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Investigation of Boar Bashing, Tooth Breaking and Snout Cutting at Ottawa Livestock Exchange (formerly Leo's Livestock Exchange Ltd.) and Investigation of Slaughterhouses that accept these boars: Hebert & Fils and Viandes Giroux April – May, 2007 External Report

Locations:

Ottawa Livestock Exchange (formerly Leo's Livestock Exchange Ltd.)

1643 Salebarn Road
Greely, Ontario
Tel: 613-821-2634
Fax: 613-821-4594
Manager: Mr. Steven Spratt

L.G. Hebert & Fils Ltee

438 Rue Hebert
Ste.-Helene-de-Bagot, Quebec J0H 1M0
Tel: 450-791-2630
President: Mr. Normand Hebert

Viandes Giroux (1997) Inc.

250 Georges Pimard
East Angus, Quebec J0B 1R0
Tel: 819-832-1551
Fax: 819-832-1212
President: Mr. Roger Giroux



Dates visited:

Ottawa Livestock Exchange/Leo's

24/04/07
21/05/07
28/05/07
29/05/07

Hebert & Fils

01/05/07
02/05/07
03/05/07
24/05/07
31/05/07

Viandes Giroux

23/05/07

1. Market Information:

Market schedule for Ottawa Livestock Exchange:

Monday – Bob calves, stockers, slaughter cows, bulls, fed cattle, **pigs**, lambs, goats and horses
Thursday – Bob calves, stockers, slaughter cows, bulls, fed cattle, dairy cattle and horses

Veterinarian for Ottawa Livestock Exchange:

Dr. Andy Domer

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Species:

Pigs – boars in particular

2. Observations:

24/04/07

We arrived at Ottawa Livestock Exchange close to the end of the working day and were provided with a tour by one of the workers. After being given our business cards and being told who we work for, the worker told us that they “boar bash” and cut the teeth of the boars at the facility before transport. The worker continued to tell us exactly how both procedures were done. He explained that for the teeth, a boar is held with a noose around its snout and heavy-duty bolt-cutters are used to snap the teeth/tusks off. For the bashing, he told us they use a baseball bat to smash the boars in the face with. The goal is to break their snouts to cause severe enough pain to prevent the boars from fighting during transport to slaughter as they do not separate them during transport as the CFIA’s transport regulations dictate. The worker told us the boars, once bashed, and with their teeth broken, are then loaded and taken to either Hebert & Fils in Ste. Helene-de-Bagot or Viandes Giroux in East Angus for slaughter. Both slaughterplants are in Quebec with Hebert & Fils being a 3 hour drive away and Viandes Giroux being 4 hours away.

We left the facility but planned to return as soon as we could to determine if there was any truth to what the worker had told us.

01/05/07

In the meantime we visited one of the slaughterplants the worker mentioned:

Hebert & Fils Slaughterplant – Ste. Helen de Bagot, QC

We observed the facility for approximately 4 hours and recorded 5 trailers unloading. Handling was rough with a great deal of vocalizing from the pigs. By noon, one of the large garbage bins outside was completely full of dead pigs – this seemed like a surprisingly high mortality rate for a plant of this size.



02/05/07

Hebert & Fils

We again returned to the slaughterhouse and recorded the unloading of another 5 trucks – all had Quebec license plates. Handling was again rough and the tractor was kept busy dumping dead pigs into the garbage bins outside. At least 1 boar was among the deceased on this day.



03/05/07

Hebert & Fils

Both bins were full to the brim with dead pigs on this day – at least 12 animals. The pigs inside the bins were in very bad, inexplicable condition. Many had large chunks of skin cut away. This was especially concerning as the wounds had been bleeding, meaning the cuts had been done peri-mortem or pre-mortem (around the time of death or before death). One pig had a bleeding snout and one sow appeared to have been dragged on her back for so long that the skin was worn away from the back of her fore limb, exposing the wrist bones.



Two bins full of dead pigs



Exposed carpal bones; excised skin – bleeding wound

21/05/07

Ottawa Livestock Exchange/Leo's Livestock Exchange

On this day we were able to confirm that "tooth cutting" was being performed on the boars. The process is actually more adequately described as "tooth breaking" for reasons that will become clear. A boar was moved to a small pen in the back pig stabling area. There were a number of bystanders around watching the process, as was a young boy of perhaps 10 years of age. A boar was locked into the stall while a man attempted to lasso just the top part of his snout (excluding the mandible). This proved difficult and a second man had to poke a cane into the stall with the boar to force the boar's mouth open to be able to get the lasso on.



