

DIRECT ACTION *DA* EVERYWHERE

Contact: Matt Johnson, matt@directactioneverywhere.com, 319.464.5985

“Roasting Pigs Alive” Exposé, Protest Campaign Culminates in Major Pork Supplier Ending Controversial “Ventilation Shutdown” Practice

*Twelve activists now face charges, including felonies, as campaign seeks industry-wide
ban*

[INVESTIGATION PHOTOS AND VIDEO](#)

(Credit: Direct Action Everywhere)



Thousands of dead and dying Iowa Select Farm pigs just after “ventilation shutdown” on May 19

(Credit: Direct Action Everywhere)

JULY 8, 2020, DES MOINES, IA - The fifth-largest US pork producer, Iowa Select Farms (ISF), has [announced](#) that it is no longer using a method of killing pigs [exposed](#) by [Direct Action Everywhere \(DxE\)](#) activists and industry whistleblowers last month.

The month-long investigation revealed pigs shrieking in agony as they're subjected to steam and heat exceeding 140 degrees in a barn with the ventilation ports sealed off. It's a process animal agriculture industry insiders call "Ventilation Shutdown" or VSD, which DxE captured on [hidden camera video](#). [Uncut 2.5 hour audio](#) reveals animals still alive 2-3 hours into the process, before workers carrying bolt guns walk through the barn, shooting pigs exhibiting obvious signs of life.

DxE is now taking the campaign to end VSD to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), which issues the [depopulation guidelines](#) touted as "industry standard" to ethically and legally justify the practice; [industry](#) and local law enforcement, as well as [Iowa's Attorney General](#) and [Secretary of Agriculture](#) have all cited the AVMA guidelines in claiming that the practice is not only lawful but humane. Investigators counter that ISF is in violation of Iowa state law, [citing](#) a legal opinion from a former federal prosecutor, as well as a veterinary opinion.

But some veterinarians have now publicly joined the activists' campaign, launching a "[Veterinarians Against VSD](#)" initiative to raise awareness within the profession, and encourage vets to add their name to a [letter](#) asking the AVMA to revise their guidelines and prohibit VSD. Over 100 vets, including many AVMA members, have already signed. The AVMA has not responded to DxE or the veterinarians asking a conversation about the practice.

An ISF whistleblower says the choice to use VSD was one driven by profit; it's simply cheaper to kill pigs via VSD than other methods.

DxE's lead investigator on the project, Matt Johnson, was [arrested](#) the day after it was released, as sheriff's deputies raided his Des Moines, Iowa, hotel room in the early morning hours. He faces felony burglary and misdemeanor charges, and is one of four activists who have been served with a [protective order](#) prohibiting them from contacting ISF employees. A total of 12 are now facing charges related to the investigation and [subsequent demonstrations](#) against ISF.

DxE says the public is opposed to industry abuses, but is denied truthful information by the animal agriculture's corrupting influence over our political system. And they say ISF is a prime example. Company owners Jeff and Deb Hansen and their son Michael have contributed over \$300,000 to the campaign of Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds, maintaining a [friendly relationship](#) with the state's top official. Within two weeks of the release of DxE's exposé, Reynolds [signed the state's latest "ag-gag" statute](#) into law, after legislators had [discussed DxE by name](#) in deliberating the bill.

But DxE says people everywhere are wising up.

"An element of good that has emerged from the ravages of COVID-19, and of this campaign, is that the longstanding systemic abuses of animal agriculture have been profoundly exposed for the whole world to see," Johnson said. "It's a catastrophe for animals, workers, the environment, and public health, but now even the industry's own employees and veterinarians are rising up against it."

As part of its #CancelAnimalAg campaign, DxE is [calling on](#) government officials everywhere to address the impact of animal agriculture amid the coronavirus crisis. Rather than doubling-down with subsidies to continue propping up the industry, activists are calling for an outright end to the industry.

Johnson said, “When we have a system that is fundamentally broken -- with government reinforcing, rather than regulating, an abusive industry which only serves those at the very top -- it’s left to ordinary people to take action ourselves and hold our elected officials accountable to the will of the people.”

Investigators with [Direct Action Everywhere \(DxE\)](#) enter farms, slaughterhouses, and other agricultural facilities to document abuses and rescue sick and injured animals. DxE’s investigatory work has been featured in [The New York Times](#), [ABC Nightline](#), and a [viral Glenn Greenwald exposé](#). DxE activists led the 2019 grassroots effort to [ban fur products in California](#). Activists have been [subjected to FBI raids](#) and [felony prosecutions](#) for these investigations and rescues. Visit Direct Action Everywhere on [Facebook](#), at [directactioneverywhere.com](#), and on Twitter [@DxEverywhere](#).

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