

FSA welcomes three successful prosecutions in animal welfare cases

The FSA monitors animal welfare at approved slaughterhouses in England and Wales by ensuring they are compliant with all specific requirements in animal welfare legislation.

Slaughterhouses in England where live animals are present should by law be covered by CCTV. Slaughterhouse operators are required to give authorised FSA staff access to the footage.

At Crewe Magistrate Court on 3 May 2023, guilty pleas were made by the defendants to a total of twenty-five charges and the slaughterhouse operator G and GB Hewitt Ltd fined £19,500, £100 statutory surcharge and £500 costs.

This case came about following undercover footage from an animal welfare organisation. Six men who worked there have been sentenced for animal welfare offences including, in some cases, causing avoidable pain, distress or suffering to animals.

G and GB Hewitt Ltd has since corrected deficiencies and improved standards in animal welfare, and is now compliant with all legislative requirements.

On 22 May, at Birmingham Magistrates Court, an abattoir in the Midlands was fined for breaking the law on the treatment of animals by causing avoidable pain, distress or suffering. Magistrates fined Leansale Ltd £10,000, and they must pay costs of £500 and a surcharge of £190.

In the third case, on 25 May at Warrington Magistrates Court, Charles Samuel Morphet, a director of C S Morphet and Sons Limited, a red meat slaughterhouse in Cheshire was found guilty of one offence of handling animals without having a valid Certificate of Competence. Mr Morphet was fined £180 and ordered to pay prosecution costs of £500.

Junior Johnson, Director of Operations for the Food Standard Agency said:

“We welcome the successful outcome of these cases as this should act as a deterrent to others. The FSA has a zero tolerance approach to animal welfare breaches.

We monitor standards of animal welfare and all staff are instructed to take prompt enforcement action where breaches are identified. We’re working with partner agencies and industry to continuously improve animal welfare.”

Senior Crown Prosecutor Maqsood Khan, of CPS Mersey Cheshire said:

“The legislation around the slaughter of animals is strict and precise to ensure the animals are humanely treated in the lead up to their slaughter.

“These convictions show that any breach of these standards set out in law will be prosecuted by the Crown Prosecution Service whenever our legal test is met. We thank the Food Standards Agency for the thorough investigation in each of these cases which helped bring the offenders to justice.

“We hope these cases highlight the importance of the humane treatment of animals in our food production.”