Once lassoed the boar's head was roughly yanked upwards to force his mouth open. A man entered the pen with the incapacitated boar with a set of heavy-duty bolt cutters. These were placed on a bottom incisor (or tusk) of the boar. The boar immediately began to scream a high-pitched, intense scream. This scream did not stop until about a minute after the entire procedure. There was a great deal of laughing from the spectators as the boar struggled and screamed. The bolt cutters, placed on the tooth were then clamped closed while the man gave a twist of his wrist. **This action together with the inappropriate device used (bolt-cutters) caused the tooth to shatter up into the gum line.** The same procedure was conducted on the other lower tooth. **During the breaking of the second tooth a piece of the snout was pinched between the bolt-cutters and torn away, ripping a chunk of snout off.** We first thought the snout was cut by accident but were later told that no, **it was in fact done on purpose to increase the pain the boar will experience to facilitate transporting them without the extra work of dividing them.** The man with the bolt cutters then left the pen and the rope was slackened some allowing the boar to back up and be accessible to the men, who then roughly slapped a green sticker on the boar's back. The boar, still screaming, flinched each time the man's hand contacted him. A second man then used a marker to write a number on the boar (25). The lasso was then removed and the boar was herded back to his stall. The boar appeared traumatized and frightened of the men. When being run back to his stall he kept his head angled away from the handlers. He was run into one of the boar holding stalls – pens that are far too small for the boars and all the wooden fronts of which are all covered with blood-spatter from previous boars shaking their heads after the procedure.



Worker entering pen with bolt-cutters



Bolt-cutters and rope used



Bolt-cutters placed on lower incisor, closed and twisted away



Boar immediately after tooth breaking

21/05/07 cont'd:

Ottawa Livestock Exchange/Leo's Livestock Exchange cont'd:



Having green sticker slapped on



Having number written on back with marker



Boar struggling to escape lasso



Boar post tooth-breaking, being run back to stall

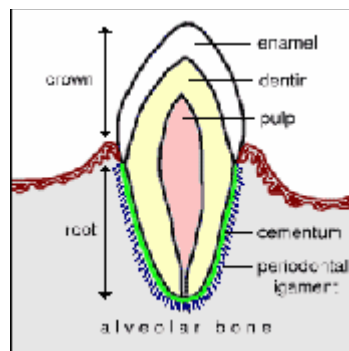


Blood-smear and spattered boar crate



Different boar in small, blood-smear crate

It must be stated that the anatomy of a boar's tusk is simply that of an elongated incisor, meaning it contains a living pulp, which contains blood vessels, lymphatics and nerves. According to the tooth remains left on the floor, one that was retrieved (pictured to the far right) and what we witnessed, the bolt-cutters are cutting directly through this very sensitive pulp. **This surely constitutes extreme and unnecessary cruelty.**



Remains of boar tooth showing innervated pulp canal

21/05/07 cont'd:

Ottawa Livestock Exchange/Leo's Livestock Exchange cont'd:

During a conversation with a different worker than the one we spoke to on 27/04/07, boar bashing came up as a practice conducted at Ottawa Livestock Exchange. **The worker provided a full description of the procedure, including showing us the instrument used for it – a crowbar (not a wooden bat as we'd been told during the first visit). The worker showed us how they use the crowbar by smashing it against the ground. We were again told that the reason it is done is to cause severe enough pain to the boar to distract him from fighting with other boars as they are loaded together when transported to slaughter.**

We were told that there were 2 boars that were both destined for slaughter on this day and that they would be bashed later that day. **One worker later told us that all large boars were bashed regardless of whether they are transported with other boars or not. We were told that this is to make them more docile and therefore easier to handle during loading and at the slaughterplant.**

There were a number of pigs in poor condition at the market on this day, including one with a large hernia (pictured here).



