning farmed animals after 20 carcasses of cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry were discovered in varying degrees of decomposition, as well as starving live animals.¹⁹⁰

FEBRUARY 2014

LOCATION: OXENHALL, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 34

One goat was immediately put down on welfare grounds and 32 others identified for 'culling' after two farmers ignored veterinary advice relating to the treatment of foot rot. On a previous visit in March 2013, another goat, initially thought to be dead, was found to be suffering severe and chronic mastitis. She was also put down.¹⁹¹

NOVEMBER 2013

LOCATION: CARMARTHEN

CASUALTIES: 2

A farmer was given a 12-month Community Order after a sick ewe and lamb – both infested with maggots – had to be put down by the local authority. They also found rotting carcasses.¹⁹²

OCTOBER 2013

LOCATION: BRUERA, CHESHIRE

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

Animal Health and Welfare Inspectors described conditions at a Cheshire farm as 'the worst of its kind to ever be investigated by this authority'. Six cows were suffering from extreme malnutrition and were put down, while dozens of carcasses in various states of decomposition were also found.¹⁹³

Farmer admits 'horrific' animal cruelty

Cheshire farmer admits 20 charges of 'horrific' animal cruelty at Hatton Heath farm

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James Knight Stratton, of Churton Heath Farm, admits animal cruelty

A Cheshire farmer could be facing jail after 'horrific' scenes of animal cruelty were found on his property.

JULY 2013

LOCATION: FINSTOCK, OXFORDSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 3+

At least three chickens died due to the 'squalid' conditions found on a farm. Birds had no access to food or water and many were suffering from bacterial infections. The farmer was banned from keeping poultry for ten years and fined £1,120.¹⁹⁴

13 FEBRUARY 2013

LOCATION: CHESTER, CHESHIRE

CASUALTIES: 69

Welfare officers discovered the rotting carcasses of 33 animals and a further 37 emaciated cattle at Cold Harbour Farm near Chester after an anonymous tip-off. 36 animals were put down, with only one surviving. The farmer was jailed for 12 months and banned from owning or working with animals for ten years.¹⁹⁵

SEPTEMBER 2012

LOCATION: ONGAR, ESSEX

CASUALTIES: 3

Three men were given suspended jail sentences and disqualified from keeping animals for at least five years after allowing three Cameroon sheep to starve to death over ten days.¹⁹⁶

AUGUST 2012

LOCATION: WADDINGHAM, LINCOLNSHIRE

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

A farmer was sentenced to 12 months in jail for various charges relating to the neglect of cattle and pigs on his farm. Inspectors visited several times over nine months and found dead animals alongside starving ones.¹⁹⁷

JUNE 2012

LOCATION: STEWARTSTOWN, COUNTY TYRONE¹⁹⁸

CASUALTIES: 17

Seventeen pigs suffocated inside their open-fronted shed when hydrogen sulphide gas was released from a nearby slurry tank as it was being mixed. Other pigs were saved when ventilation flaps and doors were opened to release the gas.¹⁹⁹

MAY 2012

LOCATION: WIMBORNE, DORSET

CASUALTIES: UNKNOWN

A farmer was found guilty of 13 offences under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, relating to failing to provide adequate feed for 90 cows, failing to care for ill or injured animals without delay and causing unnecessary suffering to a cow.²⁰⁰

APRIL 2012

LOCATION: KENLEY, SHROPSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 50

Around 50 lambs drowned after falling into a well on a farm near Shrewsbury. The well was normally covered by a 90cm square stone slab, but this had been moved by persons unknown.²⁰¹

FEBRUARY 2012

LOCATION: CASTLETON, DERBYSHIRE

CASUALTIES: 50

A hill farmer was prosecuted for neglect after around 50 dead sheep were found alongside live animals at Oxlow House Farm in Derbyshire. The farmer was fined £10,000, received a 15-month prison sentence suspended for two years, and a ten-year ban on keeping animals.²⁰²

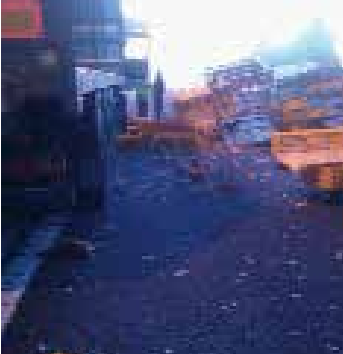


FEBRUARY 2012

LOCATION: SHILLINGSTONE, DORSET

CASUALTIES: 2

A Dorset farmer admitted causing unnecessary suffering to a cow after she was impregnated too young, resulting in complications which killed both her and her calf.²⁰³



THE UNCOUNTED DEAD:

Farming's unofficial victims



CONCLUSION

This report catalogues a great many fatal catastrophes in which farmed animals were the victims, yet their deaths received barely any official recognition. We estimate that more than 43 million animals die each year before they can be slaughtered – a figure arrived at by collating annual slaughter data published by Defra, together with pre-slaughter mortality percentages found in industry journals, and media accounts of deaths caused by fire, floods and other such events.

Among our case histories is a series of bewildering lapses and extraordinarily harsh judgments. They include the Market Rasen pig farm at which 2,000 animals perished in a February 2010 fire, only for an additional 670 pigs to die in the same way just six months later.

We include also an account of how a court in North Yorkshire decided that a local man was a fit and proper person to continue farming sheep, even though his extreme neglect of farmed animals had led to the painful deaths of 350 of them – including sheep, horses and cows.

