

Animals' Angels Inc.

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The Horse Slaughter Empire of Bouvry Exports Calgary LTD – an Animals' Angels Investigation

Introduction

Bouvry Exports Calgary LTD operates one of the largest horse slaughter plants in Canada approved to export horse meat to the European Union. The plant is located near Fort Macleod, a small town in Alberta. Bouvry Exports owns about 2000 acres of land around Fort Macleod, where they fatten US and Canadian horses in large feedlots. The majority of these horses appear to be Belgium draft horses & Percherons. Bouvry also leases property at the Peigan Indian Reservation near Summerview, where they keep up to 4500 horses.

Feedlot conditions are poor. Horses have no shelter from sun and snow. Horses are in barren pens with feed troughs that are kept full all day long. Most of the horses observed had a body condition score of 7-8. Some horses are so overweight that they spend much time lying down. It is important to stress the potential consequences of over feeding horses, particularly overfeeding grain. Laminitis, an extremely painful hoof disease and other health issues can arise from obesity in horses.

Bouvry Exports also maintains vast pastures with mares & foals, which could be an indication that they are breeding their own horses to accommodate the European demands regarding drug residues. The majority of these pastures offer no shelter for the horses and no protection for the foals from extreme weather conditions.

Bouvry Exports owns thousands of horses at any given day, which makes providing each horse with appropriate care difficult at best. Observations confirm that their hooves are neglected and that sick horses in obvious physical distress do not get immediate veterinary help.

Many horses that are slaughtered at Bouvry Exports are horses that so called “kill buyers” obtain for Bouvry at horse auctions. Bouvry also imports horses from the US, where the company operates the large “Bar S” feedlot in Shelby, Montana. Many of the US horses already have a long journey behind them when they arrive at the feedlot in Shelby. Some of them stay at the Montana feedlot weeks to months before being shipped to Bouvry's slaughter plant in Alberta, which is only two hours away from Shelby.

1. Bouvry Exports slaughter plant, Fort Macleod, Canada

Info:

The Bouvry plant in Alberta is a federally registered horse slaughter plant, approved to export meat to the European Union (Approval number 506). It is also registered to slaughter cows, sheep, goats, elk and bison. The plant is located just a mile east of Fort Macleod.

Address:

Bouvry Exports Calgary Ltd

254072 Township Road 92 / Highway 3

Fort Macleod, Alberta

Claude Bouvry is the president of Bouvry Exports Calgary Ltd.



Bouvry's slaughter plant and holding pens



slaughter plant

Observations:

10/17/12

Investigators arrived at the Fort Macleod slaughter plant at 1:00pm. Some of the holding pen area was visible from Township Road 92 and they noticed that the pens were full of horses and bison.

2:28pm: A D&J Livestock (DOT 053541) truck based out of Great Falls, MT with a single deck trailer arrived and unloaded. There were 10 horses in the first compartment and 18 horses in the second. US slaughter tags were visible. A man wearing a blue coat and white helmet was present, likely a veterinarian. All horses were unloaded within 10 minutes. At 2:39pm, a second truck arrived to unload.



US truck arriving at slaughter plant

10/18/12

Investigators arrived at 7:30am. The parking lot was already crowded. Two pickup trucks with stock trailers were parked at the unloading ramp. At 7:46am, they both left and investigators followed. On the back of the trailers was written: "Movie Horses – John Scott – Longview, Alberta".

On his website, www.johnscottproductions.com, Mr Scott advertises that he has over "100 head of horses" available for film production. Apparently these horses are discarded at the Bouvry slaughter plant when they are no longer useful. Both trucks headed towards Fort Macleod and parked at the local livestock auction.



Slaughterhouse at sunrise



John Scott trailer leaving plant

Investigators returned to the plant and observed the horses in the pens closest to the plant entrance, which were likely next to be slaughtered. Slaughter and auction tags were visible. The horses had water and feed available, but **no shelter**. In one of the pens investigators spotted a foal among adult horses.



