

Animal activists take message to the street

STAR TRIBUNE

SATURDAY, APRIL 21 • 2001

Exposing Animal Suffering" is not the most painful program you could watch on TV tonight, but that's only because KTCA, Channel 2, is showing "Schindler's List," a movie that unsparingly recreates life and death in a Nazi concentration camp.

Most Saturdays — most weeks, for that matter — "Exposing Animal Suffering" is unchallenged as the most brutal, sickening show on broadcast or cable TV.

Produced by a non-profit group called Defending Farm Animals, the half-hour program (11:30 p.m. Saturdays, Metro Cable Network, Ch. 6) showcases video shot on the sly at farms, stockyards, rodeos and slaughterhouses in Minnesota.



Television

Noel Holston

Nobody will mistake the show for "60 Minutes." There's no host, no narration, no story line. Just heartbreaking bits of video, sometimes silent, sometimes set to a crying blues guitar solo or a pro-animal pop song.

A particularly gruesome clip in tonight's telecast shows a pig being strung up by one hind leg and then, as it twists and writhes, having its throat cut. More often, the clips show something like filthy, live chickens crammed into crates as tightly as if they were a shipment of Beanie Babies, or pigs confined in cages too small for them to turn around in, or cows that died of injuries before they could be slaughtered.

If the producers had the same sense of sarcasm as some newspaper columnists, they might superimpose a sound bite from one of those TV commercials for beef: "It's what's for dinner!"

As you would expect, most of the members of Defending Farm Animals are vegetarians. But getting everybody to switch to sprouts and tofu is not their goal. They're too realistic for that.

"Our mission is to reduce farm-animal suffering," says Julie Derby, who, along with Peter Erdman, founded the organization.

Getting the video of farm animals being mistreated, although it carries physical risks, is actually easier than getting the mainstream media to pay attention. Helping KARE, Channel 11's, news department investigate a Hmong slaughterhouse in Hugo, Minn., last year got the organization its widest exposure to date. Usually the members have to content themselves with a newspaper mention here and there.

Besides producing the cable-TV program, Defending Farm Animals takes its concerns directly to the streets. With contributions from PETA and a few private donors, the organization recently bought a used, mid-sized moving truck and customized it. The passenger-side panel now folds up to reveal three TV monitors that show many of the same animal-abuse clips used on Channel 6. The video van replaced a mobile photo exhibit.

Volunteers park the van where people congregate in public spaces all over the Twin Cities — outside bars and coffee shops, even near the Metrodome as springtime crowds head for Minnesota Twins games.

"I feel hopeful," Derby said. "We're not getting threats and shouted down on the streets like we were five years ago. I think heads are hanging lower. There's more shame."

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Defending Farm Animals, Inc.

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2000

Vigil for Hugo Slaughterhouse Animals to Take Place on State Capital Steps

MINNEAPOLIS – Citizens concerned about the horrific and unlawful slaughter practices taking place at the Sung Lee farm in Hugo, Minnesota will be conducting a vigil on the front steps of the State Capital from Noon to 1 p.m., and at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. on Friday, April 28, 2000. A banner will be held insisting that Department of Agriculture Commissioner Gene Hugoson, and Attorney General Mike Hatch “Enforce the Humane Slaughter Act”.

Defending Farm Animals has recently documented extensive evidence of abuse and unlawful activity at the Seng Lee farm. Animals are routinely shackled, hoisted, and cut without any type of stunning in violation of Minnesota and Federal law.

Defending Farm Animals also investigated other illegal and inhumane “live meat markets” including Long Cheng and Concord Meats, both in South St. Paul. Asian-American investigators felt traumatized as they documented similar activities at these sites.

Defending Farm Animals vigorously promotes the humane treatment of farm animals through education and activism. Each Saturday the educational television program “Tame Yourself!” is shown metro-wide on Channel 6 at 11:30 p.m. At summer festivals a large mobile exhibit educates Minnesotans on a wide variety of animal abuse issues and specifically on farm animal suffering.

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The mission of Defending Farm Animals, Inc. is to reduce the pain and suffering of food animals through investigations, exposes, and public education. All activities are peaceful and focus on improving conditions for as many animals as possible.

To learn more about Defending Farm Animals visit our web site at <http://www.DefendingFarmAnimals.org>

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY JUNE 28, 2000

Educational Exhibit on Farm Animal Abuses to Travel to Washington , D.C.

MINNEAPOLIS – Defending Farm Animals will be touring their mobile educational exhibit en-route to Animal Rights 2000 to be held in Washington, D.C this coming weekend. This exhibit contains videos, literature, and hundreds of photographs documenting the abuses to animals raised in factory farms in Minnesota. Documentation includes information on downed cattle and pigs, confined chickens and sows, and rodeo.