Then there are the 50 lambs who plummeted to their deaths into a well on a farm in Shropshire, after the large stone slab covering the opening had been removed, either out of carelessness or malice.

Also warranting special attention, of course, are the 700,000 chickens in two adjacent Lincolnshire farms owned by the same business, who drowned in a massive tidal surge. The company's plans to rebuild on the same site – a flood plain – are well advanced.

Ultimately, the story of this report is told in the face of the pig we feature on the front cover. She was en route to slaughterhouse when the vehicle in which she was transported crashed on a roundabout near York, killing 35 of her fellows. It is a fair assumption that she was then loaded on to another vehicle to complete that journey to the slaughterhouse. In her face we see vulnerability and fear. These things signify a fundamental truth about all the nearly one billion animals produced every year in the UK for meat, milk and eggs: that they are each wholly sentient individuals who aspire to so much more than the wretched and brutal fate that we assign them.

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Daily Echo
 Thousands of chickens burnt alive at Hampsh farm
 News published Saturday 11 July 2010 in Dorset
 by Melissa Adams, Crime Reporter

Farmer admits 'horrific' animal cruelty
 Cheshire farmer admits 20 charges of 'horrific' animal cruelty at Hatton Heath farm
 Jake Davies

Fire breaks out in 16,000-bird shed
 Jake Davies

THE PRESS
 HARROGATE & RIPON NEWS
 Livestock killed on Ripon road
 First published Thursday 11 August 2011 in Harrogate & Ripon news
 MORE than 100 sheep and two cows were killed when a large goods vehicle overturned in North Yorkshire
 The vehicle was carrying 200 sheep and 17 pigs, when it overturned at Walsall Green, near Ripon, at 5.45pm on Tuesday
 A fire service spokesman said the driver and passenger of the vehicle were uninjured, but 125 sheep and two cows were killed

EXPRESS
 Cow shot dead by police marksman and officer injured after cattle stampede past houses
 A cow was shot dead and a police officer injured after a herd of cattle stampeded through a residential street
 The eight-year-old cow, known as 'Maggie', was shot dead by a police marksman as she ran down a residential street in the village of Pilsbury, Dorset
 The cow was running over a fence and into a garden where it was shot dead by a police marksman on a large spot and a police officer was injured when the cow ran into the road
 The officer was taken to hospital after suffering a broken leg when the cow ran into the road during the stampede. The cow was shot dead by a police marksman on a large spot and a police officer was injured when the cow ran into the road during the stampede.

Wrexham: 24,000 chicks perish in Marford shed fire
 A man was also taken to hospital after suffering burns in the blaze which took fire crews four hours to extinguish at a poultry shed
 Hundreds of pigs killed in blaze at Besford farm

BBC NEWS
 DORSET
 Hundreds of pigs die in Beaminster farm fire
 About 800 pigs have died after a large fire that destroyed a pigsty at a farm in Dorset
 The fire broke out on Monday night after the blaze spread from a pigsty to a large barn at a farm near Beaminster, Dorset
 The fire was caused by a fault in the heating system of the pigsty, which was used for breeding pigs
 The fire was caused by a fault in the heating system of the pigsty, which was used for breeding pigs

THE UNCOUNTED DEAD:

Farming's unofficial victims

THE WHITEHAVEN NEWS
 SHEEP KILLED AS TRAILER OVERTURNS
 Sixty sheep were killed and others injured after the trailer they were being carried in overturned
 Most of the animals died instantly in the accident just after 11.30am on Monday
 The cause of the accident was not clear but it is believed to have been caused by the tractor pulling the livestock trailer over a hump in the road
 The accident happened in the village of Pilsbury, Dorset

BBC NEWS
 SHEFFIELD & SOUTH YORKSHIRE
 Animals killed in Stocksbridge farm fire
 Dozens of animals have died in a barn fire at a farm in South Yorkshire
 The fire broke out on Monday night at a farm near Stocksbridge, South Yorkshire
 The fire was caused by a fault in the heating system of the barn, which was used for housing sheep
 The fire was caused by a fault in the heating system of the barn, which was used for housing sheep

Mirror
 Lorry with 6,000 chickens crashes on M62 spilling hundreds of birds onto the road
 A lorry carrying 6,000 chickens crashed on the M62 motorway, spilling hundreds of birds onto the road
 The lorry was carrying 6,000 chickens and crashed on the M62 motorway near Leeds
 The lorry was carrying 6,000 chickens and crashed on the M62 motorway near Leeds

FARMERS WEEKLY
 Big freeze livestock death toll hits 100,000
 A big freeze has killed 100,000 livestock animals in the UK
 The death toll has risen to 100,000 as a result of the severe weather
 The death toll has risen to 100,00 as a result of the severe weather

Snow disaster one year on: The spring weather massacre that killed 100,000 animals
 Farmers reflect on a devastating spate of weather a year to the day since it began
 A year on from the devastating weather that killed 100,000 animals, farmers are reflecting on the impact of the disaster
 A year on from the devastating weather that killed 100,000 animals, farmers are reflecting on the impact of the disaster

Dorset ECHO
 180 piglets killed by massive blaze in Weymouth farm
 180 piglets were killed in a massive fire at a farm in Weymouth, Dorset
 The fire broke out on Monday night at a farm near Weymouth, Dorset
 The fire was caused by a fault in the heating system of the pigsty, which was used for housing piglets

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