Welsh Parliamentary Briefing:
CCTV IN SLAUGHTERHOUSES

CAMPAIGN AIM — TO MAKE CCTV MANDATORY FOR ALL SLAUGHTERHOUSES IN WALES, WITH INDEPENDENT MONITORING OF FOOTAGE

The case for mandatory CCTV:

• Animal Aid has filmed inside 16 slaughterhouses to date (15 of which were in England) and revealed widespread incompetence, brutality and law-breaking.

• We have recently investigated a Welsh slaughterhouse for the first time and revealed that conditions are no better. Our covert cameras have brought to light shocking new evidence of animals being thrown, pulled along by their legs or throats, kneed or kicked. Other animals had hands clamped over their muzzles as they struggled and on one occasion a worker even sits on a sheep. We have grave concerns about the stunning process; animals may have gone to the knife fully conscious.

• Official Vets (OVs) at slaughterhouses cannot physically be everywhere at the same time and Animal Aid's evidence suggests that workers often wait until they know they are not being watched before breaking the law.

• The British Veterinary Association supports mandatory CCTV in slaughterhouses to act as a deterrent, to help vets check what is happening when they cannot be present, and to provide evidence.

• There is not always space to install a viewing platform at the stun/ kill point and it may not always be possible for an OV to view the full process safely. Footage can be referenced historically.

• Independently monitored CCTV protects animals and also assists in the training and re-training of staff and protects staff from bullying and false allegations, as well as deterring workers from committing acts that lead to injuries. These have included accidental shootings and other workplace accidents.

• CCTV could protect the public. Slaughterhouses contain firearms which on some rare occasions have been stolen from slaughter premises. CCTV could deter such thefts or provide evidence that could identify the perpetrator.

• A significant number of slaughterhouse OVs and hygiene inspectors report being bullied. The atmosphere of a slaughterhouse can be very charged and fast-paced, which may make stopping the slaughter line and challenging behaviours very problematic.

Voluntary CCTV is clearly not working

• Animal Aid's recent Welsh investigation was at Farmers Fresh slaughterhouse in Wrexham, where CCTV was installed, but without rules pertaining to its placement, use, operation and storage, it wasn't an effective safeguarding tool. For example, the camera in the stun and kill area was effectively blocked by a worker.

• Previously for English slaughterhouses, evidence that properly monitored CCTV cameras work rests with Animal Aid's fly-on-the-wall investigations. As a result of the footage obtained being properly monitored and acted upon, many abuses have been uncovered, a number of slaughter licences have been suspended or revoked, and some of the most abusive workers have been successfully prosecuted and jailed.

• The Welsh red meat slaughtering industry is calculated to be contributing approximately £461 million per annum to the Welsh economy. Trusting to luck is a reckless reputational risk to the industry (especially given the uncertainties of a looming Brexit).†

The case against mandatory CCTV

• Some argue that CCTV could be an invasion of worker privacy, but staff in many hotels, bars, high street shops and offices are covered by CCTV. The cameras would not be present in changing areas or rest rooms.

• Others argue against it due to cost. The cost of installing cameras is 'relatively modest' (George Eustice, Adjournment Debate, 3rd February 2015) and should not be a barrier.

• An independent report by Professor Ian Rotherham of Sheffield Hallam University (published August 2016 – http://bit.ly/RotherhamReport) found that costs for installation of appropriate CCTV systems for monitoring would be between £700 and £2,500 depending on the size of the facility. The Welsh Government has announced that a £1.1 million Food Business Investment of grant aid will be made available for small and medium size slaughterhouses in Wales. In a written statement on 22 March 2018, the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths AM, said that the package would cover "welfare friendly infrastructure and facilities" along with the "installation and upgrading of CCTV monitoring systems".

Which parts of the UK have introduced compulsory CCTV?

• CCTV is compulsory in England, http://bit.ly/CCTVEngland and planned for Scotland.

Support for Mandatory CCTV

• RSPCA (Cymru), Compassion in World Farming, The British Veterinary Association and many other animal protection groups support it.

• A recent YouGov public opinion poll found that 79% of respondents in Wales supported mandatory CCTV with independent monitoring ‡

† March 2016 report by Hybu Cig Cymru – Meat Promotion Wales (HCC).

‡ Taken from the Wales Omnibus Survey (OM 550) by YouGov.Plc between 16th and 23rd September. The survey was carried out online and there were 1000 adult respondents. The figures are rounded to the nearest percentage point.

Respondents gave their answers after being shown the following statement: 'The use of CCTV cameras in slaughterhouses in Wales is not currently compulsory. Some argue that CCTV should not be compulsory, as they fear that the presence of CCTV could present an invasion of worker privacy. Others argue that CCTV would help protect animals from cruelty inside slaughterhouses, as it means that procedures can be independently monitored, allowing action to be taken against those that do not follow regulations. To what extent would you support or oppose making CCTV with independent monitoring of footage compulsory for all slaughterhouses in Wales?'

ANIMAL AID