



Is This How Governor Locke Proposes to Stop Animal Abuse?

Recent investigative reports of practices at IBP's Wallula, Washington slaughterhouse—including the cutting up of live, conscious cows—drew an outraged response from the public and generated tens of thousands of letters and phone calls to the Attorney General's Office.

Readers and TV viewers were shocked to learn of allegations by IBP's own workers that, for years, terrified animals were having their legs cut off and were being skinned from tail to neck while still conscious.

The public assumed that Attorney General Gregoire would take action to enforce the state's animal cruelty laws. But unfortunately, some state officials seem more interested in whitewashing the entire scandal than in enforcing the law.

PROSECUTION OR WHITEWASH?

Earlier this year, the Humane Farming Association (HFA) and several other organizations filed a legal petition with the State to enforce its Anti-Cruelty Law and Humane Slaughter Act at IBP. Governor Gary Locke responded by forming a task force to investigate the allegations of criminal animal cruelty. He promised that if violations were found at IBP, the State would file charges.



Imagine being hit on the head and finding yourself dazed but still fully conscious. A chain is attached to one of your legs and you're hoisted upside down onto an assembly line. Gigantic clippers are used to snip off the lower parts of your arms and legs. Completely helpless, you feel workers cutting into your thighs, belly, and sides as they strip your skin from your legs to your neck.

Atrocities like these have been familiar sights at IBP, according to sworn affidavits from almost two dozen plant workers. One employee stated, "Workers open the hide on the legs, the stomach, the neck, they cut off the feet while the cow is breathing. It makes noise. It's looking around." According to another, "I've seen thousands and thousands of cows go through the slaughter process alive."

Hidden camera videotape obtained by HFA—and broadcast on KING-5 TV—shows, among other abuses, live cows at IBP dangling upside down from a moving conveyor, animals being trampled and dragged, and a disabled cow having an electric prod forced into its mouth. State officials have yet to file animal cruelty charges.

However, several questionable actions by the Governor's task force have raised concerns about the State's commitment to enforcing the law. A number of task force members have shown a bias towards IBP. And it appears that the investigation may now become little more than an exercise in public relations.

Days after being formed, the task force took its first inappropriate action. Within hours of conducting what it described as a "surprise" inspection at IBP, the task force took the highly unusual step of issuing a press release announcing that it had observed "no violations" at the plant.

In other words, the task force publicly praised IBP long before state officials had so much as interviewed a single worker at the plant. Worse still, the task force falsely characterized its visit to IBP as a "surprise." The fact is, the task force was delayed from entering the slaughterhouse for nearly one hour—more than enough time for the plant to prepare for an inspection.

Ironically, during the same period of time that the task force visited IBP, the meat industry's own consultants inspected the plant and reported widespread problems. In effect, the State's public assurances of IBP's compliance were based on a visit that conflicted with two separate meat industry inspections that actually cited the plant for inhumane practices.

What's more, Attorney General Christine Gregoire's office has, at public expense, mailed literally thousands of misleading letters to citizens who have expressed concern about the cruelty at IBP. These letters tout the findings of the task force's flawed inspection. Then, echoing IBP's own public relations rhetoric, the Attorney General's letter states in a reassuring tone that USDA meat inspectors at IBP ensure that humane slaughter regulations are enforced. This is a willful misrepresentation of the truth.

In reality, USDA inspectors themselves have said that they are powerless to enforce humane slaughter laws. In fact, the union representing the nation's USDA meat inspectors is so concerned that the law is going unenforced at IBP that it joined with HFA in calling upon the Attorney General to take action!

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED NOW:

Washington's legislature has passed laws prohibiting the skinning and dismembering of conscious animals. And shoving an electric prod into a cow's mouth, as captured on videotape at IBP, is also clearly illegal. Under the state's Anti-Cruelty Law, abuses such as these are punishable as either misdemeanors or *felonies*.

Governor Locke promised that if violations were found at IBP, the State would file charges. Now, while state officials are deciding whether to drop the matter or to proceed with a meaningful prosecution, Governor Locke needs to hear from you.

Please contact Governor Gary Locke at:

Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Phone (360) 902-4111 **fax** (360) 753-4110
email governor.locke@governor.wa.gov

Respectfully tell Governor Locke that it is up to him to ensure that state officials vigorously enforce *all applicable laws* at IBP. Explain to him that if the State does not enforce the law in a case like this, where it has been handed videographic and documentary evidence on a silver platter, then the law has no meaning. And the animal abuse will continue.

Please write or call today!

For more information, a copy of our legal petition and newsletter or to make a tax-deductible contribution towards this vital campaign, contact: **Humane Farming Association, c/o PAWS, Dept. B, P.O. Box 1037, Lynnwood WA 98046**. This advertisement was paid for by: **The Humane Farming Association**
American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals · Animal Welfare Institute · Progressive Animal Welfare Society · Pasado's Safe Haven