



Press Release

15 December 2008

Lorry Driver Given Prison Sentence for Causing Suffering and Death to Animals

As a result of an investigation by respected animal rights organisation Animals' Angels and in a judgment of considerable significance for all countries of the European Union, a lorry driver from a Dutch transport company has this month been given an eight month prison sentence by an Italian Court for causing suffering and death to animals due to exceeding the permitted loading density and journey time, exposing the animals to excessive temperatures and for failing to provide rest and water for the animals. The case was brought by Animals' Angels and Lega Antivivisezione under the Italian Penal Code and the Italian legislation implementing Council Directive 91/628 EEC as amended by 95/29 EC which relate to the protection of animals during transport.

The circumstances surrounding the case are that during late evening in July 2005, the lorry from the Netherlands with pigs on board and destined for Pagani in the south of Italy where they were to be slaughtered, was first observed by Animals' Angels investigators on the A1 highway north of Rome. With their suspicions alerted, the lorry was immediately followed by the investigators. A short while later the highway police in Frosinone were contacted by the investigators and the vehicle stopped. As the vehicle was approached, the stench was already unbearable and the reasons for this soon became clear from the horrific scenes that awaited them. Dead, dying and pigs barely alive lay one on top of the other. Some pigs had begun to cannibalise the others. Blood and other body fluids from the dead animals on the upper deck of the vehicle were literally running down the walls, as well as dripping on to the bodies of the animals below.

A veterinarian official was immediately called and a place to unload the pigs found. Those animals able to walk or had to be helped off the vehicle were disorientated and showed clear signs of exhaustion. Animals' Angels investigators immediately provided water to the survivors. Of the 70 pigs on the lorry, 40 were found to be dead and 30 barely alive, with a number of these having to be euthanized later. Incredibly, this vehicle had had a further 305 piglets on board which had been unloaded earlier. Of these 27 piglets were dead.

The police subsequently issued a Euro 15,490 "administrative penalty" which to date according to our information, has still not been paid. They also submitted in August 2005 a report on the incident to the Public Prosecutor's office in Frosinone, which scandalously "archived" the report claiming that "there were no elements of crime"!!! Disgusted by this decision, Animals' Angels contacted the Public Prosecutor's office in Bolzano to reopen the case, arguing that the offences and "crime" had not just occurred in the one place or at a

certain time, but had occurred during the entire journey and thus Bolzano being the District in which the vehicle first entered Italy had jurisdiction. This argument was successful leading to the Court case and the prosecution.

As well as the prison sentence which regrettably was set aside due to a recent law in Italy granting amnesty to those committing a crime up to May 2006, the Judge recognised both organisations as civil parties, which gives them the right to seek compensation for damages from the employer and the driver will have to pay for the legal costs of both Animals' Angels and LAV for the constitution as civil parties. Not only will this be an additional penalty for the transport company, but the money received will be used by Animals' Angels to continue their monitoring of vehicles transporting animals throughout Europe.

In commenting on the case, Christine Hafner the Animals' Angels Senior Investigator in Italy and who took part in the investigation said:

“This incident was one of the worst I have ever been involved in as an investigator in terms of the horrendous suffering that was inflicted on these animals. The horrific scenes I witnessed were unimaginable. It seems that the transport company gave little thought if any to the animals they were carrying and the animals were simply treated as mere goods. This sentence and the maximum compensation payment we will now be actively pursuing from the transport company, will we believe send a strong signal to all European livestock transport companies and their drivers that at all times, they better give proper consideration and due care and attention to the animals they carry. In addition, they should also take note that the judgment makes it clear that in the eyes of the law, not only causing intentional suffering on animals, but also suffering caused by indifference or negligence can lead to a severe sentence. We are grateful to the commitment of our lawyers Emanuela Pasetto and Federica Panizzo and delighted that the Italian court of Bolzano set a strong example, recognising the animals for what they are – sentient beings.

Animals' Angels teams will continue their weekly investigations monitoring and trailing livestock vehicles on the highways, as well as visiting border crossings, markets, ports and slaughterhouses. There is no hiding place for those who abuse animals and when found we will prosecute. Unfortunately, only when the long-distance transportation of animals is brought to an end, will the suffering and death caused by such journeys finally end”.

Ends.

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Notes to Editors:

Animals' Angels is an international animal rights organisation with its Head Office based in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. It has offices in the USA, Australia, Spain, UK and Switzerland. It was founded in 1998 and is internationally respected as being a specialist organisation in all matters relating to the live transportation of farm animals.