23/05/07

Viandes Giroux - East Angus

This is the other slaughterplant that kills cull boars in Quebec. As we arrived, a Grenier truck was just finishing unloading – this would be the last shipment of pigs for the morning. We observed the facility for approximately 4 hours. Screaming from the pigs could be heard inside. The screaming of the pigs inside steadily decreased as the morning went on and all were killed. We were able to view the inside holding pens. One was densely packed, another loosely loaded. The pigs were being misted with water from above. We were however unable to witness any handling. All the pigs we saw were market-sized and in acceptable condition. An Olymel refrigerated truck arrived at the plant around noon. We left the facility shortly thereafter.



B & M Trucking/Trans-Porc – Esso Station – Ste. Helene de Bagot

B & M Trucking transports pigs exclusively. We stopped at their head office, located at the Esso gas station just outside Ste. Helene de Bagot to inspect their empty trailers on the lot. We were curious to see if any were specially designed for boars – ie with dividers in them. We saw none with dividers, all were open inside. We have yet to see a trailer in Canada specifically designed to transport boars separately.

24/05/07

Hebert & Fils

We returned to Hebert & Fils on this day and observed the facility for approximately 5 hours. There were again a high number of mortalities being dumped into the large garbage bins outside. We witnessed the facility veterinarian inspecting the pigs, presumably to ensure they were dead. This consisted of the veterinarian leaning down and simply looking at the pigs – no ocular reaction tests were conducted. These pigs were then scooped up by the tractor and dumped.



28/05/07

Ottawa Livestock Exchange/Leo's Livestock Exchange

Two CFIA inspectors were present on this day. We recognized one of the inspectors – Lorraine Robinson - from 2 years before. At that time she had approved the transport of a cow with a broken forelimb. (Footage available)

The two inspectors (Robinson and a young male apprentice) appeared demure and inferior, asking one of the workers if they could “borrow” some sows to learn how to take blood from them. When she was given approval she asked: “You still have your rope here that you use to take the teeth out?” The worker responded “Ya,ya”.

Unfortunately, the blood extraction did not go well. The 2 inspectors repeatedly poked 3 sows in all, unable to find a vein in any of their necks. They seemed uncertain of where to insert the needle.

As the final sow was run back to her stall (which as with the boars, were far too small for the sows), the sow balked at the size of the crate. She partially entered it, then backed out again having the gate of the stall slammed on her by a worker (“Dimitri?”). **The worker then kicked her aggressively.** CFIA inspector Robinson suggested the problem may be due to the size of the crate and said “A bigger pen maybe? Want a sow pen?”. Her comments were ignored. **The worker then smashed the sow on the snout with an instrument – either a piece of wood or a long pipe** (something we hadn’t seen used before – ie not a cane or prod). At this, the sow screamed and ran back in the opposite direction. She ran partly into the crate again. The two men rushed her and tried to slam the door into her behind to force her in. The pen was far too small. Again she wriggled out. **At this the worker beat her hard 5 times in a row. The other worker yelled “C’mon on, you fuck!” to the sow.** For a third time she ran back to the stall and with an enormous amount of pushing by a number of workers forced her face into the back of the crate and slammed the door behind her. **This entire episode was disturbing for a number of reasons. The CFIA inspectors are the authorities yet did not act as such. Seeing what the problem was, CFIA inspector Robinson should have stopped the incident and led the sow to a larger pen. This sow had already been poked with needles needlessly for over 15 minutes, then was beaten because she was reacting as any animal would to a crate that is too small for it. It is the responsibility of the CFIA to ensure the welfare of animals. It is extremely concerning that two CFIA inspectors stood by and passively watched the severe and unnecessary beating of this already distressed sow (that they caused the stress to initially).**

Both the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the management of the Ottawa Livestock Exchange bear responsibility for the actions of these workers. It is the responsibility of management to hire appropriate staff and provide training to them in proper animal handling. Neither of these was obviously done in this case.

