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Children watch in horror as marksmen round up escaped cows in field next to hospital... and shoot them all

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- **Escaped farm animals slaughtered 'on welfare grounds'**
- **Neighbouring hospital shuts curtains to block the sight**

Children screamed in horror as a herd of 30 cows were shot dead after they escaped from a nearby field.

The group of youngsters- some aged just eight - were playing outside close to their homes when the animals were slaughtered.

Bosses at a nearby hospital even ordered all the curtains to be drawn so patients would not have to witness the upsetting carnage.



Grisly scene: The carcasses of 30 cows shot dead by police marksmen lay scattered on a field in Wrexham, north Wales today

Last night council officers said the decision to kill the cows was taken to avoid further distress and suffering to the animals.

But furious residents have condemned the decision to kill the Friesian cows saying they had been safely rounded up and herded into a field.

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Another resident, Edward Jones, added: 'How can shooting the cows dead where they stood avoid further distress and suffering?

'To slaughter 30 healthy cows - each worth several hundred pounds - simply because they had escaped from a field is one of the most ridiculous things I have ever heard of.'

He said: 'There were children in the area and they had seen the cows in the field but the next thing they saw they were shot and their bodies loaded onto wagons.'



Removal: Locals remove the bodies from the field close to a hospital, where children were among the patients to witness the horror

Another resident, who discovered some of the cows on her property, said: 'I can't believe all the animals had to be shot. It's appalling what's happened.'

'All I can think is they must have found something wrong with their health because before long we could hear the shots ringing out across the village.'

The cows escaped from farmland in Chirk, North Wales early on Friday morning last week and had wandered into gardens on a housing estate.

Police were called and around eight officers managed to round the animals into a field close to Chirk Community Hospital.

But after an inspection by environmental health and animal welfare officers later the same day, council bosses gave the order for all the animals to be destroyed.

Mr Jones said: 'Children were screaming and in tears because they had gone to see the cows in the field and then we heard shots ringing out.'

'It was horrific. One shot after another sounded and some of the youngsters were hysterical and traumatised by it.'



Horror: The animals had congregated in the field after escaping from a nearby farm. The owner now faces a possible prosecution on safety grounds

A spokesman for North Wales Police said staff at the hospital had to close the curtains on some of the wards to block the distressing sight.

He said the final decision to slaughter the 30 animals was not taken by police and officers had no involvement in it.

He said: 'There were discussions between the council, the Welsh Assembly Government and the animal welfare agency and it was decided the animals would have to be put down on welfare grounds.'

A spokesman for Wrexham Council said on Friday: "Officers were called to the Chirk area and worked with the police, animal health and welfare authorities to try to resolve the issue.'

Wrexham Council confirmed it took the decision to humanely destroy the cattle at Ley Farm in Chirk under Section 18 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

Andy Lewis, chief housing and public protection officer said: 'The operation was carried out to prevent further suffering and distress to the cattle.

'The public were excluded from the area. The decision on the location used to carry out the destruction of the bovines and the timing of the cull was agreed following risk assessment and in the interest of public safety.

'The incident may result in court action being taken against the owner of the animals and no further comment can be made at this time'.

Two lorries arrived on Saturday to take away the carcasses for incineration.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1366097/Cow-slaughter-anger-marksmen-gun-herd-field-hospital.html#ixzz2kLxVUmLf>

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