Each year in Minnesota millions of animals are raised in factory-like conditions in stark contrast to more traditional family farms. Sows raised in total confinement are kept in cages only slightly larger than their bodies. Egg laying chickens spend their entire lives with several other birds in a cage about the size of a folded newspaper. Disabled and injured livestock are transported long distances and have been documented being dragged and bulldozed.

Most recently, DFA investigators have documented horrific abuses and unlawful practices at several “live meat markets” in the greater Twin Cities area including the highly publicized Seng Lee Farm in Hugo. These markets have been known to not stun animals before shackling, hoisting, and throat cutting. Fear and terror is evident in waiting animals as they witness other animals being killed. Hours of graphic video taken at these markets will be taken to Washington, D.C.

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For more information, reporters may contact:

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Educational Exhibit on Farm Animal Abuses to be at State Capital

MINNEAPOLIS – Defending Farm Animals will be showing their mobile educational exhibit in front of the Minnesota State Capital to commemorate the 18th annual World Farm Animals Day on Monday, October 2nd, from Noon to 2 p.m. World Farm Animals Day falls each year on Mahatma Gandhi's birthday to raise awareness of the abuses inflicted on farm animals. Gandhi was a champion of humane farming.

A petition will be presented to Governor Ventura to urge him to visit the exhibit and become educated on the abuses currently taking place in Minnesota.

This exhibit contains videos, literature, and hundreds of photographs documenting the abuses to animals raised in factory farms in Minnesota. Documentation includes information on downed cattle and pigs, confined chickens and sows, and the growing "live meat markets" in the area.

Each year in Minnesota millions of animals are raised in factory-like conditions in stark contrast to more traditional family farms. Sows raised in total confinement are kept in cages only slightly larger than their bodies. Egg laying chickens spend their entire lives with several other birds in a cage about the size of a folded newspaper. Disabled and injured livestock are transported long distances and have been documented being dragged and bulldozed.

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9.8 Billion Animals to be Killed for Food This Year

The total number of mammals and birds raised and killed for food in the US this year is expected to reach 9,890 million, according to extrapolation of data published by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

- 41.6 million Cattle
- 111.7 million Pigs
- 5.4 million Sheep
- 312 million Turkeys
- 8,947 million Chickens
- 447 million Laying Hens
- 25.6 million Ducks

The total includes nearly one billion farmed animals who die from mistreatment before ever reaching the slaughterhouse, but does not include a staggering number of fish and other aquatic animals nor the smaller number of wildlife killed for food.

In 1999, 9,664 million mammals and birds were raised and killed for food in the US. In addition to the 8,719 million animals slaughtered in 1999 according to the NASS, another 945.3 million, or 9.8% of the total, suffered lingering deaths from disease, malnutrition, injury, suffocation, stress, extermination, or other deadly factory farming practices. Some of these 'other' deaths were reported by the NASS. But, most had to be deduced from secondary sources, such as hatchery reports and interviews with agricultural experts. Examples of the latter deaths apply to 'broiler' chickens and turkeys who die before they are placed on a farm, male layer chicks suffocated at birth, discarded layer hens, and piglets who die before weaning.

In more personal terms, during a 75-year lifetime, a typical US resident is responsible for the suffering and death of 11 cows, 32 pigs and sheep, 85 turkeys, 2,570 chickens and ducks, and uncounted numbers of fish and other aquatic animals.

The 9,890 million animals raised and killed for food account for 98% of all animals abused and killed annually in the US. Approximately 135 million animals are killed for 'sport', 25 million are used in biomedical research and testing, and 10 million are put down in pounds.

The worldwide number of animals killed for food in 1999 was 44.2 billion, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. This included 295 million cattle, buffalo, and calves, 1.1 billion pigs, 804 million sheep and goats, and 42 billion chickens, ducks, turkeys and geese. The figures exclude some small countries and 'non-slaughter' deaths which are generally not reported.

This report on the number of victims of animal agriculture is compiled and published each year by FARM in connection with the annual observance of World Farm Animals Day on October 2 (Gandhi's birthday). FARM is a public interest organization dedicated to exposing and ending animal abuse and other devastating impacts of today's animal agriculture on environmental quality, food resources, and public health. World Farm Animals Day is an international observance promoting more humane, healthful, and sustainable agricultural practices. This year's 18th annual observance focuses on raising the awareness of candidates for public office and their constituents to these issues.

