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REVIEW OF HIDDEN CAMERA FOOTAGE OF HORSE SLAUGHTER PRACTICES AT VIANDE RICHELIEU IN QUEBEC AND BOUVRY EXPORTS IN ALBERTA PROVIDED TO ME BY THE CANADIAN HORSE DEFENCE COALITION (CHDC).

“In late February 2010, the Canadian Horse Defence Coalition (CHDC) received hidden camera footage of horse slaughter practices at Viande Richelieu in Quebec and Bouvry Exports in Alberta - the latter known as the largest exporter of horsemeat in North America. The CHDC has compelling proof that puts into question the effectiveness of the assembly-line slaughter of horses. The evidence demonstrates that both the facilities in Alberta and Quebec fail to meet humane slaughter standards used by the CFIA to audit Canadian slaughterhouses.”

<http://www.defendhorsescanada.org/ChambersofCarnage.html>

Proviso: Although I have treated horses, ponies, mules, and zebras in my veterinary work, I am not an equine specialist as defined by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), in that I am not Board Certified in Equine Medicine and Surgery, nor any other specialty board. I am a veterinarian licensed in California, USA. I have more than 40 years expertise caring for a wide variety of animals: companion animals; food animals; zoo animals; and wildlife; therefore I am an expert in the care of domestic animals and captive wild animals.

Materials: For the purposes of this report I reviewed the following material provided to me by Sinikka Crosland, Executive Director of Canadian Horse Defence Coalition:

1. Slaughter of Horses, Bouvry Exports, Fort Macleod, Alberta, February 18. 2010, Disc 1 of 2—running time approximately 4.6 hours.
2. Slaughter of Horses, Bouvry Exports, Fort Macleod, Alberta, February 18. 2010, Disc 2 of 2—running time approximately 4.2 hours.
3. Slaughter of Horses, Viandes Richelieu, Massueville, Quebec, February 22, 2010, Disc 1 of 2—running time approximately 4.6 hours.
4. Slaughter of Horses, Viandes Richelieu, Massueville, Quebec, February 22, 2010, Disc 2 of 2—running time approximately 4.6 hours.

From the website <http://www.defendhorsescanada.org/ChambersofCarnage.html>, I viewed the following clips:

5. Bouvry Video Summary part I of III—07:12 in length
6. Bouvry Video Summary part II of III—07:44 in length
7. Bouvry Video Summary part III of III—05:56 in length
8. Richelieu Video Summary part I of III—03:30 in length
9. Richelieu Video Summary part II of III—05:34 in length
10. Richelieu Video Summary part III of III—06:58 in length

Including the other news reports and links from the CHDC I viewed almost 20 hours of horse slaughter. For the sake of my report I reviewed the AVMA's euthanasia and slaughter guidelines for humane slaughter of cattle and horses. I have relied upon these records, documents, photographs and video clips which I cite and which I verily believe to be true.

Professional Opinion: I have killed horses with euthanasia solution and on one occasion with a revolver and the help of a police officer at the scene of a highway accident involving an errant mule with two broken rear legs. It is never easy to take such a large life. In my career in companion animal practice rarely a day would go by when I euthanized NO pets, sometimes several. In one two week period in 1997 in an emergency pet clinic in Texas I euthanized 132 animals. My point is that I am no stranger to death in animals.

When CHDC asked me to review the hidden videos, I naively thought with my years of experience and my already hardened heart to the necessity of killing animals when it is the humane thing to do to relieve suffering, I would have no problem with the task at hand. I have taken pride in my expertise and caring to ensure any animal I euthanize dies a quiet, stress free death—a humane death.

To say I was shocked by the level of incompetence and apparent callousness demonstrated from Bouvry and Richelieu would be an understatement. These animals are suffering. Horses are the ultimate flight prey animal. They evolved to run at the slightest strange sound or sight. Anyone who has worked with them knows this to be true. Just try to lead a horse past a black floor drain in the hallway of a veterinary barn. They will glare wild eyed at the strange black grate as if it might reach out and grab them.

Bouvry and Richelieu kill rooms are the antithesis for a stress free environment for killing these horses humanely. Loud music echoing off the walls, horses whinnying in fear, people yelling and using whips and electric prods and the smell of blood and death all equate to equine hell. Then in the stun box the horses face a system setup to ensure anything but a quick death. One poor animal is shot in the right eye. And since they are using a single shot weapon, the killer must reload and shoot again, this time striking the horse in the other eye. A third shot finally appears to successfully stun the animal, although what happens in the next room is hidden from our view.

One large chestnut horse enters the stun box backwards. It is shot once then again and finally a third time, standing in the stun box suffering for more than 4&1/2 minutes

before finally being dispatched. Another horse is shot and hung by the rear leg and you can clearly see the horse is still conscious by the respiratory rate and muscle tremors. The employee who cuts the throat is kicked by the flailing hooves. Due to the worker's injuries the horse hangs until it can be lowered and shot in the head again. Inexperienced worker and horse suffers, owner of plant sells horse meat and prospers.

It is important to note a 22 caliber rifle round is very inefficient at stunning, much less killing, a horse quickly. The idea is the round will cause a concussive force on the brain and rendering the horse unconscious. These 20 hours of video testifies to the idiocy of that idea in the horse. The solution is design a horse kill box which will effectively quickly confine the horse so the shooter can get an accurate shot with a larger caliber rifle or deadbolt.

The equipment in these facilities is obviously designed for cattle not horses. When a cow walks into that chute you can clamp its head into the head gate. Place the dead bolt against its forehead and stun and effectively kill the cow. Horses will not tolerate a head gate. The shooter is essentially trying to shoot a moving target. After being stunned, if they are, horses are hoisted by one leg and it is quite clear they are not unconscious on more than one occasion, struggling and kicking when their throats are cut. The personnel in the CHDC report an accurate and fair assessment of Bovary and Richelieu Horse Slaughter operations. The website <http://www.defendhorsescanada.org/ChambersofCarnage.html> provides an accurate accounting of the 20 hours of video I reviewed.

The practices currently in place at these horse slaughter operations are not consistent with AVMA guidelines for euthanasia of horses. As an United States Department of Agriculture accredited veterinarian in California, I can safely say the slaughtering of horses at Bouvry and Richelieu does not fall under anyone's idea of "Best Practice Guidelines."

Conclusion: Bouvry Exports Calgary Ltd slaughterhouse in Fort Macleod, Alberta and Viande Richelieu Inc./Richelieu Meat Inc. slaughterhouse in Massueville, Quebec are in the business of providing gourmet horsemeat to gourmands in Europe and Japan. They are killing horses for a niche market of food lovers, not feeding the poor and starving children of the world. And they are making a considerable sum of money doing this I suspect. All I expect is that their facilities be designed with the horses' welfare in mind. And I expect their staff to be trained, efficient, and caring. Bouvry and Richelieu are causing extreme pain and suffering to the horses in their facilities. I recommend closing both of these operations until the owners can assure Canada they can provide a humane operation.



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