

SECRETLY FILMED IN AN ENGLISH ABATTOIR... HEALTHY HORSES AND PONIES BUTCHERED FOR MEAT EXPORTS

18 September 2007

Animal Aid today (Thursday, September 20) releases footage secretly filmed in an English abattoir. It shows discarded children's riding ponies and unprofitable race horses being shot in the head with a rifle and then butchered for human consumption.

It is the first time that such scenes have been filmed in Britain and made public.

Covertly recorded last month at Potter's abattoir in Taunton, the Animal Aid footage shows the killing of a succession of apparently fit and healthy horses. One conspicuous exception was a seriously injured chestnut mare who was brought to the killing factory on the evening of August 14. After a long delay, she was finally shot while lying in a yard.

Animal Aid has called on the Meat Hygiene Service to investigate whether the delay in putting her out of her misery was due to the time it took Potter's employees to re-start the slaughterline, on which she could be promptly butchered after being shot. The law states that, for meat to be deemed fit for human consumption, an animal must be bled immediately after being shot or stunned. But there is also a statutory obligation to despatch a seriously injured animal without delay.

Another horse looked as though she could have been pregnant. After she had been shot, what sounded like a second rifle shot was heard from behind the closed door of the butchering line. Animal Aid challenges Potter's management to declare whether or not this second 'shot' was directed at an unborn foal.

Lawrence J Potter (South West) Ltd describes itself in the company's latest annual report as being engaged in the 'elective euthanasia of equines and export of horsemeat'. Stephen Potter, a director of the company, was reported in The Observer (1 October, 2006) as saying that his establishment killed 'some 3,000 [horses] a year'. He added that 'only 100 [horses] a

year came from racing'. About 20 of the roughly 50 horses Animal Aid filmed over just two days and one evening were Thoroughbreds.

Says Animal Aid Director Andrew Tyler:

'The fundamental problem at the heart of the horse slaughter scandal that we have uncovered is that these horses are bred to excess. They are produced for commercial reasons, by both the Thoroughbred racing industry and by those servicing the pet horse and pony market. When an animal is no longer useful, he or she is often simply disposed of. This is the fate of thousands of healthy horses and ponies every year.'

Watch the 90 second film

Watch the 9 minute film

Read notes on the footage

Read the Daily Mail article

NOTES TO EDITORS

- Animal Aid filmed at Potter's on August 14, 15 and 22.
- Still images 'grabbed' from the film are available on request.
- For the past eight years, Animal Aid has investigated the horse racing industry, publishing a series of detailed reports exposing the oppressive regime to which Thoroughbreds are subjected. Hundreds of horses are raced to death every year and thousands of 'surplus' animals are slaughtered or otherwise destroyed. While Thoroughbred bloodstock sales are an integral part of the multi-billion pound racing industry, there is also a lucrative private sales market in horses and ponies used for show jumping, dressage, cross-country, hunting and hacking, as well as those employed

by riding schools. No matter what their background, there is always the likelihood that a horse will meet his or her end in a slaughterhouse, with the meat sold abroad for human consumption.

- More information from Andrew Tyler or Dene Stansall at 01732 364 546.
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