



Press release by LAV November 11th 2015

ITALCARNI SCANDAL (BRESCIA), LAV: THE HORRIBLE PICTURES BY [IL FATTO QUOTIDIANO](#) PORTRAY A WIDESPREAD ZOOTECHNIC PRACTICE.

WE CALL ON MINISTER LORENZIN TO ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT INQUIRY COMMITTEE AND WE ASK PRESIDENT MARONI HOW HE INTENDS TO AVOID UNHEALTHY MEAT CIRCULATING ACROSS LOMBARDY.

THE TOWN COUNCIL OF GHEDI MUST DEFINE ITS POSITION ON DANGEROUS MEAT SUPPLIED TO ITS CITIZENS

“The scandal of downers had already been reported by LAV ten years ago and, in spite of the convictions by several courts and of the Ministerial notes addressing the issue, it is still a shamefully widespread zootechnical practice in our country which causes dozens of thousands of animals to be subject to abuse in the rearing farms, during transport and slaughtering”, this is the hot-headed comment by Roberto Bennati, vice president of LAV on the video-inquiry “Inside the horror slaughterhouse” (<http://tv.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2015/11/11/il-macello-degli-orreri-di-ghedi-bs-mucche-torturate-e-batteri-letali-per-luomo/437530/>) published today on the website of the newspaper Il Fatto Quotidiano, on the facts involving Italcarni, the slaughterhouse in Ghedi (Brescia), placed under seizure by the Brescia public prosecutor's office which on Monday 9 November submitted a motion for indictment against two veterinary doctors of the local health unit of Brescia and two employees of the slaughterhouse for serious abuse of cows in the facility.

Animals would reach the slaughterhouse in serious conditions, no longer able to stand up on their legs and, instead of being slaughtered in the rearing farm as established by law or, in the last resort, on the truck, they were unloaded and pushed with tractors or lift trucks, dragged with chains and pushed with pitchforks, as documented by the terrible images published by Il Fatto Quotidiano.

“A common practice rather than the exception which veterinary services inside the slaughterhouses continue to punish inadequately – said Bennati – and which has been the object of numerous admonitions to the Ministry of health and veterinary services of some regions by the inspectors of the European Veterinary Office”.

Such an unlawful practice can no longer be tolerated and poses a risk also to the health of citizens, who are already alarmed by the WHO report on red meat: *“we call on the Minister for Health Beatrice Lorenzin to urgently establish an inquiry committee, led by independent inspectors of the veterinary office of the European commission, to investigate the conditions of the animals at the end of their life in rearing farms and slaughterhouses – continued Bennati – to bring back legality and the respect of the law and animal conditions in the zootechnical industry”.* Downers meat is also the most commonly used for the production of hamburgers and canned meat: consumers must be made aware.

The requests of the association are also addressed to the President of the Lombardy Region, Roberto Maroni, to whom LAV has publicly asked to publish the data on downers for the past two years and a regional slaughterhouses monitoring plan, as the region is historically exposed to the phenomenon because of the high number of rearing farms of milk cows, the animal most affected by this disgraceful zootechnical practice.

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“What does President Maroni intend to do to find out where, starting from today, downers no longer destined to the slaughterhouse of Ghedi will go? Considering that the conditions of reared animals have not changed and that dozens of animals will no longer be able to stand on their legs while still being transported to the slaughterhouse? – added Roberto Bennati – What does he intend to demand of the regional veterinary services, to avoid that the phenomenon be simply displaced to a different slaughterhouse, with the same adverse effects on the health of citizens and conditions of the animals?”

The practices adopted by the slaughterhouse owners could be used again at any time and were made possible by a clear and repeated will of the owner of the facility to market the meat of animals in those conditions and by the large-scale omissions in veterinary monitoring. This is why on Monday 16 November LAV is meeting with the manager of the veterinary services of the local health unit of Brescia to ask him to clearly stop what has been going on in the Ghedi facility by implementing what veterinary doctors working at the services should already have done: implementing Regulation 882/2004 on veterinary controls which allows to order the administrative closure of the slaughterhouse for infringement of the requirements on the well-being of animals.

“As the Government has allocated Euro 55 million to milk cow breeders, to protect alleged Italian excellencies, this dramatic phenomenon, which also constitutes a violation of the Criminal Code and of several European regulation on animal well-being and on public funding of zootechnology, has now burst into a scandal. Such regulations bind the funds to conditionality clauses and, if violated, result in allocated funds being revoked and future funds being denied”, specified Bennati.

Finally, LAV calls on the town council of Ghedi to have the town to declare itself an injured party in the legal proceedings against the employees and owner of the slaughterhouse and to have the Mayor, who is the brother-in-law of the owner of the slaughterhouse, revoke the agreement with which the town of Ghedy authorised the slaughterhouse to use the buildings which are owned by the town. *“The supply of dangerous meat, certified as non-marketable by the analysis carried out by the Istituto Zooprofilattico of Turin, to the citizens of Ghedy and such level of abuse on the animals cannot go unpunished – concluded Bennati – the same as the Mayor's clear conflict of interest can no longer be tolerated”.*

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