
Carmarthenshire: Livestock Auctioneers Fined After Tragic Cow Incident

Description

A livestock auction company has been fined following a tragic incident where a 75-year-old man was killed by a cow that had escaped from a livestock market in Wales.

On November 19, 2022, Huw Evans, a father of two, was struck down and trampled by a cow that had been auctioned at the Whitland Livestock Market. The market is operated by J.J. Morris Limited, a company with over 30 years of experience in the industry. The cow had been unloaded into a pen but somehow managed to escape and ran towards Whitland, Carmarthenshire.

As Mr. Evans, a resident of Whitland, crossed the junction at North Road and West Street, he was attacked by the runaway cow. The incident left him with multiple injuries. Despite being flown to the University Hospital of Wales for treatment, he succumbed to his injuries six days later, on November 25, 2022.

During the chaos, a worker from J.J. Morris Limited was injured while trying to capture the cow. The animal continued its rampage, running towards Whitland Rugby Club and a nearby railway line before Dyfed-Powys Police managed to capture and euthanize it.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) revealed significant shortcomings in J.J. Morris Limited's safety protocols. The company had failed to implement basic physical control measures to prevent such escapes. Furthermore, the risk assessment conducted by the company was deemed inadequate as it referenced control measures that were not in place at the market.

In a heartfelt victim personal statement, Mr. Evans's son, Dafydd, expressed the profound impact of the loss: "Dad was my best friend and I miss him terribly. He was taken from us too soon. Losing Dad has had a tremendous effect on both myself and my brother. Because of this incident, Dad's grandsons will never fully know him personally and he will not see them grow up."

J.J. Morris Limited, based on High Street in Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £75,000 and ordered to pay £5,047.55 in costs at Llanelli Magistrates' Court on June 20, 2024.

Rhys Hughes, the HSE inspector overseeing the case, stated: "This tragic incident was foreseeable and preventable. The risk posed by cattle escaping from the livestock mart should have been identified, and effective control measures implemented. The case highlights the importance of following industry guidance, which is readily accessible and outlines the requirements to safely manage cattle."

The prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Rebecca Schwartz, with support from HSE paralegal officer Imogen Isaac. This case underscores the critical need for stringent safety measures in the livestock auction industry to prevent such avoidable tragedies.

CATEGORY

1. Carmarthenshire

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