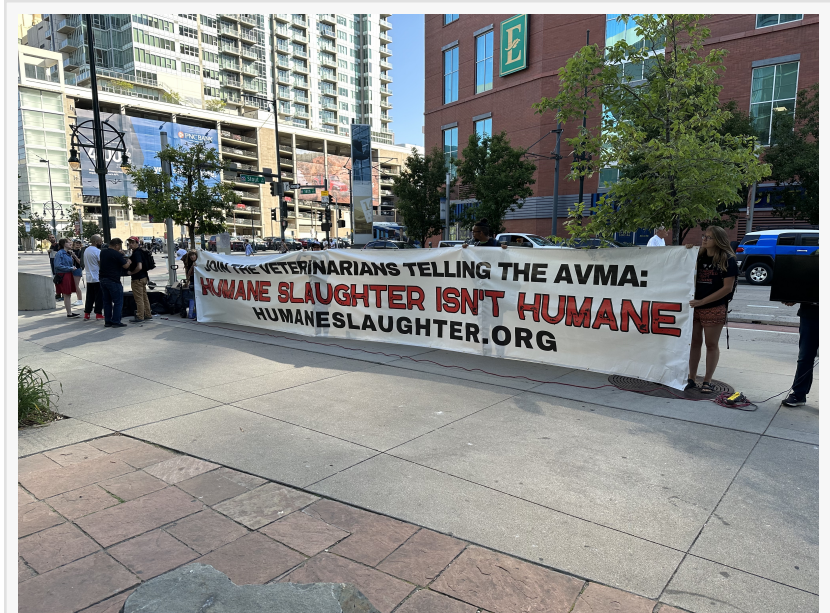


Activists show disturbing slaughterhouse gas chamber footage outside American Veterinary Medical Association Convention

Veterinarians say the more than 16 hours of grizzly footage shows the most common method used to kill pigs in the United States is not humane.

DENVER, COLORADO, USA, July 16, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Direct Action Everywhere staged a demonstration outside the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)'s Annual Convention (<https://www.avma.org/events/avma-convention>) held at the Denver Convention Center. They are asking the AVMA to take a leadership role in addressing, what they call, some of the cruelest practices in animal agriculture.



Activists unveil 30-foot banner outside the annual convention of the American Veterinary Medical Association at the Colorado Convention Center

The demonstrators held TV screens showing [footage](#) obtained from inside the gas chambers at Smithfield's Farmer John slaughterhouse in Vernon, CA. They unveiled a 30-foot banner that read "Humane Slaughter Isn't Humane," directing onlookers to the website humaneslaughter.org for more information about the killing method and how to take action.

Last October, Raven Deerbrook placed cameras inside the gas chambers recording 16 hours of grizzly footage. The footage was featured in the New York Times, Wired Magazine, the San Francisco Chronicle, and other major outlets (<http://humaneslaughter.org>).

Dr. Mickey Pardo, a postdoctoral researcher at Colorado State University and an expert in animal behavior and wildlife ecology, was among the demonstrators. He said, "Given the AVMA's stated commitment to sustainability and animal welfare, we are calling on them to bring their actions in line with their values."

Activist Andre Christy said some veterinarians were skeptical of the footage saying, “One veterinarian I spoke to said it doesn’t happen, and the footage wasn’t real. It’s really concerning how disconnected some veterinarians are from our food system.”

The AVMA’s Humane Slaughter Panel is revising its Humane Slaughter Guidelines and plans to publish a new edition

(<https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/resources/Humane-Slaughter-Guidelines.pdf>). Their most recent

edition, published in 2016, states, “For pigs, exposure to 60% to 90% CO2 causes unconsciousness in 14 to 30 seconds, with unconsciousness occurring prior to the onset of signs of excitation.” However, Deerbrook says, “The footage shows pigs suffering, scrambling, thrashing, and gasping for air.”

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Shifting our reliance away from animal agriculture and encouraging compassion for all species is the single most important step we can take in addressing our planet’s greatest challenges.”

Daniela Castillo, DVM

A [statement](http://humaneslaughter.org/sign) (<http://humaneslaughter.org/sign>) signed by more than 150 veterinarians concurs, stating, “The welfare concerns and extreme distress experienced by the pigs highlights the company’s failure to comply with the Humane Slaughter Act and California law.” The demonstrators are calling for more veterinarians to join in watching the footage and signing onto the statement.

Earlier this year, several animal protection groups submitted a rulemaking petition (<https://awionline.org/press-releases/animal-protection-groups-call-usda-require-cameras-inside-co2-stunning-areas-pig>) calling for the United States Department of Agriculture to mandate cameras be placed inside the gas chambers to allow inspectors to ensure compliance with the Federal Meat Inspection Act, which requires “an examination and inspection of the method” of slaughter and the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act which “mandates that all animals be rendered insensible to pain by a method that is rapid and effective.” According to the petition, 113.5 million pigs are killed annually in the United States using carbon dioxide gas chambers. In 1999, only 2% of pigs were killed using this method. Now, nearly 90% of pigs are killed this way.

Last year, demonstrators protested (<https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/23516639/veterinarians-avma-factory-farming-ventilation-shutdown>) the Convention in



Activists hold stop gas chamber banner outside of AVMA Convention. Photo credit: Kimito Sakata, Direct Action Everywhere

response to the AVMA Guidelines on Depopulation

(<https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/resources/AVMA-Guidelines-for-the-Depopulation-of-Animals.pdf>)

condoning the use of ventilation shutdown plus

(<https://news.vin.com/default.aspx?pid=210&Id=9708475&f5=1>) to kill farmed

animals en masse in emergency situations. This method was used in response to the avian influenza outbreak and required barns to be sealed up as heat is pumped in until the animals inside die of heatstroke. To date, the AVMA Guidelines on Depopulation still allow heat stroke-based mass killing in “constrained circumstances.”



Denver-based activist Andre Christy talks to two attendees outside the AVMA Convention. Photo Credit: Kimito Sakata, Direct Action Everywhere

Dr. Crystal Heath is the Executive Director of the non-profit organization Our Honor which aims to empower animal professionals to advance more ethical policies. Dr. Heath is one of several veterinarians opposed to heatstroke-based killing who were barred (<https://news.vin.com/default.aspx?pid=210&Id=11349820&f5=1>) from attending the AVMA's Cargill-sponsored Humane Ending's Symposium earlier this year. Heath says, “The AVMA has a long history of silencing compassionate perspectives and not supporting veterinarians working for animal protection. Hopefully, increasing awareness about this will foster more dialogue.”

At this year's convention, the AVMA's House of Delegates deliberated (<https://www.avma.org/news/avma-leaders-discuss-environmental-sustainability-spectrum-care>) on sustainability and the greening of veterinary practices. Our Honor drafted an executive [summary](http://avmahod.ourhonor.org) (<http://avmahod.ourhonor.org>) for the delegates outlining animal agriculture's impact on animal welfare, public health, and the environment— calling for the AVMA to consider the impact of animal agriculture when addressing sustainability. Dr. Daniela Castillo, a vegan veterinarian based in Los Angeles and co-author of the executive summary, says, “Shifting our reliance away from animal agriculture and encouraging compassion for all species is the single most important step we can take in addressing our planet's greatest challenges.”

Crystal Heath

Our Honor

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