28/05/07 cont'd:

Ottawa Livestock Exchange/Leo's Livestock Exchange cont'd



Worker kicking sow as 2 CFIA inspectors watch

In the back we witnessed another disturbing incident: 2 workers were running pigs into the pig holding area. The manager, coming in to the back area, said to one of his workers: "Mark, catch the pig". Mark replied: "Who got the cutters?" The manager then held up a smaller pair of pliers or bolt-cutters and said: "I got the cutters". Mark asked the manager in jest: "You gonna be involved in that fucking deal?" The Manager replied "No, I'm not. I got the cocksuckers three times the other day". All laughed and Mark offered to the manager: "You catch the pig and I'll cut them up". The 2 (Mark and the Manager) then entered the pen and Mark said: "Here we go again!" After this, intense screaming was heard and a snapping noise as the tooth was broken away. The pig screamed again. We heard the men laughing and the occasional "cocksucker" comment could be heard through the laughter. A second pig then had its teeth cut/broken and screamed throughout the procedure as the first did. All men then left the area. **The attitude of the Manager at Ottawa Livestock Exchange is unprofessional and sets the tone for what is acceptable for the other workers. We believe it is his attitude that bears the greatest responsibility for the cruelty witnessed at his auction house – both by his own behaviour and by creating an atmosphere of disrespect and hostility toward the animals.**

At one point during the sale approximately five small 100 lb pigs were put through the ring. All were in bad condition – almost all were limping and some were quite thin. The auctioneer was not able to sell any of them, even at \$1 per pig. At the end of the day these pigs were moved out of the pig area – limping as they went. We do not know what became of them.

Handling during the sale was very rough. Pigs were beaten on all parts of their bodies and often unnecessarily (ie in some cases they didn't even need the pig to move). At one point the manager was seen and heard moving a group of pigs yelling "You stupid fucking bastards!" **Boars were beaten directly on their testicles and sows were repeatedly kicked.** The one positive regarding handling at this facility is they do not use electric prods.

There were two main buyers at the market – each likely representing the two slaughterhouses: Hebert & Fils and Viande Giroux. Many of the sows were destined for "China Town". This buyer was also buying the vast majority of the market-sized pigs as well.

The sale ended at 4:00 pm.

By early evening all staff except one worker had left. **The boars were left in their stalls for the night suffering from their broken teeth with no food or water.** The lights were off in the pig stabling area.

We believe the pigs were bashed, loaded and transported at approximately 2:30-3:00 am to avoid the act being witnessed by anyone. By the time we returned to the auction at 3:30 am, the boars were gone and there were employees in the pig stabling area. It is likely that we just missed the bashing and loading of the trailer.

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31/05/07

Hebert & Fils

We returned on this day to Hebert and Fils to see what the handling and holding conditions were like for the boars that were being brought here from Ottawa Livestock Exchange/Leo's. We witnessed a number of things that give us concern.

There were major structural problems with the facility. The floors were slippery and very scantily dusted with shavings making them even more so. We saw a number of pigs doing the splits as their legs slid out from under them. The pigs were forced to walk across a barrier immediately upon loading. Almost all pigs balked at this. The instant reaction of the workers was to beat the pigs across the barrier meaning pigs could be beaten continually from the moment they stepped out of the trailer until they were finally put into a holding pen. The instruments used to beat the pigs varied from plastic canes used with full force on all parts of their bodies, including their faces to pipes. All of this was completely unnecessary as a large plastic board was available. Instead, the pipe leaning up against the board was used on the sows. Pandemonium and intense screaming ensued when the pipe was used on the pigs. Constant screaming could be heard echoing throughout the facility.

The facility itself is unhygienic, dingy and dark. The boar and sow pens are far too small to accommodate them.

The condition of the pigs themselves was also poor. The sows appeared to have urine scald on their rears and some on their sides. One sow was liming badly. Some of the boars appeared to be bleeding from their rears.

Boars and sows were transported and unloaded together, then separated once in the facility.

Three dead pigs were pulled out with the use of a chain and tractor. The worker handling the deceased sows was smoking while handling them.

A large, heavy metal rod was on a shelf but we do not know what it was used for.

Structural Concerns



Pig slipping on floor & barrier that must be crossed



Boar in crate that is far too small



Flooring conditions very scant shavings -slippery

31/05/07 cont'd:

Hebert & Fils cont'd

Handling Concerns



Sow being beaten on face



Pigs about to be beaten with pipe



Unused plastic board, pipe used beside it

Condition of Pigs



Sows with red, raw rears and sides



Unusual bruising on dead pig



Worker smoking while handling pigs

What we saw on this visit, together with the inexplicable condition of the dead pigs in the garbage bins outside, as well as the number of dead produced in this facility daily gives us great concern about treatment of these already health-compromised cull pigs (sows and boars).

