

HBO DOCUMENTARY FILMS.

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DEATH ON A FACTORY FARM

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SYNOPSIS

Each year, ten billion animals are raised for consumption in the U.S., mostly on sprawling, industrialized farms, where virtually no federal laws mandate how the animals are treated - though guidelines exist - and state laws are ineffective. As a result, animals are frequently subjected to what many consider cruel treatment and inhumane conditions in the interest of economic efficiency.

DEATH ON A FACTORY FARM chronicles an investigation into alleged abuses that took place at a hog farm in Creston, Ohio. This shocking documentary is produced by Tom Simon (a seven-time Emmy® winner) and Sarah Teale, producer of the 2006 HBO special "Dealing Dogs," which received two Emmy® nominations, including Best Documentary.

Three years in the making, DEATH ON A FACTORY FARM follows the undercover investigation of Wiles Hog Farm by the animal rights group The Humane Farming Association (HFA), and the resulting court case against it. The organization received a tip from an employee at the farm that animals were being abused, including a claim that hogs were being hung by chains and strangled to death as a form of euthanasia. HFA then turned to an undercover investigator (also featured in "Dealing Dogs") going by the name "Pete," who wore a hidden camera while he worked as a farmhand at Wiles.

Over the course of six weeks, Pete secretly filmed numerous disturbing scenes, including piglets being tossed into crates from across a room, impregnated sows held in pens that don't allow them to move, an unhealthy piglet being slammed against a wall to euthanize it, and a sick sow being hung by a chain from a forklift until it choked to death. Having obtained this key evidence, Pete concluded the investigation and quit his job.

HFA brought the footage to the Wayne County Sheriff's Department, which subsequently raided the farm. Prosecutors filed ten criminal charges of animal cruelty against Ken Wiles (the owner of the farm), his son Joe, and Dusty Stroud, a farm employee who participated in hanging the sow.

In the trial that followed, prosecution and defense waged a tense battle over the legality and morality of practices rarely seen by the public and described by the presiding judge as "distasteful and offensive," but defended by Ken Wiles and other members of the tight-knit Ohio farming community as the commonplace reality of producing livestock for consumption.

DEATH ON A FACTORY FARM is seven-time Emmy® winner Tom Simon's second film for HBO. Sarah Teale's previous HBO credits include "Dealing Dogs," "Bellevue: Inside Out" and "Mumia Abu Jamal: A Case for Reasonable Doubt?," which received a CableACE Award.

DEATH ON A FACTORY FARM is an HBO Documentary Films Presentation; a Working Dog/Teale-Edwards Production; produced by Tom Simon and Sarah Teale; edited by Geof Bartz, A.C.E.; music composed by Jamie Lawrence; sound and photography, Tom Simon. For HBO: supervising producer, John Hoffman; executive producer, Sheila Nevins.

