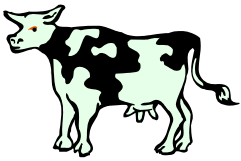


STOP TASMANIAN ANIMAL CRUELTY

July 18 2009

NEWSFLASH – THE REALITY FOR ‘PRODUCTION’ ANIMALS IN AUSTRALIA

In Tasmania, Australia’s island state, egregious cases of animal cruelty are finally getting to the courts, after unconscionable delays.



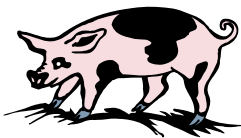
Infamous Redpa dairy farmer Roderick Neil Mitchell faces approximately 200 charges in Burnie on July 22 2009 relating to cruelty, aggravated cruelty, and obstruction and intimidation of officers. Some of the charges date back more than two years, and only a handful has been dealt with. Hundreds of cows and calves have died at Mitchell’s hands in recent years, but he is only now being forced to face justice.

Animal advocates are disgusted that animals have continued to suffer and die on Mitchell’s property with only the intervention of local authorities managing to seize just 78 animals.



Stop Tasmanian Animal Cruelty’s Suzanne Cass drew some parallels with a recent interstate case:-

‘Paul Hamilton, a farmer from the Riverina in NSW has just been gaoled over 144 cruelty offences, but only after three years elapsed after the original intervention by the RSPCA. The judges described his behaviour as like **‘child neglect’** and **‘worst case criminality’**. In Tasmania, offences on a similar scale have seen only wholly suspended sentences, which are totally meaningless, handed down to farmers in cases of truly appalling abuse and neglect. It’s quite amazing that these people can afford expensive lawyers to try and get them off on technicalities, as we saw happen with Mitchell on some charges last year’.



Mitchell’s case became prominent in the media after senior political figures were forced by distressed locals to become involved two years ago. Film footage and photographs attest to the wretched misery of Mitchell’s cattle throughout this period.

2007 photographs



Dying in a bog, this cow had to be shot



Beyond help

2008 photographs



Probable death after calving difficulties



The dairy herd forced to walk over this dead cow, left where she fell



Dying calf being euthanised

2009 photographs



Cow's body seized for autopsy



Just last month, one of Mitchell's 'dump sites'



Australia's claims to 'world's best practice' in animal welfare are supposedly underpinned by legislation in each state and territory, which in turn are underpinned by 'Codes of Practice' which detail the **minimum standards** in relation to 'production animals'. The codes themselves expressly provide for such cruelty that if they were followed with 'companion' animals, would form the basis of a prosecution. **As matters currently stand, compliance with such a code can form the basis of a defence in the event of cruelty charges.** The **inherent cruelty is particularly obvious in intensive pig farming**, and another Tasmanian farmer, **Gary William Oliver**, is to face the courts again in Scottsdale on August 11 after atrocious conditions on his farm were exposed on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's 'Stateline' program in May.



Animal advocates who raided the farm found emaciated pigs in undersized sow stalls so desperate for water that they were struggling to drink from maggot infested drains. Some pigs had such severe abscesses that they could not stand and others had open sores infested by maggots.

Oliver's farm continues to supply the self-proclaimed 'fresh food people', supermarket giant Woolworths.

And also recently, **battery hen farmer Glen Peter Balke, another supplier to Woolworths** was convicted and fined in the Hobart Magistrates court after a DPIW (Department of Primary Industries and Water) audit found hens, mired in manure, crammed into cages with dead cage mates to such an extent that they could not stand naturally.

Livestock agents and live exporter Roberts Limited is due to face the Hobart Magistrates' court on September 16 after Magistrate Michael Daly found that the company, and its southern livestock manager **William John Denholm** each had a case to answer on cruelty and mismanagement charges after StopTAC found 35 starving sheep at its Bridgewater saleyard confined to a pen without feed for what StopTAC estimates would have been nine days. **It took 13 months for this case to come before the courts.**

'Tasmania is very quick to haul before the courts peaceful forest protesters who have harmed no-one within weeks of charges being laid, but it takes years to get serial animal abusers to face justice', observed Ms Cass. 'Even when they do, the penalties to date, even in cases of appalling cruelty, have been meaningless. These people don't care about fines, and there is nothing meaningful about wholly suspended prison sentences. It just means that they go right out and do it all again', she concluded.

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