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MercyForAnimals.org

April 29, 2011

Salar Kamangar, CEO
YouTube LLC
901 Cherry Ave.
San Bruno, CA 94066
Fax: 650-253-0001

Dear Mr. Kamangar:

I am writing on behalf of Mercy For Animals (MFA), a national, non-profit animal protection organization, to ask that you reinstate the “No Mercy – Calf Farm Cruelty Exposed” video on your website. The video can be viewed via Vimeo at www.MercyForAnimals.org/Calves.

Earlier this week, MFA received notification that our undercover investigation video documenting routine abuses of calves raised for the dairy industry at E6 Cattle Company in Texas had been disabled for violation of YouTube Community Guidelines. The notice states: “It’s not okay to post gross-out videos of accidents, dead bodies or similar things intended to be shocking, sensational, or disrespectful. If a video is particularly graphic or disturbing, it should be balanced with additional educational or documentary context and information.”

In keeping with YouTube guidelines, as well as MFA’s mission to educate consumers about modern animal agriculture practices, the video includes documentary context and information in the form of quotes from workers at the facility, explaining why sick and injured calves are neglected without veterinary care, as well as a statement from world-renowned cattle welfare expert and advisor to the USDA Dr. Temple Grandin, condemning the cruel practices at this facility: “It is obvious that both the management and the employees have no regard for animal welfare.”

MFA strongly agrees that videos of cruelty to animals are shocking and disturbing, but in the context of helping to expose and eliminate animal abuse they are extremely important. Consumers have a right to know how their food is being produced, especially when the production methods are shocking or disturbing, so that they can make informed choices. MFA’s “No Mercy” video opens a critical dialogue about animal use and abuse in our society, as well as pressing social and consumer issues. Without open dialogue in a free society, broken systems remain unchallenged and unchanged.

It seems an obvious contradiction that YouTube censors MFA’s efforts to expose and eliminate cruelty to animals, while continuing to allow highly sanitized meat, dairy and egg industry propaganda videos that promote killing animals for profit, and countless sensationalized pro-hunting videos that glamorize gleeful hunters mercilessly maiming and killing animals for “sport.” YouTube was awarded a 2008 Peabody Award and cited as “a ‘Speakers’ Corner’ that both embodies and promotes democracy.” Silencing one side of the debate over how farmed animals should be treated flies in the face of democracy. YouTube seems to be sending a message that hurting animals for fun or profit is acceptable but speaking out against such abuses is not.

We understand that the “No Mercy” video documenting E6 workers bashing in the skulls of calves with hammers and pickaxes, dragging them by their ears, standing on their necks, burning them, and neglecting them to die without veterinary care is shocking and horrifying to most people. The “No Mercy” video was posted on YouTube precisely to draw public attention to this important case and give people the opportunity to learn about and speak out against cruelty to animals, and to use their democratic voices to help pass laws to prevent such shocking and disturbing abuses from occurring in the future.

MFA’s groundbreaking investigations have a long history of leading to successful criminal prosecutions of animal abusers, raids of factory farms, corporate animal welfare policy reforms and increased legal protection for animals – all testament to the crucial role these videos play in preventing cruelty and educating consumers.

For example, as a result of our Conklin Dairy investigation that was widely viewed on YouTube and exposed animals being beaten in the face with metal pipes, repeatedly stabbed with pitchforks, having their tails broken, and being kicked, thrown, and punched by employees, a farm worker was arrested and charged with 12 counts of cruelty to animals, numerous dairy suppliers ended their relationships with the facility, support was generated for a statewide animal protection initiative, and consumers nationwide learned about the dark side of dairy production.

A 2009 MFA investigation at an egg farm in Maine, which was posted on YouTube, prompted the Maine Department of Agriculture and state police to raid the farm on grounds of cruelty to animals. Grocery chains nationwide dropped the farm as an egg supplier and, as part of a landmark civil settlement, the mega-farm pleaded guilty to 10 counts of cruelty to animals, agreed to pay over \$130,000 in fines and restitution, and handed over authority to the state of Maine to conduct unannounced inspections of the facility for the following five years.

The “No Mercy” video posted on YouTube is part of MFA’s important mission to educate consumers and bring justice to animals who are routinely tortured and killed in factory farms and slaughterhouses. It is vital to our efforts to hold the E6 Cattle Company and its owner accountable for egregious cruelty to animals and that the public be able to access and disseminate this video. We respectfully request that the “No Mercy” video be reinstated on YouTube as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration. You may contact me directly at NathanR@MercyForAnimals.org or at 866-632-6446. I look forward to your positive response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nathan Runkle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Nathan Runkle
Executive Director