Slaughter plant pen – no shelter



Foal among adult horses

2. Prime Feedlot

Info:

This massive feedlot, which appears to be Bouvry's main holding facility, is located 10 minutes north of Fort Macleod. It holds thousands of horses at any given time.

Address:

Range Road 265 / Township Road 100
Granum, Alberta

Owner:

According to the landowner map of Willow Creek, the land belongs to Claude Bouvry, not to his company Bouvry Exports.

Aerial View:



Observations:

10/17/12 Investigators arrived at the feedlot at 5:30pm. The lower pens, holding at least 1500 horses, could be seen from the highway. The pens were surrounded by wooden fences to break the wind and to avoid snow drifts, but no shelter was available. Large silos, several barns and an office building were visible. There was a lot of activity at the feedlot; workers were filling feed troughs and trucks were delivering hay.



Prime feedlot – view from Highway 2



Holding Pens



Feed Supply



Next to the feedlot at the end of Township Road 100 a smaller bison feedlot was visible. Mountains of manure were piled up inside the pens and the stench was overwhelming. At the other side of the horse feedlot, a massive pile of manure was visible. Workers were loading the manure onto trucks all day, which was then hauled to the surrounding fields to be dumped. The entire area was covered in dust.



Manure covered field



Trucks hauling manure

More horse pens were visible from the end of Range Road 265. These pens were smaller and more crowded than at other feedlots. Investigators observed **aggressive horses biting others**, a behaviour some animals develop in crowded conditions. The majority of the horses in these pens appeared to be Belgian draft horses and Percherons, all extremely overweight with a BCS of 8. Long feed troughs lined the sides of these pens.



Aggressive horses biting others

3. Summerview Feedlot

Info: The Summerview Feedlot is within the Peigan Indian Reserve near Summerview and Brocket. The feedlot is legally approved to keep up to 4500 horses. It is owned by Schorno Agri-Business based out of Yelm, Washington.

Address:

Summerview Livestock
7129, Range Road 29-1 / Highway 3
Brocket, Alberta

Aerial View:



Observations:

When investigators arrived at the Summerview feedlot, they could see the holding pens from Highway 3, but a high fence blocked the view from Range Road 29-1. All horses were obese draft breeds (BCS 8). There was **no shelter** for the horses. A red sign posted at the entrance said “CFIA approved - Quarantine Area - Authorized personnel only”.



Summerview feedlot



CFIA approved – authorized personnel only



Holding pens with no shelter



Horses eating

Tractors were observed placing round bales in the pens. Again, the long feed troughs lining the pens were continuously kept full. The horses appeared lethargic.



On **10/23/12**, investigators documented the feedlot amidst heavy snow and strong winds; the temperature was **25° F**. The horses were covered in snow with absolutely no protection from the cold.



Summerview feedlot covered in snow

4. Range Road Feedlots

Info: Bouvry Exports Calgary Ltd owns about 2000 acres around Fort Macleod and Granum. The following two feedlots are located on Bouvry Exports' land parcels, according to the landowner map of Willow Creek.

a) Feedlot on Range Road 253

Investigators found a large feedlot at the end of Range Road 253, not visible from the highway. The horses all appeared to be Belgian and Percheron draft breeds. All were **extremely fat**. Full feed **troughs of grain** were observed. There was **no shelter** for the horses.



