

Dear Sir,

On Thursday 12th January 2012 KAALE monitors were once again present at the sailing of the live animal transport ship, the Joline, from Ramsgate Harbour. Before Christmas, the policing of these demonstrations had been proportionate with the view that we had the right to be there as had the exporters the right to ply their trade.

However, on this evening, there seemed a marked difference in attitude towards both the protesters and us, the monitors, and contact between the people and the police was non-existent. This resulted in causing tension long before any transporters arrived at the port.

When eventually the first two transporters arrived, and because of police actions, the protesters were able to surround the cab of the first transporter, namely Hunters International Transport from Ireland, which was carrying calves, and protesters remonstrated with the driver for about 30 seconds. At no time did these people touch, harass or interfere with the animals, they merely shouted at the driver.

When the vehicles then passed the monitors at the entrance to the port, it was noted that the calves were crying pitifully; apparently in great distress within the Hunters transporter. The second transporter, Dutch, and owned by the company Slegers, was full of sheep, which were markedly 'smelly'. The monitors have been present at hundreds of sailings over the years, and so they know when a vehicle smells unusually highly of urine. Animal Health in the port was contacted, and their spokesperson was very angry, declaring that our actions had "distressed the calves". His anger, we feel, overrode his judgement, and he has since apologised for his outburst. We have been able to obtain evidence from a concerned member of the public who was located at the Medway Services on the M2 (Kent), that these calves (carried by the 'Hunter' transporter) were already distressed and crying pitifully whilst the vehicle was taking its hours break at the services, prior to undertaking the next stage of its journey.

We can also declare that the calves were still crying in this distressed state one hour after entering the port, and especially as they were loaded on the Joline. The KAALE monitors had moved to the esplanade which is located above the port, to watch the loading and sailing of the Joline. From this vantage point, monitors were able to hear, quite clearly, the very audible noise the young calves were making. Members of the public who were walking their dogs in the esplanade area, came over to the monitors to question what was the matter with these calves, as they too could hear the noise of their distressed cries.

We do not believe that any action by the people that were present protesting at Ramsgate harbour that night caused this distressed state, and if this was the case, why were they noted being distressed at the Medway Services by members of the public, when there were no protesters present? Experienced market watchers, who have visited markets for the last 20 years, believed the cries were of both hunger and disorientation for what was happening to them.

The monitors were informed by Animal Health that the sheep transporter (Sleegers) did not smell and everything was fine, 'the vehicle just smelt of sheep'. Again, people who have dealt with these transporters for many years beg to differ, and we feel the Animal Health inspectors anger over the aforesaid incident clouded his thinking. We have since spoken with him and Animal Health at Dover, and we believe our differences are now resolved; but his still leaves the question of these calves welfare during transport.

This transporter (Hunters), we believe, came from the West Country and stopped at the Medway Services on the M2 in Kent for its necessary one hour break according to journey plans. The vehicle arrived at the M2 service area at 16.37 hrs and left there at 17.40 (on Thursday 12th), having had the regulatory break. From that time until it reached Calais at 00.30 hrs the following morning (Friday 13th), is seven hours all but ten minutes. The transporter then had two hours and ten minutes to disembark from the Joline, exit the port of Calais, and drive to either his eventual destination, or to an approved EU Control Post, where it would be necessary to unload these calves according to the animal transport regulations of European legislation. We believe that this imposes rather tight limits that the transporter can undertake on French roads, don't you agree ?. We ask you if these calves' journey times were compromised and ask you to investigate further the reason for the obvious distress observed at Medway services earlier on the 12th.

It was very easy for Animal Health personnel to blame the protesters for the state of the calves at Ramsgate, as they have no one to defend their actions. However, because of the evidence we have obtained from independent witnesses at the M2 services, we believe the calves were already very upset and in a very distressed condition well before they reached the port of Ramsgate. That the protesters get upset and shout, probably due to the red mist descending as can happen to all of us if we are passionate about anything, is not disputed; but to use the protesters as the only reason to cause distress to these animals during their entire shipment to continental Europe we dispute totally, and therefore wish to make this a formal complaint to be further investigated.

Yours Sincerely