

Hormel Foods Corporation

Consumer Response

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Dear Hormel Foods Corporation:

I commend your zero-tolerance stance on animal abuse. I urge Hormel Foods Corporation, its international division, and all factions to take this policy to heart.

As you know, a 9/16/08 video depicts workers at a Hormel supplier in Iowa battering pigs with metal gate rods. One supervisor thrusts a cane into a sow's vagina and smacks her back some 17 times. Clothespins and fingers are poked into pigs' eyes and faces. Piglet's heads are crushed against a floor and they're tossed into a bin to die. An obese worker clobbers a sow's back and reportedly sits on the animal's head. Another beats a piglet's face with the rim of a herding board, a method that investigators saw repeatedly. An employee even spray paints the nostrils of a nursing sow.

"Beat on the bitch. Make her cry," a supervisor advises, as he kicks a young pig's face, abdomen and genitals. The dismissive nature of these workers indicates their cruelty is commonplace. How can Hormel monitor this single supplier — let alone all its producers, transporters, and other employees — when egregious violence toward animals is routine?

I respectfully suggest you begin with the prompt termination and criminal prosecution of workers implicated this video, along with any employees who neglect or hurt animals. Please require all Hormel suppliers to comply with basic animal welfare standards such as phasing out gestation crates. It is widely known breeding sows cannot move in these cruel confinement systems where they endure months-long pregnancy cycles.

In addition, Hormel can immediately install video surveillance cameras at factory farms. I also encourage you to take the "factory" out of farms by advocating a more natural environment. Currently, pigs are denied space, sunlight, straw bedding, mud baths or anything intrinsic to pigs.

Please put some action behind the words in "Hormel Foods Position on Humane Handling."

Thank you,