
Forensic aspects in animal abuse/cruelty: negative behaviors of humans towards the livestock

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Abstract

Abuses (cruelty) are instances of inappropriate treatment of animals by careers or persons interacting with the animal as part of the production process, such as before sacrifice or during shearing. These circumstances are then generalized on a large scale, leading to the spread of this behavior and posing a serious risk to animal welfare. It is important to establish the prevalence of behaviors, the reasons for the occurrence and the appropriate responses from livestock communities. These issues need to be taken into account in the context in which we have a moral duty towards the animals we care for and provide us with consumer goods. In general, the idea is to use animals for the company, food or clothing, an idea embraced even by many who do not consume meat but buy meat products for feeding their pets. Animals that provide these resources are dependent on people for food and shelter throughout their lives. Therefore, we have a duty to care for those animals that depend on us. In our research, the prevalence of deliberate maltreatment of animals in the county of Iasi was monitored. This does not mean that there were no occasions when an individual harmed the animal due to a certain set of circumstances, such as the animal's response to orders or because the person is upset about other reasons or is not feeling well. Cases of animal abuse are numerous, from precarious housing, to starvation, beating and even slaughter in barbaric conditions. Under existing laws (Law 205/2004 modified and republished in 2017) on animal welfare, a person commits the offense of cruelty to animals when the person causes death or unjustifiable physical pain or suffering to any animal by an act, an omission, or willful neglect.

Key words: animal abuse, livestock's, law

Introduction

This paper is about the veterinary forensic findings in animal cruelty cases, this subject has been written very little in Romanian veterinary forensics. It is important to establish the prevalence of behaviors, the reasons for the occurrence and the appropriate responses from livestock communities.

Maybe, a problem is the lack of training in psychology and criminology of veterinarians, as Morgan C. (2005) suggested, they are not prepared to evaluate their clients' abilities to improve the care of animal. So, it is proved that there is a connection between animal cruelty and other acts of violence such domestic violence. (Rollin B., 1998, Reisman R., 2004).

Melinda D. Merck (2007) said that animal cruelty is the act of abusing a helpless victim who has no recourse and no voice. That's why veterinarians must be their voice and seek justice for their suffering.

In our research, the prevalence of deliberate maltreatment of animals in the county of Iasi was monitored. This does not mean that there were no occasions when an individual harmed the animal due to a certain set of circumstances, such as the animal's response to orders or because the person is upset about other reasons or is not feeling well. Cases of animal abuse are numerous, from precarious housing, to starvation, beating and even slaughter in barbaric conditions.

Under existing laws (Law 205/2004 modified and republished in 2017) on animal welfare, a person commits the offense of cruelty to animals when the person causes death or unjustifiable physical pain or suffering to any animal by an act, an omission, or willful neglect.

Material and methods

In our research, the prevalence of deliberate maltreatment of animals in the county of Iasi was monitored.

A number of 23 cases of animal abuse have been reported, including from precarious housing conditions to starvation, ill-treatment and even clandestine slaughter in unauthorized sanitary-veterinary places, during 2015-2016.

Participating institutions were represented by Direcția Sanitară Veterinară și pentru Siguranța Alimentelor (DSVSA) Iasi, IPJ Iasi and Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.

Results and discussions

We will present in this paper three cases of animal abuse that were seen in 2016 in Iasi county and we will try to show the important role of veterinarian's trained in forensics for prosecution preparing phase of the trial.

In locality Holboca, there were discovered inappropriate conditions of animal maintenance, without respecting minimum welfare conditions. The animals were kept in the open field, without a roof during the winter (Fig. 1). Some of the animals were born in that paddock and the fetuses died by frost (Fig. 2, Fig. 3, Fig. 4). The animals were in an advanced state of weakness, kept in misery, dying in the cold and being eaten by stray dogs (Fig. 5).

The case was referred to the Holboca Police Station for the preparation of a criminal case file under Law 205/2004 for the application of ill-treatment to animals.



Fig. 1 - Inappropriate conditions of animal maintenance



Fig. 2 - Calf born in the winter cold



Fig. 3 - Unsuitable zoo-hygienic conditions



Fig. 4 - Dead calf by freezing



Fig. 5 - Dead calves eaten by stray dogs

Another case, in the Doi Băieți area of Iași, was found an abandoned horse. It was initially sold to middlemen, then abandoned. The horse was abandoned in a hidden area, surrounded by a hedge, when the people in the area complained of a repellent odor, identified the animal in a state of intense weight loss, malnutrition, numerous areas of necrosis and decubitus plaques on the surface of the body (Fig. 6, Fig. 7).

The animal was unable to stand up or move (Fig. 8). He was euthanized and given to S.C. Protan S.A. (Fig. 9). The owner was sanctioned by contravention, sanction applied by the Iasi Court, under Law 205/2004 an animal protection.



Fig. 6 – Horses abandoned with necrosis and decubitus plaques



Fig. 7 – Right part of the body with mud



Fig. 8 – Impossibility of movement



Fig. 9 – After euthanasia

It has been discovered an act of slaughtering of horses, in places forbidden by law in another case. The meat from the slaughtering was marketed in public places of Iasi as calf meat. The slaughter point was arranged under an improvised roof with improper pulleys and rudimentary and totally unhygienic slaughtering utensils (Fig. 10, Fig. 11, Fig. 12, Fig.13).

The meat that was packed in bags and prepared for delivery, was totally confiscated under the supervision of DSVSA with Police of Iasi (Fig. 14). The meat was incinerated in the DSVSA Iasi incinerator. The police forwarded the case to the Prosecutor as a criminal complaint.



Fig. 10 - Slaughter point



Fig. 11 - Unhygienic slaughtering utensils



Fig. 12 - Improper pulleys



Fig. 13 - Proof of meat origin: horse



Fig. 14 – Bags with the meat prepared

Conclusions

Most of the actions performed were mixed team actions with representatives of DSVSA and IPJ Iasi, according to the collaboration protocol with this institution.

Owners were drawn up criminal files that were submitted to the Iasi Prosecutor's Office for settlement.

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