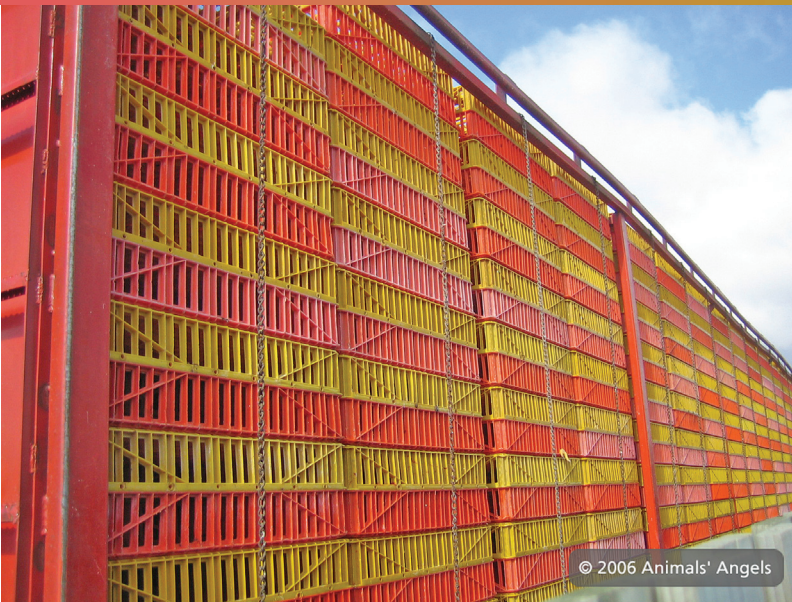


Jane – one tiny chicken foot. . . .



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By Twyla Francois

At Animals' Angels, we do something called a Wailing Wall as a kind of memorandum for animals who have touched us in a particular way. While in Toronto, Ontario on investigation into the Maple Leaf chicken slaughter plant located in the city, I saw an empty chicken transport trailer. It was completely clean (it had just gone through their pressure washer), except for one tiny chicken foot that had become lodged in one of the red and yellow crates. I thought it important to give the owner of this foot a name, and to tell her story as I imagine it might have been.

Jane was a baby broiler chicken who lived in a barren, crowded, filthy barn with 5,000 to 50,000 other baby birds. Bred to grow too quickly, she most likely suffered from crippling skeletal problems, and the foot that was left behind in the trailer could well have been part of a leg that was in constant pain.

When the day came for her to be trucked to slaughter, Jane would have still been a baby, blue-eyed and peeping, only 42 days old. Terrified, she would have been violently yanked by her feet and carried upside down with three or four other terrified birds and shoved roughly into a transport crate. Here in Canada, she could have been trucked for up to 36 hours without food or water in the cold and rain.

It was probably at the slaughterhouse that Jane's leg was amputated. Probably as she was being ripped from the crate, her foot jammed, and her body was pulled and separated from her leg. She would have screamed, but no one would have heard.

Inside the slaughterhouse, Jane's other leg was snapped into a shackle, where she hung, upside down from the conveyer belt, with her heart beating in terror, and her bleeding leg stump, and quite possibly she slipped from the shackle and fell to the floor before they cut her throat. With only one leg and one bleeding



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stump, she would have flopped around on the slippery surface of the kill floor, until someone kicked her, or threw her against the wall, or worse (as numerous investigations have shown).

If Jane was rehung in the shackle (as often happens), chances are she did not enter the electrified “stun” bath properly, but “properly” or otherwise, she suddenly feels to the core of her skeleton violent electric shocks pulsing and boring through her face, her eyes, her eardrums, her feathers, her skin, and her internal organs down through her legs and into her feet – into her foot and her leg stump. Now, she is not only mutilated but immobilized, because as research has shown, the electrified waterbath stunner is not designed to relieve pain and suffering, but only to paralyze a chicken’s muscles so that her feathers will come out more easily after she (or he) is dead.

Conscious, mutilated, pulsing with the burning sensations of the electric shocks – unable to move or cry out – Jane was dumped with other chickens into a tank of scalding water, and no one saved her. All that remained was her story to tell, the story that I saw imprinted in her sad, helpless little foot left behind in the trailer, recalling the life of Jane, a baby broiler chicken who was tortured to death. – *Twyla Francois*

Twyla Francois is the Canada Head Inspector for Animals’ Angels, an organization whose motto is *Wir sind bei den Tieren*, “We are with the animals.” Animals’ Angels was founded in 1998 by former Lutheran pastor Christa Blanke. The group specializes in fighting poultry and livestock transport and conducts investigations at live animal markets and auctions in Europe and North America. For more information: info@animals-angels.de. www.animals-angels.de

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Never To Crow

By Barbara Moffit

Dedicated to the millions of precious chickens who were snuffed out during the couple of hours that it took me to write this poem.

*Into man's automated world they hatch,
Ten thousand in a batch.
Peeping softly at first,
Oblivious of why they're on earth.*

*Shipped to a "farm,"
Crowded into a barn,
They huddle beneath a light,
Never knowing true day or night.*

*Never knowing a mother's soft wings,
Or what tomorrow brings,
They eat, they sleep, they grow too fast.
Too soon! Too soon! Six weeks are past.*

*With little room to move around,
Crippled birds hug the ground.
Legs have grown too weak to stand –
To bear bodies enfeebled for human demand.*

*Catchers are coming! They don't know why.
In darkness they're caught, unable to fly.
They're stuffed into crates thrown on trucks in heaps.
No one listens to terrified peeps.*

*Legs are broken, wings dislocated.
Who will weep for these birds ill-fated?
Born to be eaten, born to die,
A slaughterhouse is where their destiny lies.*

*Could a chicken have dreams? Can a human know
How these young ones would have loved to live and grow?
Instead of dying,
Never to crow.*

Barbara Moffit has been rescuing chickens from rural auctions for many years. Her home in Stillwater, Oklahoma is called “Wings-Haven.” Her article “Come to the AUCTION and See It Through Their Eyes” is in the Winter 2003 *Poultry Press* and can be read at www.upc-online.org/winter2003/auction.htm or purchased from UPC for \$5.