3. Documented Violations:

Animals' Angels has numerous concerns with **L.G. Hebert & Fils Ltee.** and the **Ottawa Livestock Exchange**. Many of the practices in both facilities are in direct violation of the federal **Criminal Code Act of Canada/Cruelty to Animals** section, the **Canadian Food Inspection Agency's Health of Animals Act**, and the **Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act**. These are listed below according to facility and Act:

A. L.G. Hebert & Fils Ltee.

1. Federal Health of Animals Act

Part XII Transportation of Animals

139. (1) *"No person shall beat an animal being loaded or unloaded in a way likely to cause injury or undue suffering to it."*

139. (2) *"No person shall load or unload, or cause to be loaded or unloaded, an animal in a way likely to cause injury or undue suffering to it."*

141. (4) *"Animals of the same species that are incompatible by nature shall be segregated during transport."*

B. Ottawa Livestock Exchange

1. Criminal Code of Canada

Part XI: Wilful and Forbidden Acts in Respect of Certain Property

Cruelty to Animals

446. (1) *"Every one commits an offence who (a) willfully causes or, being the owner, willfully permits to be caused unnecessary pain, suffering or injury to an animal or a bird; (b) by willful neglect causes damage or injury to animals or birds while they are being driven or conveyed."*

446. (2) *"Every one who commits an offence under subsection (1) is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction."*

446. (3) *"For the purposes of proceedings under paragraph (1)(a) or (b), evidence that a person failed to exercise reasonable care or supervision of an animal or a bird thereby causing it pain, suffering, damage or injury is, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, proof that the pain, suffering, damage or injury was caused or was permitted to be caused willfully or was caused by willful neglect, as the case may be."*

Animals' Angels feels the practice of boar bashing and snout cutting clearly constitutes the infliction of willfull and unnecessary pain, suffering and injury. The snout of a pig is extremely sensitive and the intentional breaking of the bones of it must be unimagineably painful. It was, in fact, readily admitted that the intention is to bring about maximum pain to the boars. It appears that many boars do not survive the procedure (as we saw many dead boars at Hebert & Fils, some with bleeding snouts). Both boar bashing and snout cutting are brutal and intentional acts of cruelty.

We also feel that tooth breaking constitutes willfull and unnecessary pain, suffering and injury. While the use of bolt-cutters is not recommended in industry literature, it is not prohibited. We feel that this must be changed. Bolt-cutters do not ensure a straight cut and in fact, more often than not, cause the tooth to fracture up into the gumline causing severe pain. Also, there are no regulations stipulating how short the tooth can be cut to meaning cuts are randomly made. Often the boars' are experiencing a direct cut through the very sensitive pulp of their tooth. This surely constitutes cruel and unnecessary suffering.

Animals' Angels feel that all three practices – boar bashing, snout cutting and tooth breaking – are blatantly cruel and unnecessary. According to CFIA regulations boars must be separated during transport. It is only because producers/slaughterhouse buyers want to maximize profit by loading more boars on one trailer that the practice is occurring. If proper trailers with dividers were designed and available, the practice would be rendered obsolete. This is what the regulations require and the alternative is blatantly inhumane.

2. Federal Health of Animals Act

Part X: General Provisions/Animal Markets

93. *“Every person conducting a public sale, auction or market of livestock shall keep the place where such sale, auction or market is held in a sanitary condition.”*

The blood-smeared and spattered fronts of the too-small crates that the boars were housed in violate this regulation.

Federal Health of Animals Act

Part XII: Transportation of Sick, Pregnant and Unfit Animals

138. (2.1) *“For the purpose of paragraph (2)(a), a non-ambulatory animal is an animal that cannot be transported without undue suffering during the expected journey.”*

The boars that have been bashed, had their teeth broken and snout cut are in severe pain – this is in fact the sole purpose of these acts. Transporting an animal in such severe agony is certainly causing undue suffering and directly in violation of the purpose of the Regulation (to prevent the transport of suffering animals).

Part XII Loading and Unloading Equipment

139. (1) *“No person shall beat an animal being loaded or unloaded in a way likely to cause injury or undue suffering to it.”*

This can directly be applied to the act of tooth breaking, snout cutting and boar bashing as all are procedures done immediately before transport and can be considered part of the loading of an animal.

