

Media Release

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BSA finds high public interest in *Sunday* bobby calves programme

The Broadcasting Standards Authority (BSA) has found a *Sunday* item, which exposed the alleged mistreatment of bobby calves was an important current affairs item which carried high public interest and did not breach broadcasting standards.

The item, broadcast on TV ONE on 29 November 2015, was based on evidence gathered by animal rights campaigners and alleged that bobby calves were subjected to mistreatment by some members of New Zealand's dairy industry. The item contained footage of cruelty to the bobby calves including being beaten by slaughter-house workers.

The Authority found that the broadcast about alleged mistreatment of bobby calves carried a high level of public interest. It was an important current affairs piece which used the medium of free-to-air television to draw attention to, and inform the wider community about, a legitimate issue.

The Authority noted that after the broadcast, several prosecutions were taken against companies and individuals, due in part to what was revealed in footage included in the programme.

"This supports the validity of what was revealed in the programme and the impact of the broadcast in forcing positive change within the dairy industry" said the Authority.

The Authority found that the item did not breach a number of broadcasting standards. The Authority considered that the item discussed a controversial issue of public importance and was sufficiently balanced. The perspective of the dairy industry – that the actions represented 'a very small minority of ... the dairy industry in New Zealand' – was given both within the item and in other broadcasts.

'The purpose of the item was to highlight and attempt to expose instances of bad practice within the wider dairy industry... so viewers were not left with a misleading impression of the extent of the problem', said the Authority.

ENDS

For more information contact Nicole Hickman on 027 313 0179.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The full decision is available at <http://bsa.govt.nz/decisions/latest>.

The programme was broadcast on 29 November 2015. The decision was made under the previous Radio Code of Broadcasting Practice. The new Codebook has been in force since 1 April 2016 and is available at <http://bsa.govt.nz/standards/overview>.

ABOUT THE BROADCASTING STANDARDS AUTHORITY

The Broadcasting Standards Authority is an independent body that oversees the broadcasting standards regime in New Zealand. We do this by determining complaints that broadcasts have breached standards, by doing research and also by providing information about broadcasting standards.

The Authority members who determined this complaint were Leigh Pearson, Te Raumawhitu Kupenga and Paula Rose.

For more information see our website: www.bsa.govt.nz.