

# Fact Sheet: HSUS/CNN “Downer Pigs” Report

## *Reporters’ Spin Influenced by Animal Rights Involvement*



### Overview

On December 8 and 9, 2010, CNN aired two segments focusing on the Humane Society of the United States’ (HSUS) campaign against “downer pigs.” HSUS provided CNN with undated footage allegedly taken from an Iowa processing facility that showed the slaughter process. HSUS was referred to as simply the “Humane Society” throughout the clips, although HSUS has no connection to local shelters. Both segments incorporated images unrelated to the discussion, including clips from HSUS’ Bushway Packing veal investigation, hens in cages that appeared to be in poor condition, and veal calves tethered in stalls.

HSUS representatives Paul Shapiro and Dr. Michael Greger appeared on the first segment with CNN reporter Nicole Lapin, and implied that processing “downer pigs” is both inhumane and a threat to public health. National Pork Producers Council representative Dr. Jennifer Greiner also appeared, stating that all pigs are examined by a veterinarian before entering the food supply and that passing a law banning “downer pigs” would waste 41 million pounds of safe pork. HSUS’ images of slaughter played in the background as Greiner spoke.

The second segment aired on “Issues with Jane Velez-Mitchell” and the host was outspokenly critical of the entire animal agriculture industry. Velez-Mitchell described modern agriculture as “horrific and barbaric” and “obviously cruel.” She cited the Pew Commission’s report on Industrial Farm Animal Production as proof that agriculture is a threat to public health and is to blame for H1N1. The Dec. 8 clip of Paul Shapiro ran and Nicole Lapin appeared on the show to add her opinions of the issue. Lapin said that this wasn’t a matter of “bad apples” but that the entire industry was at fault. Mitchell added that pigs have a higher IQ than dogs. The reporters ended the segment by encouraging viewers to donate to HSUS or Farm Sanctuary’s “Petition for Pigs.”

### Video available at:

<http://us.cnn.com/video/?/video/us/2009/12/08/lapin.downer.pigs.cnn>

<http://us.cnn.com/video/?/video/bestoftv/2009/12/09/jvm.downer.pigs.cnn>

## Background on Reporters

Nicole Lapin has been a vegan for 10 years and was recently ranked in the “Top 20 Under 30” in the April 2009 edition of *VegNews*. She was on the Honorary Committee for the HSUS’ 23<sup>rd</sup> Genesis Awards, an event honoring those that are aligned with HSUS’ campaign areas, such as actively promoting vegetarianism, criticizing animal agriculture, and advocating against puppy mills.

Jane Velez-Mitchell has received two Genesis awards from HSUS for past news segments. She is also a vegan and is a more outspoken supporter of animal rights than Lapin. She was honored at the 2009 Animal Rights Conference in Los Angeles with the Celebrity Animal Activist Award. Velez-Mitchell has said Ingrid Newkirk, founder of PETA, is one of her personal heroes. She defended a controversial 2009 PETA billboard that stated: “Save the Whales, Go Vegetarian,” despite criticism that it was demeaning to those who struggle with their weight. Velez-Mitchell has appeared at Farm Sanctuary’s Walk for the Animals and has outspokenly criticized animal research and testing. In her book, “iWant,” she said that “One day, humans will look back and view the treatment of animals in the early twenty-first century as barbaric and the mark of a primitive society.” She has also inferred that H1N1 is a result of modern animal agriculture.

## For More Information

Guidelines: National Pork Board’s Pork Quality Assurance “PQA Plus” program-

<http://www.pork.org/Producers/PQA/PQAPlusEdBook.pdf> and Transportation Quality Assurance “TQA” program-  
<http://www.pork.org/Producers/PQA/PQAPlusEdBook.pdf>

Organization: NPPC statement on safety of products from fatigued hogs- <http://www.nppc.org/issues/fatiguedhogs.htm>

Article: 10,000 Iowa pork producers are now PQA Plus certified-[http://www.porkmag.com/directories.asp?pgID=675&ed\\_id=8506](http://www.porkmag.com/directories.asp?pgID=675&ed_id=8506)

Article: Difference between non-ambulatory “downer” and fatigued pigs-

[http://www.porkmag.com/directories.asp?pgID=728&ed\\_id=3377](http://www.porkmag.com/directories.asp?pgID=728&ed_id=3377)

Article: Background information about Pew Commission’s findings-

[http://www.animalagalliance.org/current/home.cfm?Section=061708\\_What&Category=Media\\_Corner](http://www.animalagalliance.org/current/home.cfm?Section=061708_What&Category=Media_Corner)

Timeline: Animal welfare actions by pork producers- [http://www.porkmag.com/directories.asp?pgID=675&ed\\_id=7273](http://www.porkmag.com/directories.asp?pgID=675&ed_id=7273)

## Next Steps

Viewers can contact CNN.com to advocate for future spin-free reporting of agriculture issues and to share their support of pork producers:

<http://www.cnn.com/feedback/forms/form4a.html?5> and <http://www.cnn.com/feedback/forms/form1.html?15>