

P-04-433 CCTV in Slaughterhouses – Correspondence from David Grimsell to the Chair, 05.09.18

Mr David Rowlands
Chair
Petitions Committee
Welsh Assembly

By email 5th September 2018

Dear Mr Rowlands

re Petition concerning mandatory CCTV in slaughterhouses (Petition P-04-433)

At the Petitions Committee meeting of 3rd July 2018 the Committee discussed the above petition. In attendance were Lesley Griffiths, Cabinet Secretary, and Christianne Glossop, Chief Veterinary Officer, and I believe the session was referred to as an ‘evidence’ session. However, there was little evidence presented by either in my view to support the Government’s current position of not requiring mandatory installation of CCTV in Welsh slaughterhouses.

The Cabinet Secretary implied that the majority of slaughterhouses in Wales have CCTV. It is important to note that this far from guarantees that such CCTV is effectively and comprehensively located to detect welfare problems, or that footage obtained is accessible to relevant officials.

Ms Griffiths also sought to imply that only a minority of animals are slaughtered in premises without CCTV. Even were CCTV to be effectively sited and used where it is held, this is hardly an argument not to require installation of CCTV in all, as the ‘minority’ still constitutes many tens of thousands of animals even within Wales – and each deserves protection.

The Cabinet Secretary has also sought to imply that she has no evidence of welfare at slaughter issues. She referred at the meeting to there only being ‘some speculation’, yet this is very disingenuous indeed. In England thorough undercover investigations revealed that in 13 out of 14 slaughterhouses investigated there were serious and widespread breaches of welfare regulations and, in many cases, overt cruelty. This evidence was supplied to the Food Standards Agency and prosecutions have followed from it. While it is true that similar undercover investigations have not been undertaken in Wales, it is overwhelmingly likely that similar problems exist here too. After all Welsh slaughterhouses process very large numbers of animals,

they do so using plants that operate as those in England do, they have the same purported 'controls' administered by the Food Standards Agency, and they are even often run by the same companies.

Lesley Griffiths has presumed to date to ignore this evidence (as has the Welsh abattoir industry which simply disregards it), as well as the collective views of the Food Standards Agency, Official Veterinarians working in slaughterhouses, the British Veterinary Association and the RSPCA that CCTV is a very useful tool to prevent welfare abuses in slaughterhouses and should be a requirement.

It is not acceptable that animals in Wales at the time of slaughter are not offered the maximum protection. It is also not acceptable that the Cabinet Secretary should presume to collude with industry interests alone – ignoring public concern and that of the agencies above, at the expense of animal welfare.

The Committee will be aware that compulsory CCTV is now a requirement in England, and is very likely to become so in Scotland too once their consultation is finalised.

Some funding to be used or not to facilitate CCTV, without requirements relating to siting and usage, without requirements relating to access and monitoring of footage and on a voluntary basis avoids the issue and fails to comprehensively protect the welfare of animals at slaughter in Wales.

I urge the Committee not to close this petition, and to remain alert to the need to apply pressure for Wales to actually adopt high animal welfare standards rather than simply to claim this. Wales is already well behind England and Scotland in this regard.

Thank you for your attention.

David Grimsell
Welsh citizen