

P-04-433 CCTV in Slaughterhouses – Correspondence from the petitioner to the Committee, 21.06.2013

I welcome the Minister's comments but should point out that - when cameras were placed in slaughterhouses where competent and qualified staff were working - they picked up a multitude of breaches, some of which were very serious indeed.

Unobserved monitoring is crucial in the regulation of slaughterhouses, and CCTV is the best example of unobserved monitoring. Hidden platforms etc rely on a) an appropriate plant layout and b) the ability of regulators to stand in that place for a portion of each day.

CCTV once installed is one place and it is working. A platform where the vet could observe without being observed is less efficient and less effective for the following reasons:

- 1) Vets report that their duties keep them out of the stunning/slaughter area for most of the day. Certainly, during 250 hours of footage obtained in nine slaughterhouses, we did not see a single vet in the stunning or slaughter areas at any point. It is unlikely that they would spend much time at that platform. They could, however, view CCTV footage at their convenience.
- 2) CCTV provides a far greater deterrent than an unobserved platform. Knowing that there is a slim chance that a vet may be viewing the stunning/slaughter process is not the same as knowing that every animal is protected through the use of CCTV.
- 3) Unobserved platforms do not record events. Such recordings can be used to train and retrain workers, encourage best practice and provide evidence for prosecutions should they be necessary.
- 4) For many slaughterhouses, it is not possible to observe without being observed because of the plant layout. CCTV can be installed easily in every slaughterhouse.
- 5) CCTV protects workers from false allegations, and deters acts that could lead to injuries and deaths, such as the accidental shooting at Sandyford in 2011.
- 6) A significant percentage of slaughterhouse vets and hygiene inspectors report being bullied. CCTV would protect them, and allow them to undertake their tasks with confidence.
- 7) CCTV – unlike an unobserved platform – allows workers to discreetly air their concerns about, for example, certain procedures or a particular colleague. The concerned worker need not make a formal complaint but could simply suggest the vet views certain parts of the footage.
- 8) There can be no dispute with CCTV. With an unobserved platform, any allegations remain unsubstantiated, with a vet or other employee describing a problem and a worker denying it. CCTV settles such disputes definitively.

For all these reasons, I would urge the Welsh Assembly Government to take decisive action. The industry is ready for this, and the public overwhelmingly want to see it.

Kind regards,
Kate Fowler