



.....STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSES MOUTH

Duane A. Lienemann, UNL Extension Educator, Webster County

November 20, 2015 Edition

It seems that as you get older your body ends up paying for the abuse you punish it with over the years. I am writing this column the night before I go in for some surgery on my shoulder, rotator cuff and bicep tendon. I am not complaining, as I was warned years ago that if I kept doing things like I was still 25 years old that it would come back to haunt me - and it has. I am not asking for sympathy, and I doubt I would get too much anyway. This will however make it a little more difficult to do the things I normally do, including time in the office, out in the fields and all the other sundry things that I am used to doing, including writing. I will see how it goes and how this old body reacts to the work being done on it, but I felt I should let individuals know should they be looking for me over the next several days to a couple of weeks. Now that this is off my chest let us look at some things that caught my eye this week. Are you ready for some incredible stuff?

Slaughter Trucks? I have to add this to the “You have got to be kidding me file!” The attack against animal agriculture just keeps on coming. Now growing up on a farm and even hitching a ride with a trucker or two with our cattle or hogs to the sale barn or even to Omaha Stock Yards, I never thought of the straight truck or a semi-tractor with a pot as anything more than a truck. But “slaughter truck”? It’s a new term to me, and I would bet a new term and for that matter an insult to farmers, ranchers, feeders or anybody with a CDL that makes their living transporting livestock.

But more than 9,500 misguided and misinformed souls have signed a petition at Change.org asking Walmart CEO C. Douglas McMillon to “stop selling toy slaughter trucks in Walmart stores.” The petition states, “Normalizing the enslavement and murder of animals to kids is not OK.” They don’t even try to point out that livestock trucks are used for many purposes on the farm, not just to take animals to slaughter. These trailers are used as a transport! It doesn't mean that they are going to the slaughter house. Most are just moving their livestock from one location to another. Perhaps from farm to farm or maybe they've been sold to another rancher, or they are being moved to another pasture or home.

Those “slaughter trucks” are what most of us would call toy livestock transport trucks, mini versions of the ones that roll down the highways of America. Walmart is selling an “ERTL Big Farm 1:32 Peterbilt Model 579 semi with livestock trailer” for \$34.99. But somebody using the online name “Vegan Oso” started the petition and claims that “normalizing the enslavement and murder of animals to kids is not OK.” This is taking the Vegan movement one giant leap further than what I can stomach. It is one thing to call attention to your thoughts on animal agriculture, but in this way? I draw the line! I am amazed and dismayed at all the different ways that people can shoot at livestock production and the producers of our food!

If you have a strong stomach read what they say to justify this petition: “No matter how “humanely” animals are raised for food, inevitably the pigs, cows, horses and other animals doomed for factory slaughter are crowded onto slaughter trucks; there is no shelter against the weather, no food or water and no place for the animals to defecate or urinate except on each other and under their own feet. Someday, look inside a slaughter truck; there you will see the eyes of an animal treated worse than anyone can imagine. They foam at the mouth, their eyes are crusted with infections, their faces silently scream from abject fright and abuse. At truck stops, they watch humans passing them by; hoping someone will save them before their last day on earth in a slaughter line. This is not what a child's toy should represent.” All I can say is “What?”

If it wasn’t so incredibly stupid, it is almost entertaining to read some of the comments that have been posted. You will be shaking your head and wondering what is coming of this world. I will guarantee that I will be responding to this petition and I would suggest that if you want to offer your opinion, you can visit the petition site (www.change.org/p/c-douglas-mcmillon-walmart-please-stop-selling-toy-slaughter-trucks) and leave a comment, or you can visit Walmart’s Facebook page (www.facebook.com/walmart/) and tell Mr. McMillon to keep selling the toys and for him to tell this idiot - Vegan Oso - that calling livestock transports “slaughter trucks” is an insult to the responsible, professional farmers, ranchers, and truck drivers who work hard to help put food on America’s tables and do so in an humane and caring way. If you agree with this wingnut, I hope you get more informed and don’t do the knee jerk reaction to misinformation and become one of those people who unwittingly further the cause of a group committed to their own particular agenda regardless of who they hurt!

PETA Wants to Rename Turkey, Texas: Let’s just add one more to the file. You read the headline correctly. Of all the asinine, publicity-seeking ideas from one of my “favorite” groups - People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) this one was about as appealing as a barefoot walk through a chicken coop. It ranks right up there with their last endeavor to have fish renamed as “Kitties of the Seas”. The folks at PETA have asked the folks in Turkey, Texas, to change the town’s name to – get this – “Tofurkey” for one day. That day being on Thanksgiving. PETA sent a letter to the Turkey Mayor (no pun intended) on Monday, offering to provide a vegan feast for the whole town. Tofurkey is described as “a savory, flavorful, ‘meaty’ vegan entree with wild-rice and bread-crumbs stuffing that is 100 percent cruelty-free.” The meal would come with “mushroom gravy, mashed potatoes (made with vegan margarine), and vegan apple pie topped with vanilla dairy-free ice cream.” It is not surprising to me that the 410 townfolk basically responded “Tophoey!” The old adage of you don’t mess with Texas. I am glad that they stood their ground and proved to these PETA nut jobs that you also don’t mess with Turkey either!

The preceding information comes from the research and personal observations of the writer which may or may not reflect the views of UNL or UNL Extension. For more further information on these or other topics contact D. A. Lienemann, UNL Extension Educator for Webster County in Red Cloud, (402) 746-3417 or email to: dlienemann2@unl.edu or go to the website at: <http://www.webster.unl.edu/home>