

Illegal grisly corpse pit found by animal rights activists

New Zealand Open Rescue

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Yesterday afternoon animal rights activists from New Zealand Open Rescue discovered a fly-infested pit filled with rotting broiler chicken corpses behind a Foxton factory farm. Activists say the dump is illegal as the corpses were piled up, along with household refuse, in an open pit behind the farm. Many bodies were torn apart and had been partially eaten by predators. Other corpses were maggot infested. One chicken was discovered alive but injured among the corpses, a clear breach of animal welfare legislation.

A complaint has been made to Horizons Regional Council who are now investigating the site.

Activists from Open Rescue were investigating a pig factory farm in Bergin Road, Foxton, when they discovered the hidden pit. Open Rescue activist Tom Wright said he noticed something was not right when he saw a chicken foot hanging from what he had assumed to be a pile of rubbish. 'I discovered a pit filled with household trash and about 100 chicken corpses. Then I saw one of the bird's move'.

'This bird was obviously a runt which had been thrown alive into the pit like trash and left to die. Deliberately throwing a living bird into a pit full of corpses is a breach of the Animal Welfare Act and is an arrest-able offence' he said.

The bird had crippled legs, was unable to stand or walk and was in need of immediate veterinary attention. In this condition, the bird was defenseless against predation and would inevitably suffer from starvation and dehydration. The activists removed the bird and have sought veterinary help.

Another activist, Mark Eden, said 'Every time we visit factory farms we find evidence of illegal animal cruelty. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry are supposedly in charge of enforcing animal welfare standards but no one bothers to inspect the farms. If the government was serious about animal welfare they would be inspecting farms and enforcing the laws themselves, instead of leaving it to volunteer groups like us'.

New Zealand Open Rescue are asking MAF to make a formal investigation and prosecute whoever was responsible for dumping a live chicken into the pit. The activists have notified the Horizons Regional Council who are now investigating whether the property owner has resource consent to dump hundreds of chickens alongside household waste in an open, fly-infested pit.