



ANIMAL CONCERN NEWS

Campaigning for animals since 1876

WINTER 2004

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SAWMILL POULTRY FARM

Sawmill Poultry Farm, Kirkcowan, by Newton Stewart, Dumfries & Galloway DG8 9OB is owned by Martin Marsh and has an exclusive contract to supply fertile eggs to the Aviagen Group. Their UK HQ is Aviagen Limited, Newbridge, Midlothian EH28 8SZ

Ross Poultry is part of Aviagen which claims to be "The world's leading poultry breeding company". The company sell day-old chicks for meat production in over 85 countries. They claim "almost half of the world's broiler chickens are derived from Aviagen stock".



In the autumn of 2004 we were contacted by an employee at Sawmill Poultry Farm.

This employee was so disturbed at what he witnessed he had, without any prompting from us, kept a diary of what went on.

We reproduce extracts of his diary along with some of the photographs he took.

I know it is disturbing but please read his diary and then follow our action call on the back page.

This suffering need not be in vain.

26/7/04 10.15hrs. 1 hen decomed and distressed, being pecked by others. 3cm x 1 cm wound on neck, exposing bone. Reported this bird and others. Told "Do not report these injuries. Just carry injured birds to the door for culling." (between 17.00 and 19.00). "If the bird can walk we get another egg." (fertile eggs worth about 70p each to the farm.)

17/8/04 9.45hrs 2 decomed hens being pecked and harassed by the others. 13.30hrs - one dead.

19/8/04 Told Martin Marsh about a barely alive hen. It has been hen-pecked, de-feathered and has other injuries. Nothing done.

30/8/04 5 or 6 very scabby hens with injuries over biscuit size.



GENERAL COMMENTS: Not given any proper training and not taught how to catch birds humanely. Farm practise is to catch and carry by one wing, occasionally by one leg. There's no iodine or other sprays to treat injuries. Only medical treatment available (when and if it is available) is euthanasia. They cull out injured birds once a week or once a fortnight. By that time injuries are much worse than at the time of injury. Typical injuries include pecking injuries, scabs, cuts and prolapses where the egg laying vent is protruding and bleeding. Few staff use the disinfectant foot baths and these are seldom refilled. When they are refilled the old sludge is just dumped out.

The above bird is bleeding heavily from injuries to its eye.

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This bird is trapped by its neck in a broken metal grid. Its back is almost featherless where it has been attacked by other birds.

CALL FOR ACTION

Yet again Animal Concern exposes the plight of animals suffering and dying in farms in this country. We cannot prove that this sort of treatment of animals happens on other farms or is commonplace. We can say that getting information from inside intensive farms is very unusual but when we do get inside information it always points to neglect, cruelty and suffering.

Animal Concern alerted numerous agencies to conditions at Sawmill Farm and we hope they will continue to monitor the welfare of birds at the farm for years to come. However we need new laws to protect animals in farms. Our main objective is to have all livestock farmers and dealers licensed. On November 3rd we used the Sawmill expose to raise the matter yet again with Ross Finnie, Minister for Environment and Rural Affairs at the Scottish Parliament.

We received a reply dated 22/11/04 from Ms Patsy Gray, Animal Health & Welfare, Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department. The letter states:

"We plan to introduce primary legislation which will give Scottish Ministers the power to license farmers and livestock dealers. However, no final decision on whether to use this power has been taken."

Please write to your MSPs (details from your library) and to Ross Finnie at The Scottish Parliament, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh H99 1SP. Ask them to support and implement new laws licensing all livestock farmers and dealers and to make it compulsory for livestock farmers, dealers and transporters to install CCTV systems to monitor the animals in their keeping.

11/9/04 I bird has a cut about 8cm long. Another has a patch the size of my hand which is bleeding from being pecked and cannibalised by other birds. A third has had its eyes pecked out by other birds. I put it by the door to be put down. As usual they are not treated and the blinded bird died before I leave.

9/10/04 One senior staff member asks another why I have not been taught to catch and carry birds by one wing. I asked if they did not bother about hurting the birds and was told "It's how we do it here."

13/10/04 Vet in to do inspection for an export license. Enters shed at 12.15 hrs, leaves at 12.19 $\frac{1}{2}$. Inspection took 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes!!!

14/10/04 Saw birds being picked up by one wing and thrown as far as 4 metres. One person carried six birds holding them by one leg and another 19 birds were caught and carried by one wing.