Obese horses



Feed troughs that are kept filled all day



Identifying brands

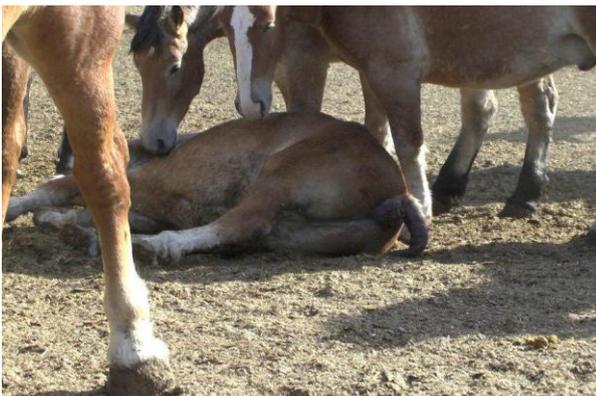


Injury

All horses displayed numbered brands on their right shoulders, likely Bouvry's own freeze brand used for identification. Many horses had severely **neglected hooves** evidencing absence of any farrier care. One horse had an **open wound** just above his hoof. Given the fact that each of these feedlots holds thousands of horses at any given time, it is likely that injuries often remain unnoticed and **untreated**.



Investigators observed a gelding lying flat on the ground. **Blood around his anus** could be a symptom of colic, which can be fatal when left untreated. Colic is a common result of over consumption of grain. Other horses surrounded him, touching him with their noses, indicating they were aware of his distress. He was able to lift his head, but not to stand up. It is questionable how long it took Bouvry's workers to detect him, as there were so many horses lying down in the pens.

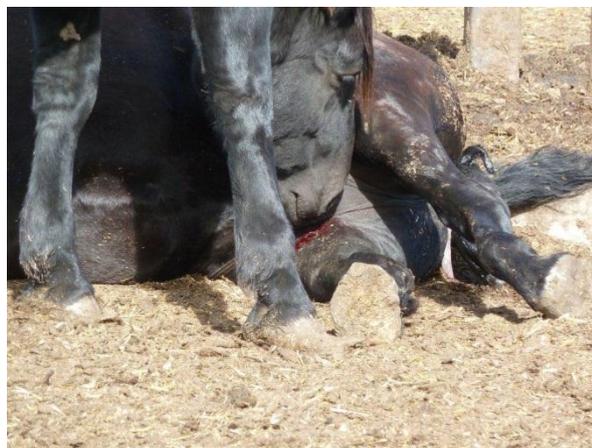




A few minutes later, investigators noticed a mare lying on the ground, surrounded by other horses. **Blood was steadily dripping from her teats** and another horse was licking it. Coming closer, the investigators observed a **partially born foal** lodged in her birth canal. The foal was dead. Instead of emerging the front legs first, the foal's head had emerged first. The mare appeared very weak and was unable to rise.



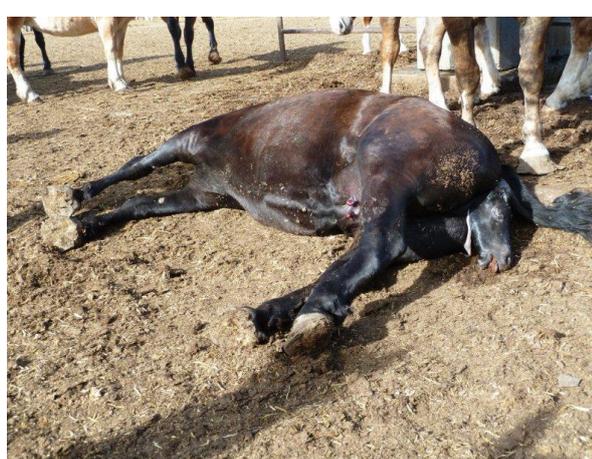
Horses sniffing struggling mare



Blood dripping from teats



Dead foal





1:35pm: Since no workers were present to address the situation, investigators called the SPCA in Lethbridge (Tel: 800-455-9003) to get help for the suffering mare. The SPCA promised to send someone out. At 3:00pm, a pick-up truck from the Bouvry plant arrived at the feedlot. Shortly thereafter, an SPCA officer from the Okotoks office pulled into the road and introduced himself as Officer Grant Love. After explaining the situation, they returned to the feedlot together. The pick-up truck was parked next to the dying mare. The SPCA officer told the investigators to wait outside the property. From a distance, investigators observed him talking to Bouvry's workers.

