



PETA

PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

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Log Notes From PETA's 2007 Undercover Investigation at George's Poultry

For four weeks in early 2007, a PETA investigator worked at a George's Poultry slaughterhouse in Missouri. George's was named KFC "Supplier of the Year" in April 2006. The following are excerpts from his log notes:

- Today was my first day. I started as a "dumper." The dumping area is where the crates of birds from the transport trucks are dumped out and the birds are sent on a conveyor belt to the next area where they are shackled by their legs. The dumping operator controls a system that lifts the crates at a steep angle. The birds then slam into spring-operated doors that open up and dump the birds about 8 feet onto the conveyor belt into a big pile. This process does not always run smoothly. The metal doors sometimes do not open after the birds are slammed into them. When this happened, workers would take a long metal pole and try to pop the door open by repeatedly and forcefully ramming it into the large pile of birds stuck by the door. The pole would sometimes stab right into the abdomens or heads of the birds with full force. I was told by other workers that this was the correct method to open the stuck doors.
- Some of the crates seem to be very old. Many are decrepit, and some are no longer even square. The wires on many of the crates are bent out of shape, and some have wires jutting out that stab the birds. This can cause the birds' limbs to get stuck in the crates. One worker showed me that in this situation, you do not spend time trying to work them free. You just grab the bird by his leg or whatever you can get a hold of and "pull as hard as you can." I once found a live bird's severed leg in a crate.
- Some of the crates have large holes in them, through which birds can get free. I saw live birds get crushed and eviscerated by falling through the bottom of the crate while the dumping machine—which lifts and tilts the transport cages in order to dump the birds out—was being lowered.
- The condition of the birds as we received them was horrible. The crates are stuffed full of birds. Wounds were visible on the backs of some birds. Some did not move. Many birds were covered with feces, and many in each load had what appeared to be bad burns, apparently from the ammonia fumes caused by the waste build-up in the factory farms that they came from. The birds are vocal the entire time and scream every time the crate is bounced open or they are poked with the pole or grabbed.
- I had to shackle live birds for about 15 minutes today. The lines move really fast, sometimes causing the birds to be hung by only one foot, ensuring that their throats are not slit properly. The birds are all violently grabbed by the workers, who ignore the fact that they are alive. The birds react with terror: They try to run up the line to get away and scream and flap their wings wildly

when grabbed. It is impossible to hear anyone in that room over the birds' screaming.

- There are always birds on the concrete floor, usually between 20 and 60 each day by the end of my shift. They end up huddling together in the same corner near the platform. No matter where they escape from, they run around the dumping area and then huddle tightly in a corner together, most with their heads hiding under the bodies of those around them.
- Trevor, my new immediate supervisor, pulled me off the evisceration line for about 20 minutes today to work in the next area. After they exit the hanging line, the birds have a large hole drilled through them by machine. This fist-sized hole is made by ripping open their vent and exposing their internal organs. Immediately after this, two people stand on a stage, viewing each bird pass by. The first person sticks his or her fingers into any hole in a bird that does not seem wide enough and manually rips it open. This ends up being every three or four birds, it seems. This is what I had to do.
- This morning, I saw more than 50 red birds—ones who went into the scalding tank alive and conscious. I asked my supervisor why there were so many, and he replied that one of the kill machines went down, and then he walked away. I am assuming that he meant the “bleed machine”—the machine that slits the birds' throats. I have only been at George's for three weeks, yet I have seen constant machinery problems in this short time.

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