

# General Guidelines and Check List for Scene Investigation in Animal Mutilation Cases

**When initially notified, the animal mutilation investigator should determine as much information as possible from the caller. The investigation itself should include:**

**A. Pre-plan investigation:**

- 1. Owner's name, address, phone number.....
- 2. Individual animal identification (species, breed, age, sex, hair color, tag number, marks, weight, etc.) .....
- 3. Number of animals in the herd.....
- 4. Management practices, feeding, breeding.....
- 5. Herd health (morbidity and mortality in the several past years; losses experienced through animal deaths in similar conditions; vaccination practices and history) .....
- 6. Description of illness signs (if available) or health history of the dead animal.....
- 7. Date/time when the animal was last observed before death and condition at that time.....
- 8. Date/time when the death occurred (if known) or when the animal was discovered.....
- 9. Location and geographical characteristics of the property and the place where the animal was found (pasture, barn, etc.) .....
- 10. Distance from roads, highways, localities, neighboring farms, waters, wooden areas, etc.)
- 11. Previous similar occurrences on the premises and/or the proximity.....
- 12. Weather conditions at the time when the death presumably happened and during the time until the carcass was discovered. ....

**B. At the scene of investigation:**

- 1. Date/time of the investigation.....
- 2. Participants in the investigation; designation of investigation team and tasks.....
- 3. Assessment of the weather conditions (outside temperature, wind, precipitation) .....
- 4. Immediate environmental data: type of soil, vegetation; presence of preagonic struggle signs (pedaling signs on the soil, snow, mud, etc.); inspection for vehicle tracks
- 5. Visual inspection:
  - a. Nutritional condition.....
  - b. Body and body parts position; orientation with regard to compass cardinal points
  - c. Integrity of the body: missing body parts, description of the aspect of the remaining tissues, with regard to the aspect of the edges (tearing, chewing, sharp instrument cut, cautery, and other artificial means) .....
  - d. Hair coat condition (uniformity, presence of foreign materials, such as leaves, grass, leaves, soil, etc.) .....

- e. Presence of swellings, fractures (legs, horns, tail), parasites, wounds) .....
- 6. Other information regarding the event:
  - a. Odors emanating from the carcass and/or surrounding .....
  - b. Behavior of the other animals in the herd before and after the animal died; reaction to the presence of carcass.....
  - c. Behavior of wild animals in the surroundings (coyotes, foxes, wild dogs, etc.) .....
  - d. Presence and behavior of wild birds in the area.....
  - e. Usual incidence of predators and scavengers in the area.....
  - f. Unusual perceptions of the owner: lights, noises, smells noticed before, during or after the death of the animal; any strange perceptions, events, or impressions that could be related in a way to the death of the animal .....
  - g. Occurrence of similar cases in the neighborhood in the past.....
  - h. How such events are perceived by the local population; what are their beliefs .....
  - i. Similar cases reported and investigated by local authorities, veterinarians, and other bodies. ....
- 7. Photography, videotaping .....
- 8. Geiger counting .....
- 9. Microwave, electric and magnetic field measurements .....
- 10. Plant and soil sampling .....
- 11. Close inspection of the body, photography .....
- 12. Necropsy: external and internal examination of the carcass (see the necropsy protocol); possible cause of death.....
- 13. Photography of significant lesions .....
- 14. Sampling of different tissues for laboratory analyses (see the sample collection protocol) .....
- 15. Removal of the carcass (disposal, cremation, burying, refrigeration) .....

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