He returned shortly afterwards and stated that "they [Bouvry's men] would take care of business". The investigators asked if a veterinarian was present and if the mare had been euthanized. The officer's answer was "no". Oddly, he then started questioning the investigators and stated: "Bouvry owns quite a lot of land here and if I were you, I'd follow the [no trespassing] signs."

In the meantime, the pick-up truck had pulled up next to them and the man who got out of the truck immediately started writing down the license plate of the investigators' car. He and the SPCA officer appeared to be very friendly with each other, they were laughing and chatting and the SPCA officer called him "Jeff". When investigators interrupted their friendly little chat to inquire about the fate of the suffering mare, the SPCA officer rudely responded that the situation was resolved, that he was leaving and that the investigators should move out of his way.

The behaviour of the humane officer that day was **completely unacceptable**. As an employee of a society created to protect the welfare of animals, he should have ensured that the mare would receive immediate veterinary care. He should have stayed at the location until it was determined if the mare had to be euthanized or not, to ensure that this euthanasia was performed humanely. Leaving her in the care of Bouvry's workers without veterinarian and without witnessing what was being done to her is irresponsible and makes his motives very questionable.

b.) Feedlot of Range Road 264 / Township Road 102

Investigators found another feedlot off Range Road 264. Again, all horses observed were **obese** draft horses. Many of them were **lying down**, completely indifferent to the horses around them. They did not even lift their heads when other horses walked by or were fighting next to them, only their breathing showed they were still alive. Overall, their demeanour appeared lethargic and opposite to natural behaviour of flight animals.



Again, no shelter was available. After the snow storm on 10/23/12, all of the horses were covered in snow and ice.



Horses covered in snow

5. Pastures with mares and foals

a.) Township Road 92 / Highway 3

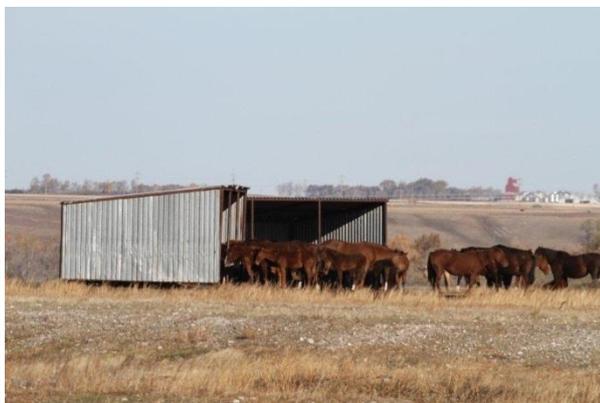
Next to the slaughter plant holding pens is a large pasture with mares and foals. Based on the brands some of the mares displayed, it is possible that some of them were former PMU mares. PMU (pregnant mare's urine) factory farms freeze brand the stall numbers on their mares.

There were two small sheds on the pasture, but they were not big enough to provide shelter to all of the mares and foals. Dominant mares will fight aggressively for shelter, preventing weaker mares and foals from entering the shed.

Among the horses on this pasture investigators observed a very emaciated mare (BCS 1). Her hip bones and ribs were clearly visible and she appeared very weak.



Emaciated mare



Small sheds for the mares and foals

Several coyotes were roaming the pasture with the mares and foals. Some mares appeared thin and their **ribs were clearly visible**.



Coyotes among mares and foals



Thin mare

b.) Range Road 263 / Township Road 100

Close to Prime Feedlot, investigators found another large pasture with mares and foals. They had feed and water available, but no shelter. Some foals appeared to be very young and many of them were lying flat on the ground. One foal did not move when approached. It is not known if this foal was sick or just sleeping.



Sleeping foals



Not moving, even when approached

After the snow storm on 10/23/12, investigators checked on the little foals early in the morning. It was still **snowing heavily** and **very windy**. The temperature was **25° F**. The mares were all gathered along a fence, trying to get some protection from the icy wind.

