

NUTRIQUEST®

Delivering Real Solutions™

NEWS

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

The Undercover Video “Drive by Shooting” by Steve Weiss

There have been numerous instances of “drive-by-shootings” in the pork industry where animal activist organizations dispatch an eager animal rights zealot to gain employment at a production facility for the sole purpose of capturing under-cover video...specifically designed to cast the livestock production industry in a negative light. What organization—of any type—would not be shed in very poor light if an infiltrator shot three months of film attempting to capture the worst of the worst— and boiled it down to three minutes of film? And how could anyone give this any degree of credibility?

Unfortunately, in today’s era of YouTube and sophisticated and well-funded activist organizations, the logical and rational answers to those questions don’t seem to matter. Nor did it matter that the most recent victim of this movement complied substantially with industry accepted procedures. Unfortunately, there will be more videos, and they will be used against us and they will be afforded a degree of credibility from consumers and, more importantly, our retailer and packer customers.



What can producers do?

We have compiled some answers to this question that we hope you will find useful.

Drought Stressed Corn Susceptible to Mycotoxin Contamination, by Dr. Ken Purser



With corn harvest underway in some areas and approaching in others, it is important to remember that drought-stressed corn is more likely to be contaminated with aflatoxin. Agronomists from Kansas State recently reported that of 15 samples received at the Grain Inspection Lab in Topeka, 90% tested more the 20 ppb aflatoxin level safe for human consumption. The range was 29 to 400 ppb. Of 150 samples received at the Wichita, Kansas lab, 75% tested in the 20 to 100 ppb range with two over 200 ppb. We encourage producers to test all new crop corn for mycotoxins prior to feeding.

Prospective Employee Screening

For all of the obvious reasons, we need to identify the right people to best further our organizations' success; we also need to identify those who aren't interested in our success. Perform intensive background checks. In addition to diligently checking references and previous employers (focus on previous employers who are not provided as references), you should perform a check of Department of Motor Vehicle and criminal records. Perform a Google and Facebook check on each applicant (tip: indicate name along with places lived in multiple Google searches). Post-offer/hire (in compliance with labor laws), perform drug testing and investigate workman's compensation records. If you haven't routinely performed these background checks and want to start, strongly consider performing them now on your current employee base. If you don't have the resources to perform these background checks internally, hire an outside firm; there are several that offer this service.

Your application form should pose a question similar to: "Do you now or have you ever belonged to an activist organization such as HSUS, PETA, MFA or similar animal rights organization?" At a minimum, this might create a deterrent.

Employee Certification

All employees should be PQA-Plus and/or TQA certified. Perform regular **unannounced** internal "audits" (site assessments). Periodically re-certify. For site assessments as part of PQA-Plus certification, don't announce visits to farm personnel. Follow up with each farm weeks after its site assessment to ensure that any areas of deficiency have been remedied. Establish consequences for noncompliance. Consider employing an outside firm to do third-party audits for this process.

Employment Policies, Standard Operating Procedures ("SOP's")

Develop a "Zero Tolerance Policy" for animal welfare violations that is required for all employees to sign upon employment. In addition to consequences for direct violation, the policy should state that not reporting witnessed incidences of animal abuse is also grounds for termination.

Even though this is second nature to our organizations, ensure that animal welfare policies are prevalent in all standard operating procedures, and in employee training that you need to conduct on a regular and regimented basis. A heightened awareness to animal welfare might include a summary code of conduct expressed as "Work like you're being filmed."

Establish a "Whistleblowers Policy" that encourages all employees to report – anonymously if desired – incidents of abuse, with a guarantee of no retaliation/retribution. This policy helps give your organization the "eyes and ears" in the field that helps us overcome the disadvantage of not having all of our operations under one roof.

More Ethanol Plants Extracting Oil, by Dr. Rob Musser



Big River Resources, LLC.

NUTRIQUEST's ILLUMINATE data show that the number of ethanol plants extracting oil is increasing. Review of data from 136 different ethanol plants shows 28% of DDGS contained less than 10% fat in January 2011 while data from July showed 37% of DDGS were under 10%, an increase of 32%. If you are not an ILLUMINATE Services subscriber, you should monitor the fat content of your DDGS to insure the expected energy content is being supplied. Failure to do so could result in poorer feed conversion and growth rate and increased cost of gain.

New ILLUMINATE® Promotional Campaign



ILLUMINATE®

The NUTRIQUEST team is proud to announce the launch of the "new" ILLUMINATE promotional plan

It also would shed an undercover activist in bad light if, as has been the case in certain past incidents, they had signed a Whistleblowers Policy but elected not to report an occurrence of animal abuse. We initiated writing the standards for this policy for NPPC so can help you with establishing a Whistleblowers Policy.

Need help establishing SOP's? Check out the Employee Care Toolkit at www.pork.org/resources.

While the industry has been under attack from the outside, producers also run the risk of their own employees using the internet and social media (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Blogs) to – even inadvertently – cast their company in a negative light. Establish a “Social Media Policy” which reminds employees of their commitment to confidentiality and prevents them from using photos or video of company operations or co-workers without consent, or from making negative remarks about the company, its products or services. The policy should also prohibit the use of company logos or trademarks, and any implication that views expressed by an employee are representative of the company.

Importantly, management must drive accountability, enforcement and consequences. Reprimands and, if necessary, termination of employment, must accompany any effective set of policies and SOP's.

Are you still using blunt force trauma? The retailers involved in the most recent undercover video incident universally expressed objection to this practice. While it is accepted as a humane form of euthanasia by AASV, it is objectionable to employees and doesn't pass the “soccer mom test.” If you are using CO2, is your system designed to be worker-friendly and consistently applied with reliable results?

Public Relations

Invite influential persons to your farm, including local influencers as well as your packer, further processors and their customers (retailers, food service providers). Educate them as to your commitment to animal welfare and our standard acceptable practices, as they may be in a position to support you versus distance themselves from you if you are unfortunate enough to be the next victim. With past incidents creating a refusal of customers to purchase animals unless/until a successful investigation is completed, this could mean the difference between you having a place to sell your hogs or not.

for the poultry and swine industry. Please check out the September 6 issue of [WATT Poultry USA](#) to see our first ad (pg. 28) placement and the article entitled, “With increasing ethanol production from corn, DDGS is being used to a greater extent by livestock and poultry producers to replace diverted corn. By Sheila Purdum, Ph.D., University of Nebraska Lincoln.

ILLUMINATE Services offers a database of DDGS nutrient loadings from over 130 ethanol plants in the United States to accurately estimate nutritional value and economics which allows producers to identify and buy the highest value DDGS sources. Contact a NUTRIQUEST team member to learn more.