



Expert Panel Addresses Idaho Dairy Hidden Camera Investigation

A panel of farm animal care specialists established to analyze undercover video investigations at livestock farms has completed a review of a recent investigation at a dairy in Idaho. Hidden camera investigations at livestock farms have heightened public attention on animal care issues. In an effort to foster a more balanced conversation and to provide credible feedback to promote continuous improvement in farm animal care, The Center for Food Integrity (CFI) created the Animal Care Review Panel.

The Panel that examined the recent video was comprised of Dr. Temple Grandin, Colorado State University; Dr. Candace Croney, Purdue University; and Dr. Jim Reynolds, Western University.

Panel members agree that the practices seen in the video are unacceptable and clearly abusive.

“It’s atrocious and it’s a disgrace,” said Croney.

“The video repeatedly shows the workers were callous and had no respect for animals,” said Reynolds.

“If this abusive treatment had occurred at a slaughter plant, the plant would have been shut down by the USDA,” said Grandin.

The experts reviewed video recorded on the farm by the group Mercy For Animals. The experts summarize their review of the video in the following statements:

Dr. Grandin:

“I watched the dairy video and the abuse of the downed cow with electric prods and dragging with the tractor. It was horrific animal abuse. The employees were constantly beating and kicking animals as hard as they could. The atrocious treatment of cows at this dairy is an indicator of a total lack of management supervision.”

Dr. Croney:

“The treatment of the animals in this video is scientifically and morally abhorrent. None of the people I saw in this video appears to have the training or compassion needed to work with animals. It’s not just that they’re improperly handling the animals – their attitudes are abusive, their language is abusive and what they are physically doing to these animals is abusive. There is nothing in this video that can be defended.”



Dr. Reynolds:

“It’s obvious the workers seen in this video had no training in handling animals. They simply don’t know right from wrong. There is no management supervision. From what we can see in this video these were not isolated instances. It certainly appears that there is a continuous pattern by the employees.”

Observations

Commenting on a scene in which a cow that is obviously unable to walk was dragged from a barn with a tractor:

“These people clearly have no idea how to handle healthy animals, much less non-ambulatory ones,” said Croney.

“Jumping up and down on the animals, kicking them and the excessive use of electric prods, and using a tractor to drag a cow by the neck from a barn, are all instances of animal cruelty,” said Reynolds.

The experts also noted there were design problems at the dairy:

“The slippery floor of the milking parlor obviously is dangerous for the cows,” said Reynolds. “The design of the exit in the milking parlor allows cows to get their heads caught. Several cows were trapped under the exit and one cow was lifted by her head and off her front feet (hanging her). Management should have fixed this serious problem.”

Croney and Reynolds noted a scene in which a cow apparently had a broken leg. They agreed it was obvious the workers did not recognize the leg was broken.

In another scene, workers are heard making lewd comments while working with one of the cows:

“That kind of behavior has no place in a well-managed dairy,” said Grandin.

“The workers’ attitude toward the animals is seriously disturbing,” said Croney. “As a woman, I would be afraid to work in that barn. The vulgar language and the repeated hitting and kicking even of cows that are doing nothing but standing in their stalls suggests an environment that is physically and psychologically unsafe.

“There are so many workers showing the same abusive attitude that there is clearly an issue with the culture at this dairy,” said Croney. “In some of the other videos we’ve reviewed, that type of behavior



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appeared to be the exception. In this case it appears to be the norm. Workers in this video are consistently cruel and abusive, and those aren't terms I throw around lightly."

"There's nothing in this video that can be defended or rationalized," said Reynolds. "I'm glad somebody is taking videos like this and showing them. Otherwise, the abuse seen in this video would not be corrected at this dairy. I hope they are prosecuted."

The Center for Food Integrity created the Animal Care Review Panel to engage recognized animal care specialists to examine video and provide expert perspectives for food retailers, the dairy industry and the media. The Panel operates independently. Its reviews, assessments, recommendations and reports will not be submitted to the dairy industry for review or approval. CFI's only role is to facilitate the review process and release the panel's findings.

About the Experts

Dr. Candace Croney Purdue University

Dr. Candace Croney is a renowned expert in applied animal behavior, with an emphasis on animal learning, welfare and ethics. She is an associate professor of animal sciences at Purdue University. She has contributed to nationwide animal welfare efforts working with organizations such as the American Zoo and Aquarium Association and many others. She is on the Scientific Advisory Committee of the American Humane Certified program. Her research on farm animal cognition has been featured in national and international broadcast programs.

Dr. Temple Grandin Colorado State University

Dr. Temple Grandin is one of the most noted experts in animal behavior and animal welfare. She is a bestselling author and consultant to the livestock industry. Dr. Grandin is a professor of animal science at Colorado State University and also designs livestock handling facilities. She has authored over 300 articles in both scientific journals and livestock periodicals on animal handling, welfare, and facility design.

Dr. Jim Reynolds Western University

Dr. Reynolds is a professor of large animal medicine/welfare at Western University, College of Veterinary Medicine, Pomona, Calif. His current research interests include calf management, mastitis control and farm animal welfare. His prior experience includes the chief of clinical services for production medicine at UC Davis for 12 years. Dr. Reynolds was also in private dairy and beef practice in California for 14 years. He received the AVMA Animal Welfare Award for 2007 and the American Association of Bovine



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Veterinarians Award of Excellence for 2010. His is a Diplomate of the newly formed American College of Animal Welfare (ACAW).

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