Part XII Segregation

141. (1) *“Subject to this section, no person shall load on any railway car, motor vehicle, aircraft or vessel and no carrier shall transport animals of different species or of substantially different weight or age unless those animals are segregated.”*

141. (4) *“Animals of the same species that are incompatible by nature shall be segregated during transport.”*

141. (5) *“Groups of bulls, de-tusked boars, rams and goat bucks, if mature, shall be segregated from all other animals during transport.”*

141. (6) *“Every mature boar that has not been de-tusked and every mature stallion shall be segregated from all other animals during transport.”*

The transport of boars together who would naturally be incompatible with one another is a direct violation of this regulation. While the practices of boar bashing, snout cutting and tooth breaking are to work around this regulation, the proper method is the use of dividers in transport trailers. This is required by law as per this regulation.

3. Province of Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act

R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER 0.36

Requirements for Premises

12. *“No operator shall hold a community sale unless, (b) facilities for watering livestock are provided in each in each separate area in which livestock is kept.”*

Boars seen on 28/05/07 were not provided with any food or water during the day or for the evening and night.

4. Conclusions:

A. The investigation showed that several serious animal welfare violations are occurring at Ottawa Livestock Exchange/Leo's

- Boar bashing is being practiced routinely with the use of a crowbar. The goal is to bring about maximum pain to the boar. This constitutes a violation of the federal Cruelty to Animals Code as the pain inflicted is intentional.
- Tooth breaking is being practiced with the use of bolt-cutters which inevitably shatter the tooth up into the gum line and cut across the live innervated pulp of boar's incisors.
- Snout cutting is being practiced.
- Handling is inhumane with frequent beatings on all parts of the pigs – faces and genitals included.
- The stalls used for the sows and boars are far too small to accommodate them.
- The market is accepting sick and injured animals and attempting to sell them.

B. There are also a number of welfare concerns with L.G. Hebert & Fils Ltee

- Handling was aggressive and unnecessarily cruel with illegal beatings on the faces and genitals of the pigs.
- The use of implements such as pipes cause undue suffering.
- The facility is unhygienic, dark and dingy.
- The stalls are far too small for the sows and boars.
- The facility is accepting the mixing of boars and sows on transport.
- Floors are slippery with little to no substrate provided.
- Questions remain concerning the treatment of the pigs missing large pieces of flesh in the dead bins. The fact that these wounds were bloody is very concerning to us.

C. The CFIA's involvement in these abuses is particularly concerning

- Important animal welfare regulations are often unknown by local authorities such as CFIA inspectors. How can existing laws be enforced if the authority in charge is not aware of the existence of the law?
- We highly suspect that the CFIA inspectors that attend the Ottawa Livestock Exchange know about the boar bashing that is practiced there and have tolerated the practice.
- The demeanor of the CFIA inspectors was one of inferiority when they are in fact in the position of authority.
- The mandate of the CFIA is to ensure the healthfulness of the Canadian food supply but also to protect the welfare of food animals. This is obviously not being ensured as these two inspectors stood passively and watched as a sow (who they had already caused stress to) was severely beaten, kicked and had gates smashed on her.

5. Summary:

- 1. Boar bashing and snout cutting must be prohibited at all costs.**
- 2. Boars must be separated during transport.**
- 3. The use of bolt-cutters for the practice of tooth cutting/breaking must be prohibited.**
- 4. Animals' Angels urges OMAFRA and the CFIA to prosecute and/or terminate the employment of the offenders in these cases.**
- 5. Markets must be inspected regularly – this includes the pig stabling area.**
- 6. Trucks arriving and leaving the market must be inspected to ensure boars are indeed being separated.**
- 7. Boars must be loaded under the supervision of OMAFRA or CFIA inspectors at all times to ensure the welfare of the boars. No boars must be allowed to be left overnight at Ottawa Livestock Exchange as this is when the bashing is occurring.**
- 8. Both Ottawa Livestock Exchange and Hebert & Fils must provide training for their staff and management on proper animal handling practices, and must only retain and hire staff with professional, respectful attitudes towards animals.**

Investigation report provided by:

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