

HOME | Investigations

[Email This Story](#) [Print This Story](#)

SPONSOR

Volatile Reaction From Viewers, Feds, To Meat Investigation

[Chris Halsne](#)

KIRO 7 Eyewitness News Investigative Reporter

A KIRO Team 7 Investigation exposed how cows, too sick or injured to even walk, routinely get turned into hamburger.

We received a volatile reaction from our viewers and an attack on our report from the federal agency that's supposed to protect your food supply.



Investigative Reporter Chris Halsne spent months undercover, videotaping what are known as "Downer" sales.

Downers are cattle that aren't healthy enough to even stand. For months we watched and videotaped USDA meat inspectors repeatedly allowing suspect downers into a slaughterhouse in Chehalis.

The USDA refused to respond to our repeated efforts to show them the tape, and analyze the performance of its veterinarians.

Finally, they sent us a statement, but it's far from apologetic.

KIRO Team 7 Investigators videotaped hours worth of downer transactions at Midway Meats in Chehalis.

We watched while farmers brought their dying cattle to the plant in pick-up trucks and trailers. Since the cows were too sick, weak, or crippled to walk inside, a bobcat and chain helped them move across the parking lot.

"If what everyone saw on KIRO TV is humane, something is very, very, wrong," says Susan Michaels, co-founder of Pasado's Safe Haven, a Monroe-based group that monitors animal rights issues.

She, and many of our viewers, were sickened by the revelations in

More From kirotv.com

News

[Western Washington Residents Bracing For Snow And High Winds](#)

[27 Year Old Immigrant Dies From New Year's Day Stabbing](#)

[KIRO 7 Pinpoint Forecast](#)

Weather

[Pinpoint 5-Day Forecast And More](#)

Sports

[Sonics Cancel The Lake-Show](#)

Health

[Viagra May Help Improve Fertility In Women](#)

Consumer

[Problems Found With Many Newer Homes](#)

Entertainment

[Reality Show Takes Closer Look At Airline Workers](#)

SeattleInsider.com

[New Year's Weekend](#)

SPONSOR

SPONSOR

SPONSOR

SPONSOR

our hidden camera report, but not surprised.

"We think that state and USDA inspectors are a joke. Their excuse is always there isn't enough money and not enough people around," Michaels says.

One of America's top experts on downer cows is former USDA vet trainer Dr. Lester Friedlander. He watched our tape, and was heavily critical of the lack of proper inspection outside the Midway Meats plant.

"After looking at a tape like this, you ask where do you think fecal contamination comes from? Is this a good source? Obviously, it is a good source, the main source," Friedlander says.

KIRO Team 7 Investigators offered to show several hours worth of unedited tape to the USDA weeks ago, but they refused. Tonight, they finally faxed a response.

"We take allegations of wrongdoing very seriously in all plants where we have jurisdiction. When we find violations, we act quickly with all the enforcement authority we have under the law."

But in next statement attacks the messenger, us.

"Your station repeatedly refused to provide any evidence or even the name of the plant in question, thus completely impeding our ability to conduct an investigation."

That's not true. KIRO 7 has a Freedom of Information Act request, sent to USDA on September 5th, asking for all inspection reports, and condemned cattle tags issued for Midway Meats.

To date, KIRO 7 has not received the information.

KIRO Team 7 Investigators also called, and talked with no less than six federal investigators regarding this matter in the past three weeks.

That includes the special agent in charge of West Coast investigations for USDA in San Francisco.

If you want to comment on the use of downers to Congressional



DOWNER COWS INVESTIGATION

[Meat From Dying, Sick Or Diseased Cows Getting into Food](#)
Aired Oct. 31, 2002, 5 p. m.

[Volatile Reaction From Viewers, Feds, To Meat Investigation](#)
Aired Oct. 31, 2002, 11 p. m.

[Downer Cows' Treatment May Be Illegal](#)
Aired Nov. 1, 2002, 5 p. m.

[Downer Industry Thrives Despite Consumers' Concerns](#)
Aired Nov. 1, 2002, 11 p. m.

[New Revelations From Ex-State Ag Employee On Downer Cows](#)
Aired June 12, 2003, 5 p. m.

[State Agencies Help Fund Attack On Downer Cow Investigations](#)
Aired June 12, 2003, 11 p.m.

[Market For Downer Cow Beef Is Dying](#)
Aired June 13, 2003, 5 p. m.

apartments.com™

You want what you want.

Pick a city:

Pick a type:

apartments.com™

You want what you want.

members on the Agriculture Committee, [send them an e mail](#).

Copyright 2003 by [KIROTV.com](#). All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

 [Email This Story](#)  [Print This Story](#)

[Back To Top](#)

 Part Of The IBS Network

© 2004, [KIRO](#).

[Click here for the privacy policy](#), By using this site, you accept the terms of our [Visitor Agreement](#).
[KIRO EEO Information](#) [Click here for advertising information](#).

[Site Map](#)