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Case:  
Hog killing in Alabama, 2007

### Veterinary Statement

Background: I was sent photos and information from Rhonda Shearer of the hog killing case by a young boy using a .50 caliber pistol. It was further reported that the hog was shot several times over a three hour period before dying. The hog was not a wild boar but a domestic farm pig.

#### Photograph Analysis:

The photos are of the deceased hog taken in ventral recumbency and then with the hog strung up by the hind leg and hanging above the ground. On the left side there appears to be four bullet wounds seen in the lateral abdominal region. There is visible blood trails from the two most dorsal of these wounds extending ventrally. There appears to be a bullet wound at the cranial left shoulder region but no clear blood trail on skin surface. On the right side, there is approximately one bullet wound seen in the lateral chest region and one on at the cranial right shoulder region. There is visible blood trails from both wounds extending cranially and over the side of the head. The fact that there is blood trails going ventrally on the body and then seen dripping down the body when hung is supportive of significant hemorrhage from the bullet wounds and bullet injuries.

Conclusions: There was no other photograph evidence or reports indicating any other types of injury to the hog than gunshots. There is a question of the use of a .50 caliber pistol on a hog of this size. They have low velocity and it is questionable on this weapon being effective to kill an animal of this size. One of the gunshot wounds appears to be in the right lateral chest region and right shoulder area. Bullets from a 50 cal pistol may not even penetrate such a mass of tissue to a sufficient depth to impact the heart. This is further supported by the blood trails from the wounds. The right chest and should wounds do not have blood trails that extend ventrally as would be seen if the animal was standing or laying down on his chest; or dorsally as would be seen if the animal had fallen down on his side. This is supportive that these wounds were later than the left abdominal wounds which show more hemorrhage. The left side gunshots were all located in the abdominal area. The blood trail from these wounds is more substantial and ventral which is consistent with the animal being ambulatory or laying on his abdomen. Abdominal wounds are extremely painful. Injuries to the abdomen are one of the most painful injuries an animal can have. The hog would have been in excruciating pain and vocalizing. The injuries to the body cavities,

depending on their individual penetration, would have caused hemorrhage resulting in shock and eventual cardiorespiratory arrest. The shock would have been exacerbated by the severe pain the animal was in. Based on the lack of a conclusive 'kill shot' and the prolonged time to die, the cause of death is most likely shock and exsanguination primarily from the injuries to the abdominal organs.

Dr. Melinda Merck 2/26/08