Cruelly, there was an **empty barn** on the other side of the fence to which the horses had **no access**. There was absolutely nothing on the premises **to protect them from the snow and wind**, not even trees. All horses were covered in snow and ice. The mares gathered around their foals, trying to share some body heat. Some horses appeared very lethargic and seemed to suffer from the cold.



Mares and foals covered in snow



Empty barn, out of reach for the mares

According to available weather charts, temperatures can drop as low as **-15 °F** in winter months. Adding the wind chill factor it is **questionable if all of these foals will survive without shelter**.



6. Bar S Feedlot in Shelby, Montana

Location:

**1 Benjamin Rd
Shelby, MT 59474**

Owner: Bouvry Exports Calgary Ltd.

Aerial View:



Observations:

10/17/12

The investigators arrived at the feedlot at 8:00am. The large feedlot is capable of holding close to 1800 horses. The temperature was 37° F. There was a lot of activity at the feedlot. A red Vanee truck (DOT 14138) from Fort MacLeod, AB with a single deck trailer was parked on the premises. It left the feedlot loaded with horses at 8:10am and started heading towards Canada.

At 8:50am, a D&J Livestock truck (DOT 053541) with a single deck trailer arrived loaded with horses and backed up to the unloading ramp. At the ramp, a sign was visible, stating: "Horses unloaded at this facility are required to remain here." This confirmed that the Bar S feedlot is still considered a quarantine lot. All animals inside the lot are bound for slaughter and therefore the state does not require them to be tested for EIA (Equine Infectious Anemia), a contagious and incurable disease. In return, all horses have to be branded with a "S" within 48 hours of their arrival at the lot – indicating that their EIA status is unknown. (Source: Montana Department of Livestock)



D & J Livestock truck at ramp

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10/21/12

The front pens appeared **very crowded** and the horses were observed fighting and biting each other. Some horses in the front pens had auction or slaughter tags on their hips. All horses had plenty of water and food available, but **no shelter**. The feeding troughs were full and there were large hay bales in some of the pens.



Pen with mares and foals

Horses of different breeds and sizes were visible. There was also a pen with donkeys and one with foals. Most horses observed were in good physical condition. However, the investigators noticed **several thin horses** and one horse that was **significantly lame**.





The large death pit investigators had located on the premises during their 2008 visit, was covered and no new pit was found. It appears that Bouvry is using a different method of disposal for the horses dying on the premises.

10/22/12

At 9:00am, a blue Vanee truck with a single deck trailer arrived empty at the feedlot. A second black Vanee truck was already backed up to the loading ramp. The temperature was **23° F**. The horses were very agitated that morning and there was a **lot of fighting**.



Fighting horses



Canadian trucks waiting to load

At 9:26am, the black Vanee truck started loading. The workers used long sticks with flags to move the horses. All horses had been tagged with USDA slaughter tags. They finished loading at 9:38am. A total of 27 horses were loaded. At 10:09am, the truck left the feedlot and pulled onto Highway 2 North.



Horses heading into slaughter truck

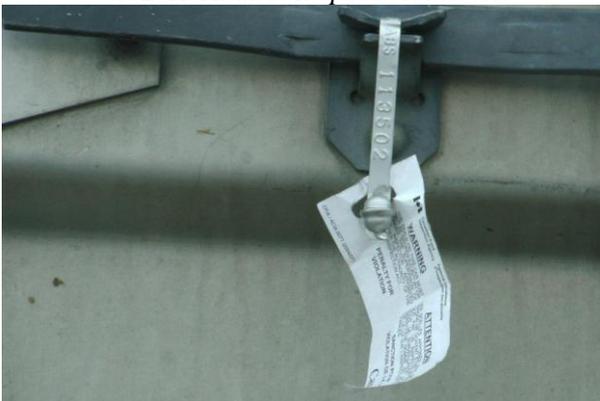
At 10:45am, the Vanee truck pulled into the USDA/CFIA Animal Inspection Station at the border. Two hours later, the truck with the now sealed trailer crossed into Canada. Shortly after the border, the driver pulled into the Vehicle Inspection Station to weigh the truck and then continued its journey.



