



HIDDEN HORROR: The windowless chicken factory at Wrawby Farm

SUNDAY MIRROR INVESTIGATES

By MARTIN COUTTS

SOME birds are so lame and deformed they can only drag themselves to the food and water troughs by their wings. Others stand motionless, too dazed or dying to move.

There are more than 36,000 chickens here in huge windowless sheds. The conditions they have to endure during their short, brutal lives are so horrific it defies belief.

Today the Sunday Mirror reveals the sickening reality of one factory farm which lies hidden beneath the cheerful image of the KFC fast-food chain, with its slogans "Finger Lickin' Good" and "Nobody Does Chicken Like KFC".

Undercover investigators went behind the scenes at Wrawby Farm, near Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire. Its owners, PD Hook (Broilers) Ltd, are contracted by Premier Fresh Foods, part of the huge 2 Sisters Food Group, to supply chickens that end up at KFC outlets and stores such as Tesco and Kwik Save.

KFC were so impressed by 2 Sisters' service that they made them their Supplier Of The Year in 2001. And 2 Sisters, who have an annual turnover of £500million, even boast of receiving RSPCA awards for their 'outstanding contribution to animal welfare'.

But our investigation at Wrawby Farm painted a different picture - one of cruelty and neglect.

In one shed where chickens had been taken away for slaughter there were dozens of carcasses littering the floor. In another - where scores of birds had died - their remains were being picked over by other chickens.

The findings will shock KFC, who have 500 outlets in Britain and employ 8,000 people. Originally called Kentucky Fried Chicken, they are the world's largest chicken fast-food chain with a worldwide turnover last year of \$4billion. Almost 900million birds were slaughtered to produce more than two billion chicken meals for the group last year.

We launched our probe with experts from animal welfare group the Hillside Animal Sanctuary after a tip-off about conditions at Wrawby Farm.

One investigator who shot a secret film there said: "I have investigated animal welfare for many years, but this easily ranks amongst some of the worst cruelty I have seen."

"When I went into the sheds I could hardly believe how crammed-in the birds were. It was difficult to move among them and the heat was unbearable. There were lots of dead and dying birds and many were terribly deformed."

"The conditions these birds were living in was inhumane - and if the public saw how they are reared before ending up on their table then they would be appalled."

Our findings come just weeks after animal rights group People For the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) announced they would be suing KFC in the USA.

PETA claims the company's advertising hides "grotesque abuses inflicted upon chickens by suppliers".

PETA's Director of European Campaigns Sean Gifford said: "KFC has said from the outset that they will not allow the animals to feel any pain... in fact every moment of these animals' lives is characterised by unmitigated misery."

"People need to understand that if they are eating chicken, they're supporting cruelty to animals and if they're eating at KFC, they're supporting a company that has done nothing to prevent the worst abuses of chickens on the farm, during transport and at slaughter."

In the US, PETA researchers

● HAVE YOU GOT A

DISTRESSED AND DYING IN A CRAMPED SHED.. NOBODY DOES CHICKEN LIKE KFC



BUCKETS OF CRUELTY: Densely packed sheds are the reality behind KFC's cheerful image.



SHOCKING: A bird pecks at a carcass



GRUESOME: Bloody remains on floor

Desperate birds peck at carcasses as thousands struggle to survive

found birds destined for KFC meals grow to full weight - 4lb 9oz - in only 41 days instead of the natural five or six months.

As a result, their heart and lungs came under such pressure that many died from organ failure.

These chickens are raised in huge sheds where there is initially plenty of room, but as they grow, conditions become crowded.

PETA has also demanded that chickens should be killed by gassing rather than electric stunning.

Last night Hillside Animal Sanctuary echoed PETA's concerns

and called on the Government to take urgent action. A spokesman said: "The scenes of appalling neglect we witnessed in these sheds were abhorrently cruel."

"As a supplier to such major supermarkets and food retailers you would expect these farms to be setting the highest welfare standards - but this farm is like something from the Dark Ages."

"We would ask the relevant Government department to take immediate action to put an end to this cruelty. Factory farming is simply about producing the largest

amount of animals in the shortest amount of time with animal welfare unimportant."

An RSPCA spokesman said: "We are extremely concerned at allegations of cruelty at this site. The RSPCA has for a long time campaigned for improvements to chicken farming and we would like to see this footage as a matter of urgency so we can assess it and, if necessary, investigate these allegations."

Questioned about Wrawby Farm, a KFC spokesperson said: "Although we only represent a very small part of 2 Sisters Food Group production,

we take all welfare matters very seriously and would take any evidence of maltreatment as a breach of our contract."

A spokesman for 2 Sisters said: "We take animal welfare extremely seriously and if there is any evidence that the required standards have not been met then we will take immediate remedial action."

A Tesco spokesman said: "We expect the highest standards from our suppliers and audit them regularly. We take allegations of this kind seriously and have already started to investigate them." And a

spokesman for Kwik Save said: "Our fresh meat departments are run by independent retail concessionaires."

"One such concessionaire has been using this farm to supply a very small amount of his weekly poultry requirement. He has now decided not to use the supplier in the future."

A director of farm owners PD Hook, Mark Wannell, 37, of Bampton, Oxfordshire, said: "The company has no comment."

● HILLSIDE Animal Sanctuary campaigns for the welfare of farm animals. Donations to: Hill Top Farm, Hall Lane, Frettenham, Norwich, NR12 7LT.

● COMMENT: Page 14

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THE LIFE OF A CHICKEN



BROILER chickens are hatched in giant incubators at hatcheries across Britain.

At a day old the chicks are stuffed into crates and taken to windowless rearing sheds.

Each chicken may have little more space than the size of an A4 sheet of paper.

For the first two weeks the chicks are kept warm using industrial heat lamps.

At three weeks they are half the size of an adult bird - growth that should take twice as long.

At 42 days old the birds are taken to a slaughterhouse.

They are hung upside down, then stunned with an electric shock and their throats cut.

Some are then put in boiling water to help remove feathers - and then the carcass is sent to restaurants.

MACCA: STOP THE SUFFERING



KINDER: Veggie alternative

BEATLES legend and veteran animal rights campaigner Sir Paul McCartney has called on KFC for an urgent shake-up of its farming practices.

"If KFC suppliers treated dogs or cats the way they treat chickens, they could be charged with the crime of cruelty to animals," he said.

"I would like to see KFC stop allowing chickens to be drugged, end the starvation of birds, stop burning the beaks of parent birds and make sure slaughter methods do not permit animals to be scalded to death."

"I am a vegetarian because I realise that even little chickens suffer pain and fear. These remarkable animals are deserving of at least a little kindness."