

Kent Action Against Live Exports (KAALE)

“I never give them hell. I just tell the truth and they think it's hell.”

President Harry S Truman

Website: <http://www.kaale.org.uk/>

*Commission europeenne
Xxx xxx
Belgium*

*Xxx xxx xxx
Legal Affairs
Health and Consumer Protection.*

*xx xxxxxx;
Singlewell;
xxxxxxx,
Kent
xxxx xxx;
England, Uk.*

For the attention of Mr. Xxxxx xxxx – Head of Unit.

20th April 2012.

Dear Mr xxxxxx,

I am writing specifically with regard the 20th-21st March 2012 inspections of Hungarian assembly stations designated to dispatch animals to Turkey; as undertaken by investigators from ‘Eyes on Animals’, ‘Animal Welfare Foundation’ and ‘Welfarm’.

As an animal welfare organisation monitoring the export of live animals from the United Kingdom to mainland Europe, we at KAALE wish to express our utmost concerns relating to two specific points raised in the above visit report.

I wish to make it clear that we (KAALE) are not at all satisfied with the animal welfare conditions currently exhibited within Hungarian facilities with regard to their (Hungary) substantial EU provided funding, whilst at the same time exhibiting obvious non-compliance with existing EU animal welfare regulations.

Our primary concern particularly relates to the inspections undertaken by the above organisations on 21st of March 2012 at ‘Agracoop Kft’ farm and export station, Nagykapornak, Hungary – owner: Kiss Arped.

*At the entrance to this facility there is a clear sign indicating that they (‘Agracoop Kft’) have received some **615,000 Euros from the EU** to ‘modernise their facility’. Whilst appreciating that this facility is further sub-divided into four main animal rearing areas, it is our clear understanding that one part, comprising of one building still in current use, **retains the old, now (EU) illegal, veal crate system** made out of wood, with slatted floors and **solid wooden dividers**.*

*With solid wooden dividers on these crates, the calves held within these facilities are thus unable to either see or touch each other. Although you in Legal Affairs are obviously fully aware, we would like to point out to you once again, that **this type of crate system has been illegal within all existing EU member states since 2006**.*

The calves held in these facilities were, on the day of inspection, seen to have ‘Hungarian’ (HU) ear tags - Hungary being an EU member state and nation which should have been compliant along with all other EU member states in banning this type of crate system as far back as 2006.

Sheet 1

BAN LIVE ANIMAL EXPORTS

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Further to this, we question that on another day, should inspections have been made at another time, it may have been possible that UK originated animals (with 'UK' ear tags) may have been witnessed being confined in such illegal systems. Regardless of the 'nationality' / origin of the calves, this is not acceptable.

Violations:

In regards to the young calves kept in tiny wooden crates with solid walls, preventing them from seeing each other or touching each other.

Article 3.1 (a) and 2.

From 1 January 1998, the following provisions shall apply on all newly built or rebuilt holdings and on all those brought into use after that date:

(a) Individual pens for calves (except those for isolating sick animals) must not have solid walls, but perforated walls which allow the calves to have direct visual and tactile contact;

2. From 31 December 2006, the provisions provided for in paragraph 1 shall apply to all holdings.

I am enclosing the following photographs for your reference; obtained during the above March 2012 visit to 'Agracoop Kft', clearly showing calves still being confined in this barbaric system; a system which should have been banned by all EU member states, including Hungary, some six years ago.



Sheet 2

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During this same visit to 'Agracoop Kft' of March 2012, investigators also found at another large building in the middle of the premises containing calf animals (young bulls), many of which carried 'UK' ear tags; most animals allegedly being originally provided from Northern Ireland.

Our understanding is that male calves from the United Kingdom (with 'UK' identifiable ear tags) end up in this 'Agracoop Kft' facility after being trucked down into Hungary from their origins within the UK. We understand that last year (2011), between August and September, many calves originated from (Northern ?) Ireland. In the past they have been, and will currently continue to be, further fattened at the 'Agracoop Kft' prior to going for slaughter in other parts of Europe; which we understand to be both Germany and Croatia.

Whilst declaring that Germany is an existing member state of the European Union, and as such, should adequately meet EU standards for animals going for slaughter, we would like to point out to you that **Croatia is currently not a member state of the EU.** As 'Agracoop Kft' employees verbally informed investigators (during March 2012) that calves carrying 'UK' ear tags are potentially (after further fattening) re-exported from Hungary into Croatia for slaughter, we would be most interested to know, **and have your full written guarantees, that 'UK' tagged animals are being slaughtered to the highest of standards (certainly to EU standards, nothing less) within Croatia.** We request now that you provide us with full evidence of this, including the names of facilities within Croatia which undertake the slaughter of British calves carrying 'UK' ear tags which have been shipped from Hungary.

This investigation has proven that despite being provided with substantial EU funding and resources to facilities within Hungary, there is an obvious failure of EU enforcement of existing EU regulations **within existing EU member states by the EU.** Following this, we can only hopefully assume that Croatian slaughterhouses which process 'UK' tagged calves exported from Hungary are at least compliant with existing EU (slaughterhouse) standards.

Sheet 3

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Conversely, the Croatian 'standards' may also not be compliant with existing EU standards; hence the question – **what guarantees can you provide to us to ensure the welfare of British exported calves**, both in terms of the crate systems in which they may be housed within the EU (Hungary), and their subsequent slaughter in a non-EU member state, namely Croatia ?

Are we now supposed to accept the situation that 'UK' tagged animals (ie. EU animals) are now being slaughtered in non EU member states (Croatia) which may have a lower standard of welfare during slaughter than those required by existing EU regulations ?

As a Uk animal welfare organisation directly related to the monitoring of live calves being shipped from Ireland via Ramsgate, England, to mainland Europe, we also have extreme concerns regarding excessive journey times for calves transiting between Ireland and Hungary, and especially also their welfare at the point of slaughter, should they end up being sent to non EU countries such as Croatia. Whilst we cannot currently prove that calves exported via Ramsgate (Uk) are going to Hungary, we can be sure that some Uk calves are ending their journey in Hungary. If these animals are shipped directly from Northern Ireland to, say, Cherbourg in France, then even more attention as to be given to the time that these animals are actually in transit to their final (Hungarian) destination before they are re-exported for slaughter.

Therefore, we at KAALE would request your further (Food and Veterinary Office - FVO) investigations into the welfare (ie. crating) standards for 'UK' tagged animals which are exported to Hungary, and also the current standards at slaughter in non EU member states (ie. Croatia) for these same animals, once they are re-exported from Hungary.

We also express our concerns here with regard the situation for Hungarian livestock carriers as noted by investigators at the Turkish border; effectively that they are not complying with existing EU regulations for animals in transport; so we ask the question, if they are not compliant en route to Turkey, why should they be compliant when carrying animals between Hungary and Croatia ?

If there has ever been a time for the Commission to enforce a maximum journey time of 8 hours for animals in transport; the time is now. **The EU is failing animals**, and this is supported by the fact that **the illegal veal crate system is proven to still being operated within the EU** - Hungary, a nation which at just one farm investigated is using over half a million Euros provided / donated by the EU.

In addition, we have a lack of compliance with essential transport times and slaughter guarantees for 'UK' tagged animals which may end up being re-exported from Hungary to Croatia.

We very much look forward to your further investigation and your response to the points we raise in this letter, and trust that you will give our requests the utmost urgency and immediate attention they deserve.

Yours with thanks;

Mark Johnson

EU Correspondent
Kent Action Against Live Exports (KAALE)
Kent, England, Uk.

Website: <http://www.kaale.org.uk/>



Sheet 4

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