U.S.D.A. Animal Inspection Station



Horses arriving in Alberta



CFIA Seal



Truck heading to Fort Macleod

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The Canadian Food Inspection Agency seal on the trailer door stated the following: "The seals on this car must not be broken except by or under the supervision of inspector appointed under the authority of the meat inspection act. Penalty for violation."

At 2:24pm, the truck arrived at Bouvry's slaughter plant in Fort Macleod and immediately backed up to the unloading ramp. Ten minutes later, the second Vanee truck also arrived. The workers used plastic sticks to unload the horses. A man with a blue coat and white helmet, probably a veterinarian, watched as the horses walked off the trailer. All horses walked off the trailer, but **one horse was severely limping**. At 3:00pm, the black Vanee truck finished unloading and the horses were moved to another pen.



Investigators left the plant and returned to the Shelby feedlot for further observation.

10/23/12

It had snowed the night before and the ground was covered in snow.



No protection from the cold

At 3:00pm, another D&J Livestock truck loaded with horses arrived at the feedlot and backed up to the unloading ramp. 15 minutes later, workers started unloading. The investigators observed **several very thin horses** with hipbones clearly visible. One horse was **lame**. Among the horses were also **two mules**. The auction tags were still attached to the horses.



D & J truck arriving at feedlot



Unloading of the horses



Mule walking off the truck



Very thin horse



10/26/12

That morning, it had started to snow again. It was still snowing heavily when investigators arrived at the feedlot at 8:23am. A truck was unloading large bales of hay at the entrance. Temperatures had dropped to 11 degrees. In the front field, the mares were keeping their foals close.

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Horses in the snow

At 8:56am, the hay truck left the premises. A burgundy Vanee Peterbilt 379 was backed up to the loading ramp. There was a lot of movement visible in the front pens, horses were running and several were fighting and kicking each other. Investigators spotted a severely lame mare among the pregnant mares in the mare & foal pasture. She was lame on both front legs and was moving slowly.



Vanee truck at feedlot



Lame mare and her foal

At 9:48am, a second Vanee truck arrived (Kenworth W900) and parked next to the other truck. At 10:39am, the first truck finally started loading horses. Again, workers used long sticks with flags to move the horses. Handling was calm and finished at 10:50am. All horses appeared to be in good condition.



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The truck left the feedlot at 11:00 am and investigators followed the truck. 50 minutes later the truck pulled into the USDA/CFIA inspection station at the Sweetgrass border crossing and backed up to the CFIA building. All horses were unloaded. 15 minutes later they were reloaded and the trailer was sealed by a CFIA veterinarian. At 12:24pm, the second Vanee truck backed up to the ramp and started unloading horses. All horses with the exception of one horse segregated in the front of the trailer (likely a stallion) were unloaded. The investigators approached the driver and asked to speak to the CFIA veterinarian and take a look at the facility.



The driver accompanied the investigators through the modern building, which had a multiple pens connecting to the unloading chute. The pens had metal railing, sliding gates and concrete flooring. CFIA veterinarian Dr. Kelley confirmed that the horses were unloaded for individual inspection according to CFIA regulations.



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He was not willing to elaborate any further stating that investigators were interrupting the inspection. At 12:40pm, the horses were reloaded and both trucks left the inspecting station and headed to the border.

7. Bouvry's suppliers

Public documents and investigations show that Bouvry Exports has a vast network of kill buyers that frequent auctions throughout the United States and Canada to guarantee a steady supply of horses for their plant. Most US horses are shipped to Bouvry's collecting stations in Shelby, MT (Bar S Feedlot) and Stanwood, WA (Florence Packing) prior to shipment to the plant. Others are gathered at kill buyer lots in Hermiston, OR or Sugar City, ID. In Canada, Bouvry's buyers pick up horses at many of the local horse auctions, such as the Sekura auction in Drayton Valley, AB or the Innisfail Auction.