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Mobile Educational Exhibit Exposes Animal Suffering

MINNEAPOLIS – Defending Farm Animals will be unveiling their newest mobile educational exhibit to the local media at Noon on Friday April 27th at the YWCA at 2121 East Lake Street, Minneapolis.

This multi-media truck contains three televisions, a photo display, and signs. The mobility of this unit will allow DFA volunteers to bring local and timely evidence of animal suffering to the streets of the Twin Cities on a daily basis.

Each year in Minnesota millions of animals are raised in factory-like conditions in stark contrast to more traditional family farms. Sows raised in total confinement are kept in cages only slightly larger than their bodies. Egg laying chickens spend their entire lives with several other birds in a cage about the size of a folded newspaper. Disabled and injured livestock are transported long distances and have been documented being dragged and bulldozed. Inhumane slaughter has been documented at numerous facilities and is becoming an extreme problem.

The most challenging aspect of animal protection education is the lack of reporting by local media. Activists have been squelched in the press because of their theatrics and questionable agendas. However when a responsible group works methodically to expose real Minnesota issues, the press falls out of interest. Defending Farm Animals has worked tirelessly for five years in documenting and educating Minnesotans on specific issues of animal suffering. Our outreach has included a mobile trailer exhibit, a weekly television program, a web site, and numerous smaller activities.

We encourage the local media to now take an active role in seeing the photos, videotape, and first-hand accounts of horrific animal suffering taking place in our own home town.

After the press conference the truck will be driven to the State Capital where a lengthy petition will be presented to Governor Ventura urging him to see the exhibit and learn more about animal suffering in Minnesota.

For more information, reporters may contact:

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE MONDAY, JUNE 3, 2001

Inhumane Slaughter Exposed in Hugo, MN – Criminal Complaint to be Filed

MINNEAPOLIS – Defending Farm Animals will be attending the Hugo City Council meeting tonight to urge the Council to table their vote to grandfather in a slaughterhouse operated by Andrew Goiffon, until charges of animal cruelty are investigated.

Defending Farm Animals has documented four examples of severe animal cruelty taking place at the Goiffon facility including inadequate stunning, pigs trying to right themselves, making eye contact and thrashing. This slaughterhouse also operates under the name Chaw Tua Npua / Asian Pig Butchering.

Defending Farm Animals will be using their multi-media truck outside of the meeting to show images of the horrific cruelties taking place in this facility. This truck is equipped with three large TV screens, photos, and banners.

In connection with tonight's meeting, a formal complaint of inhumane handling and slaughter practices (Minnesota Statutes, Section 31.591) will be filed in both the City of Hugo and Washington County.

Video from inside the Goiffon Slaughterhouse has played for the past several weeks on our weekly cable television program *Exposing Animal Suffering*. This program is on every Saturday at 11:30 p.m. on metro-wide cable channel 6.

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2001

Educational Vigil for Lack of Prosecuting Animal Abusers

MINNEAPOLIS – Defending Farm Animals (DFA) will be conducting a vigil to raise public awareness that Washington County refuses to prosecute horrific and blatant acts of animal cruelty. The vigil will be held outside of the Washington County Government Center on Monday, November 19th at Noon. The Government Center is located at 14949 62nd Street North, Stillwater. Afterwards DFA will go to downtown Stillwater to show and distribute information on this neglected cruelty case.

Last year four animal investigators for Defending Farm Animals documented animals being horrifically slaughtered at two businesses in Hugo. Washington County residents and others were videotaped hanging live, conscious animals and cutting/stabbing animals throats, restraining the mammals, scalding and drowning dying animals in scorching water. A cow was gruesomely killed by hanging. Goats, pigs, and sheep suffered bleeding out deaths while kicking and struggling chained and hanging by their legs. Also, electrical stunning did not work adequately to render the pigs insensitive to pain. All of these are violations of Minnesota statutes (Section 31.591).

DFA's attorney submitted affidavits and video evidence to Washington County Sheriff, elected officials of Hugo, and prosecutor Thomas J. Weidner. In July of 2001 Weidner wrote that he had "determined that no criminal prosecution of this matter would be commenced at this time." When investigators approached the Hugo City Council with this evidence on two occasions, they were not permitted to speak.

DFA will be using their multi-media truck at the vigil to show images of these horrific cruelties. This truck is equipped with three large TV screens, photos, and signs. DFA's video evidence has played frequently on our weekly cable television program *Exposing Animal Suffering*. This program is on every Saturday at 11:30 p.m. on metro-wide cable channel 6. The program also plays Wednesday's in Minneapolis at 10 p.m. on cable channel 16.

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