19/10/04 20 birds culled in shed 2. Some were killed by visitors from the Far East who are here to buy stock to replace birds culled due to the avian flue crisis.

27/10/04 Shed stinks but I cannot open the air vents as it is cold outside and they don't want to turn the heating on to save money. Saw a bird with half a wing (it had been torn off in September).

30/10/04 Hen with prolapsed vent which is split open and bleeding. She is being attacked and cannibalised by other birds. Picked her up but she died in my hands.

SUNDAY 31-10-04 PHOTOGRAPHS AND STORY APPEAR IN NEWS OF THE WORLD NEWSPAPER.

1/11/04 Arrived early to find incinerator already burning. Mr. Marsh says the "government men will be all over us". Places where injured birds would hide have been blocked off.

We are ordered to take breaks together and keys which were always left in locks have been removed. Gates which were open are now locked. There is a new foot dip and soap and towels. Talk of installing staff showers as law requires them. Despite all the cleaning up there is no mention of the welfare of the birds.

NEW ZOO FOR THE ONCE BONNY BANKS?



In the 1980's Animal Concern saved the bears which were to be destroyed when Balloch Bear Park closed down.

Since then Loch Lomond and The Trossachs has been given National Park status. You would think that would protect this beautiful area from daft developments like zoos.

Think again. On the left is Drumkinnon Tower at Balloch. It is the centrepiece of the gateway to the National Park.

Not only did the authorities allow this concrete monstrosity they gave permission for a shopping mall to be built right on the edge of the loch.

In other countries such desecration would result in prosecution. In Scotland it gets charity status and massive tax relief!

DRUMKINNON TOWER & TACKY FAIRGROUND. PICTURED FROM OUTSIDE JENNERS STORE. WELCOME TO BONNY SCOTLAND - BEST VIEWED THROUGH SCOTCH MIST.

I reckon the people in charge of Scotland's newest National Park went over to America to see how things are done there. The only problem is they did not go to Yellowstone, Yosemite or the Grand Canyon. They went to Disneyland and Universal Studios. That's why Loch Lomond is being turned into a commercial theme park instead of a National Park. Our National Park bosses would have been as well going to Jellystone and taking advice from Yogi and Boo Boo.

Despite being built with the help of public grants and getting loads of tax back as a registered charity, Drumkinnon Tower and the Lomond Shores shopping mall is losing money. A new owner has been found for the Tower - Merlin Entertainments Group. Merlin run Sea Life Centres and, guess what, they want to put a "Fresh Water Life Centre" at Drumkinnon Tower.

Star attractions are going to be a family of otters. We understand Merlin have already sought permission to make alterations to the front of the Tower along the artificial shoreline (see picture above) so the otters can get into their artificial holt inside the tower.

Merlin have stated: "*The species of otter we would be working with is not native to the UK. It looks the same but is not nocturnal and lives in a family group.*"

That's the first time I've heard our native otters being described as nocturnal. They are shy of humans but I have seen them several times in the wild and, with my eyesight, that had to be during the day in good sunlight. What Merlin are talking about are otters bred at another of their attractions and humanised so they have lost their fear of people. As for them living in family groups, all young otters stay with their mother for one to two years and then disperse to find territories of their own. If they are not dispersed they will fight.

Drumkinnon Tower would be a dumping ground for surplus otters from another "attraction". In two or three years Drumkinnon would be looking for new homes for more of their inbred alien species of otters which are unsuitable for release into the wild.

To build the the rest of the fresh water aquarium deep piles would have to be driven into the shore subjecting the local wildlife to yet more disturbance. Then they would catch some trout, salmon, pike and perch and put them in the tanks for folk to gawp at before they nip upstairs for a fish supper in the cafe-bar.

I have no doubt that a few years down the line Animal Concern will be called upon again to find homes for the unwanted animals from another bankrupt zoo at Balloch.

CALL TO ACTION: Please write to Environmental Services, West Dunbartonshire Council, Council Offices, Clydebank G81 1TG (e-mail: environmental-health@west-dunbarton.gov.uk) telling them you wish to lodge an objection to any application for a Zoo License for Drumkinnon Tower, Balloch.

