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China flaying animals alive

Investigation reveals images so graphic, nightmares rampant among probe team

Posted: August 19, 2008
9:48 pm Eastern

By Bob Unruh
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Editor's Note: The descriptions and video of China's fur industry in this story will be disturbing to some readers.

The newest controversy over exports from China has caused nightmares for researchers documenting the abuse inflicted on animals bred and raised in tiny cages and then skinned alive for their fur.

WND has reported multiple times on problems with exports from China, with [poison found in pajamas](#), [consumers warned against using ginger](#), [an alert about the dangers from China's pickled vegetables](#) and even the [dangers from honey and fireworks](#).

Now comes word from an extended investigation into the fur trade that China is estimated to produce approximately 85 percent of the world's fur products – and it has virtually no regulations or rules for the treatment of the animals.

According to Mark Rissi, a spokesman for [Swiss Animal Protection](#), which has documented abuse of animals raised for their fur as early as 1983, the China project has been going on for several years.

(Story continues below)



Animals rights activists have documented that China's fur industry skins [animals](#) alive for their fur (Photo courtesy of Swiss Animal Protection)



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The organization's report has been made available online, with dramatic images and descriptions that researchers found more than disturbing.

"As animals are considered objects in China, there is little or no awareness for the suffering of these sentient beings," Rissi told WND from his European base of operations via e-mail. "The cruelty found was beyond our expectations, and it was hard to document without interfering. It caused nightmares to the team, especially in the editing room, because the scenes had to be replayed and replayed to be edited from six hours down to 20 minutes."

Rissi said the actual onsite investigation was done by his organization's staff members as well as trusted Asian animal protection supporters, but as fur production was not a controversial subject, "people willingly showed their farms to the team."

He said he's glad other organizations, such as the U.S.-based People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, have joined in his group's campaign.

"Our main goal was to get this distributed because

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we want consumers worldwide to be aware about the cruelty involved in the fur fashion," he said.

"People have a right to know that a huge percentage of fur is imported from China, which doesn't have any federal laws protecting animals on fur farms. People who might contribute to this atrocity by purchasing fur or fur-trimmed garments need to know about the horrible suffering of the animals who wore that skin first," PETA spokeswoman Melissa Karpel told WND.



Dogs are picked up by workers using a metal tongs and their tails prior to being slammed to the ground and skinned. (Photo courtesy of Swiss Animal Protection)

"We want them to see how fur farmers slam terrified animals — including raccoon pups — on the ground and skin them while they're still conscious. People need to know what they're really buying when they buy fur or fur trim," she said.

"Conditions on Chinese fur farms make a mockery of the most elementary animal welfare standards," the Swiss report said. "This report shows that China's colossal fur industry routinely subjects animals to housing, husbandry, transport and slaughter practices that are unacceptable from a veterinary, animal welfare and moral point of view."

PETA has posted a Swiss Animal Protection video on its U.S. site, documenting the bloody violence prevalent in the Chinese fur industry.



The report contained the testimony from witnesses to a dog slaughter:

Once pulled out from its cage, the raccoon dog curls up into a ball in mid-air. ... One woman in a headscarf is first to grab hold of the raccoon dog's tail and the others drift away peevishly. The woman in the headscarf swings the animal upwards. It forms an arc in the air and is then slammed heavily to the ground, throwing up a cloud of dust. The raccoon dog tries to stand up, its paws scrabbling in the grit. The wooden club in the woman's hand swings down onto its forehead. The woman picks up the animal and walks toward the other side of the road, throwing it onto a pile of other raccoon dogs. A stream of blood trickles from its muzzle, but its eyes are open and it continues to repeatedly blink, move its paws, raise its head and collapse to the ground. Beside it lies another raccoon dog. Its four limbs have been hacked off but still it continues to yelp.

The report then graphically describes how the dogs are skinned, sometimes while they are living.

Rissi noted that the Humane Society of the United States also has worked on the investigation, citing well-known U.S. companies, including J.C. Penney, Burlington Coat Factory, Bloomingdale's, Sak's Fifth Avenue and Macy's, for selling Chinese-produced fur products, sometimes labeling them as "faux fur" or raccoon when the actual product is from a raccoon dog.

The Swiss Animal Protection report said slaughter methods range from beatings with a metal or wooden stick or swinging the animal until it slams to the ground.

Then they are skinned.

"They struggle and try to fight back to the very end. Even after their skin has been stripped off breathing, heart beat, directional body and eyelid movements were evident for five to 10 minutes," the report said.

The process is repeated millions of times, as China processes up to 100,000 pelts in a day at times.

The Swiss organization said China should pass a national animal welfare law, prohibit skinning live animals, prohibit inhumane treatment and slaughter methods, and the rest of the world should shun the use of fur.

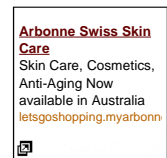
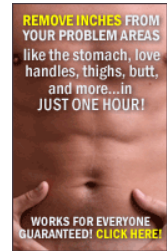
Swiss Animal Protection is the umbrella organization of 58 regional animal protection associations in Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein. Founded in 1861, it is the oldest and biggest animal protection organization operating throughout Switzerland.

WND's earlier reporting showed Chinese products recalled in 2007 alone included:

- Portable baby swings that entrap youngsters, resulting in 60 reports of cuts, bruises and abrasions;
- Swimming pool ladders that break, resulting in 127 reports of injuries, including leg

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lacerations requiring up to 21 stitches, five reports of bone fractures, two back injuries, two reports of torn ligaments and eight sprained ankles;

- Faulty baby carriers that result in babies falling out and getting bruised, getting skulls cracked and hospitalizations;
- Easy-Bake Ovens that trap children's fingers in openings, resulting in burns;
- Oscillating tower fans whose faulty wiring results in fires, burns and smoke inhalation injuries;
- Exploding air pumps that have resulted in 13 lacerations including six facial injuries and one to the eye;
- Bargain-priced oil-filled electric heaters, selling for less than \$50, that burn down homes;
- Notebook computer batteries that burn up computers, cause other property damage and burn users;
- Circular saws with faulty blade guards that result in cutting users, not wood.

WND also has reported on Chinese imports that [poisoned America's pets, risked America's human food supply](#) and [reintroduced lead poisoning to America's children](#).

Other problems have occurred with power strips and extension cords, holiday lights and batteries.

China also consistently has topped the list of countries whose products were refused by the FDA. The list includes many countries, including Mexico and Canada, that export far more food products to the U.S. than China.

[The Chinese government, in fact, actually has blamed WND's reports for fanning the flames of hysteria about the safety of Chinese products.](#)

41

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