



To: Rebecca Johnson
From: Mimi Bekhechi, PETA Australia

20 November 2019

Via e-mail: neil-rebecca@ecn.net.au

Dear Ms Johnson,

I hope this message finds you well. I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) to suggest some additional pages for titles in your Steve Parish Story Book collection. These additions would make the books about animals farmed for their flesh and fleece, among other things, more accurate and honest and help you tell the *whole* story of their lives.

For example, in *Elliot the Piglet*, you could include images of the cramped farrowing crates in which most mother pigs languish after giving birth, unable to bond with their babies. You could also include a picture of a 12-hour-old piglet being killed by blunt trauma to the head. Of course, for accuracy, at the end of the story, Elliot should be prodded onto the abattoir kill floor, thrash around inside a gas chamber, and be dismembered.

Clover the cow's story could begin a little earlier than her pregnancy and depict her trapped in a "cattle crush", being forcibly impregnated via artificial insemination. At the end of her story, she could attempt to flee from the abattoir as she smells the blood of the herd members killed before her – but inevitably, her throat would be slit, too.

Neville the sheep's tale could begin as he's restrained by the legs, screaming in pain and fear as his tail is cut off and swathes of skin are carved away from his sensitive backside. Later, his fear of shearing could be validated as he's beaten in the face with clippers and carelessly slashed during shearing. And finally, his gaping wounds could be hastily sewn up without pain relief.

Animal agriculture industries like to hide their cruelty behind "welfare measures", and your series reinforces their misleading claims that these make any difference to animals. In reality, no matter the conditions in which animals are farmed, they all have an interest in living, just as humans do, and – as portrayed in your books – have unique personalities. Yet they're all subjected to a terrifying early death at the abattoir.

As you're clearly captivated by animals, I'm sure you'll agree that it's important for impressionable children to learn to respect them, not to see them as commodities to be used and abused. If the full story of farmed animals' miserable lives and violent deaths isn't one we want to tell children, we should strive to end the injustice – not present kids with fallacies implying that these animals are better off thanks to the humans who use their bodies for profit.

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OF ANIMALS

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You claim that your books are based on the "52 virtues, including caring, honesty, forgiveness and unity". However, the glaring omissions within them represent a missed opportunity to be genuinely honest with children. The treatment inflicted on the animals kids love – such as "dear, gentle Clover" – is as far from a display of caring and unity as possible. By portraying animal agriculture as unproblematic, we not only rob children of their natural empathy for animals but also champion practices that bear [significant responsibility for environmental destruction](#), thereby robbing them of a future, too.

We'd love to see your storytelling evolve to teach children that animals are not ours to use in any way.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mimi Bekhechi". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Mimi Bekhechi
Campaigns Adviser