Write also to Bill Dalrymple, C.E. Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, National Park Head Quarters, The Old Station, Balloch Road, Balloch G83 8BF asking the National Park authority not to co-operate with any live animal attraction at Drumkinnon Tower. (info@lochlomond-trossachs.org).

Please also write to Merlin Entertainments Group Ltd, 3 Market Close, Poole BH15 1NQ and tell them you will boycott Loch Lomond Shores if they go ahead with their proposed zoo.

Finally please write to The Manager, Jenners, Loch Lomond Shores, Ben Lomond Way, Balloch, Dunbartonshire G83 8QL and ask them to stop selling tins of paté de foie gras.



Look carefully and you will see a gull caught in a net. Not a fishing net, but nylon mesh deliberately suspended over a warehouse roof in Inverness. Believe it or not this is legal in the UK in 2004.

Animal Concern member and local bird rescuer Kenneth Hughes photographed many nets loosely hung above the roofs of different buildings in Inverness. They are meant to deter birds from roosting and nesting but in effect act as huge mist nets entangling the birds.

We have hard evidence that it takes birds seven days to die from dehydration, starvation and slow strangulation when trapped in the nets. We have photographs of many birds killed in this way.

Royal Bank of Scotland, 29 Harbour Road, Inverness recently applied for planning permission to instal nets on their roof. We objected but our letter was not shown to the Planning Committee as council workers ruled that welfare issues are not relevant grounds for objection.

We are taking it further and have contacted Councillors on the Planning Committee. However this is not a local issue as these nets can legally be installed anywhere.

ACTION CALL: We need to do several things to have these cruel and inhumane devices removed. First of all we need to know the extent of the problem. If you see such nets please let us know the address and, if possible, the name of the owners of the building. A photo would help but do not put your safety at risk to take one.

When we know where the nets are we will write to the owners explaining the nets are not just cruel but could, if birds are left to die a slow death or if protected species are trapped, cause the owners to be prosecuted. Please also write to your MSPs in Scotland and MPs in England asking that these nets be made illegal. The humane way to deter birds is to install plastic or wire spikes which don't harm the birds but stop them roosting and nesting.

Write to the Royal Bank of Scotland at the address above (or their head office if you have an account with them) and ask them not to instal the nets. What did they expect on their roof at Harbour Road, ptarmigan?

The Kenneth Mitchell Memorial Trophy sponsored by Animal Concern and awarded to the best shod Clydesdale Horse at Kittochside Heavy Horse Show at the Museum of Scottish Country Life, was not won in 2004. Only one horse met the standard required and as that had been shod by the judge's son he decided to withhold the trophy this year. In 2005 a demonstration on proper shoeing will be given at the show before the trophy is awarded.



One of our supporters attended a major heavy horse show in Canada this autumn and was saddened to see that cruel and debilitating coup shoes are now prevalent there. This practise has been exported to Canada by Scottish horse breeders. We are now seeking assistance from Canadian groups to export our campaign to ban coup shoeing.

Hunting with hounds has finally been banned in England and Wales although, as in Scotland, it will be some time before we know how effective the new legislation will be. We are very concerned that the new law in Scotland is not being properly policed.

Hunts now operate as "pest controllers" and are allowed to use their hounds to flush foxes out of cover to be shot by waiting guns. I do not agree that this should be allowed but the law was not designed to stop foxes being killed but to stop them being chased for miles before being ripped apart by the hounds.

However the law does not determine how close the guns should be to the cover and no-one is present to ensure the hounds don't chase foxes for miles before they are shot. Police say they do not have the resources to police this but they did have van loads of officers and support helicopters to harass hunt sabs. Surely they could spare a couple of officers to check that this new criminal law is being properly observed?

Please write to your MSP and MP asking them to insist that the new legislation is properly policed and upheld.

We need you to be the eyes and ears of Animal Concern and report to us anything you think we should be dealing with. This year the giving of goldfish as prizes (something we hoped had ceased) was reported at two different fairs in Scotland. We have written to dozens of shops after your reports on the sale of fur items. One supporter asked for our help after two young thugs sadistically killed her pets. If you are out in the countryside look out for animal abuse. We especially need information on seal persecution, illegal bloodsports, raptor destruction, setting of snares. Remember get as much accurate info as you can **without** putting yourself at risk - animal abusers usually move on to abusing people. Keep an eye on planning applications and news items in the papers. Have our phone number and address handy and get any relevant material to us as quickly as possible.