

First complaint against market, owner says

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market as "hiding a dirty little secret from the nearby community".

She wrote the livestock area reminded her of "a third-world livestock market where animals are constricted in tiny cages unable to move, then stuffed into onion bags awaiting a horrible fate at some other location."

She also called it "a little shop of horrors ... where customers wait in the shadows at 3 a.m. to make their purchases."

In her petition, she also claimed there were small dead pigs laid out on flattened cardboard boxes.

Ms. Clemenceau, 50, told The Sun-Tribune, she saw caged chickens being dropped to the ground from waist level and animals with broken legs.

In response to the petition, Mr. McMeekin's office told The Sun-Tribune it has brought these issues to the attention of the OSPCA.

"We also take allegations of illegal slaughter very seriously. (The agriculture ministry) will investigate based on the concerns raised in the petition. As this matter may be the subject of an investigation, it wouldn't be appropriate to discuss details," wrote Amber Anderson, press secretary and issues manager for Mr. McMeekin in an e-mail to The Sun-Tribune.

None of the allegations have been proven.

The livestock market, which sells mostly chickens but also pigeons and rabbits, according to Stouffville Country Market owner Norm Clements, has been in operation for 60 years.

Mr. Clements has owned the market since 1982.

The livestock market operates from about 3 to 11 a.m. every Saturday and attracts roughly 100 people, he told The Sun-Tribune.

'We would have been shut down 50 years ago if we weren't doing it properly'

"A lot of cultures like live chickens," Mr. Clements said, adding buyers come from all over the place.

Until now, there has never been a complaint filed against the market, according to Mr. Clements.

"(The OSPCA inspectors) love it. They say (we) do everything perfect ... All the government agencies love us because we do it exactly the way we're told," Mr. Clements said.

"We would have been shut down 50 years ago if we weren't doing it properly," he said.

Mr. Emmerson first learned of the petition shortly after it was launched as his town e-mail address is on it.



WAYNE EMMERSON: Stouffville mayor says he visited market last weekend for first-hand look.

'Because I live in this town and I've seen some of this with my own eyes. It's cruel.'

also posted comments against the livestock market, including M.L. Hammond, who wrote: "Because I live in this town and I've seen some of this with my own eyes. It's cruel!"

Another local, Trish Stedman wrote: "I grew up in Stouffville and to this day, people still tell me that when they think of Stouffville, they think of the flea market. I'd like to see this gem returned to its former glory and not tarnished by cruelty and ignorance."

Mr. Emmerson said he has contacted Ms. Clemenceau and the Whitchurch-Stouffville residents regarding the petition and their comments, but had not heard back from them as of Tuesday.

A protest is planned for Dec. 15.

"The animals at this market, the way they're being treated I've never seen before," said 18-year-old Whitby resident Nicholas Wilvert, one of the protest's organizers.

"It's very blatant cruelty to animals," he said.

"It's sad," was all Mr. Clements could say when The Sun-Tribune informed him of the planned protest.

The mayor went to the livestock market this past Saturday to get a first-hand look at its operation.

"I didn't see anything different from what I've seen before," he told The Sun-Tribune.

More than 750 people from around the world have signed the petition, including people from France, Florida, the United Kingdom and Germany.

"How do they know what's going on around here?" Mr. Emmerson wondered.

A few Whitchurch-Stouffville residents

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