The following are just a few examples:

a) Collecting station of Max Palmer, Sugar City, ID

Max Palmer is a large scale kill buyer located in Sugar City, ID. According to public documents Palmer supplies horses to the Bouvry plant in Alberta. Palmer also sells trailers at the Sugar City location. Investigators arrived at the premises at 7:00am. The large property consists of a private home, several barns, an extensive pen area with loading ramp and surrounding pastures.



The pens were almost empty, only a small group of horses was visible in one of the pens. Fresh semi tracks were visible in the snow, indicating that a load of horses may have left the night before. Another small group of horses was visible in the pasture.



They appeared to be in fair condition and had access to hay and water. However, all of them had red bailing twine and a plastic tag with a three digit number tightly tied around their necks, too tight to be comfortable for the horses. Investigators monitored the premises for several hours, but there was no activity.

b) Drayton Valley Horse Auction, Alberta (Summary report –full length report available)

Location:

Sekura Auctions
3351 50th Street South
Drayton Valley, Alberta

10/19/12

Most horses were in good condition, many were overweight. A lot of horses were **not broke** and did not wear a halter. There was **no water or feed** in the pens and the horses in the outside pens had **no shelter**.



Horses for sale

At least two horses were **lame**, one of which had a crooked fetlock. One horse had a severe **eye infection**, with yellow discharge coming from his left eye. A sorrel gelding had a bad **tooth infection** and appeared to be in much pain. Most horses did not wear horseshoes. Some **hooves were neglected**; one horse had a **split hoof**.



Tooth infection



Severe eye infection



Lame horse - crooked fetlock



Split hoof



One kill buyer was present at the auction. He was bidding under I-2 to I-5, picking up the majority of the horses sold that day. The sale ended at 9:15pm. The kill buyer's horses were left in the outside pens overnight and loaded the next morning. It **started snowing** that night, but there was **no shelter** to protect the horses from the snow and the cold. Early the next morning, two trucks with single deck trailers arrived and backed up to the ramp (Ray Schmidt Trucking and M&G Hollingsworth).

At 8:45am, the first truck started loading. The investigators observed that some horses **slipped and fell on the loading ramp**. The horses were agitated and the loading rather chaotic. Some horses were reluctant to enter the trailer. The workers used moving paddles. More than once, they **hit the horses in the face** with the paddles.



Loading of horses



Worker using moving paddle



Single deck trailers



Truck leaving auction lot

At 9:06am, the trucks left the auction and headed south towards Fort Macleod. The outside temperature was 32° F. They arrived at Bouvry's slaughter plant at 2:00pm. The drivers immediately started unloading the horses. 20 minutes later, both trucks were unloaded and the horses were moved to one of the holding pens.



Truck driving on Highway 2



Truck arriving at plant



Unloading of horses

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Conclusion:

The investigation revealed the enormosity of the Bouvry Exports Calgary LTD slaughter horse empire. Thousands of horses are kept in their feedlots any given day to ensure a reliable and steady supply for the Fort MacLeod plant. Hundreds of mares & foals were found, which might be an indication that horses are bred for slaughter to accommodate European demands in regards to drug residues.

Concerns:

- Lack of shelter in harsh weather conditions with heavy snow and temperatures as low as 11 degrees
- Horses, including foals, covered with snow and ice and left to suffer in the harsh elements
- Hooves that had not seen care and would therefore make standing and walking painful
- Obese and extremely lethargic animals, gross overfeeding
- Fighting
- Crowded conditions
- Untreated injuries
- Emaciated horses
- Horses in great distress due to medical emergencies with no workers around to even take notice

Observations suggest that the massive feedlots are operated with only a few workers who focus on ensuring that the feed troughs are never empty. It is questionable that they are capable of detecting animal welfare problems, injuries and diseases in a timely manner. Investigators witnessed a medical emergency that was only addressed after several hours and after law enforcement had been contacted.