

Where & How does Emoya Source Meat for the Big Cats?

The diet of lions consist of 100% protein (meat).

A challenge most sanctuaries in South Africa face, is to source sufficient, good quality meat. There are various options, all tainted with ethical dilemma:

- (1) Carcasses of culled, surplus wild antelope. It is Emoya's first choice. It is the most healthy and natural diet for the big cats, expensive and not freely available. In our opinion, it is the most ethical source of meat. The antelope is culled with a single head shot, when farmers have to cull surplus animals.
- (2) Horses or donkeys which have to be destroyed. It is not an option for Emoya. We have several rescued donkeys and horses living out their natural lives on Bahati Estates. However, it may be a solution to some sanctuaries.
- (3) Beef carcasses from abattoirs unfit for human consumption, bred in feedlots. Cattle are stunned with a captive bolt pistol which keeps the cattle unconscious until death when their throats are slit. This option is the most cost effective. There are no large abattoirs near Emoya and we believe that the hormones and antibiotics the cattle are raised on will eventually be to the detriment of the lions. There is also scientific proof that beef is not the optimal meat to feed to captive

big cats. We do not agree with the method of killing. Emoya has never collected carcasses from beef abattoirs.

(4) Carcasses of discarded or unproductive dairy cows and their male calves. Emoya has never explored this option.

(5) Chicken carcasses from factory poultry farming, death due to “natural causes” after living in despicable conditions. Emoya bought carcasses to supplement the feeding at a low cost but the quality was unacceptable.

(6) Chicken carcasses produced for human consumption either too big or too small or not symmetrical for the upper market South African supermarkets. These carcasses are excellent quality, quite expensive and not consistently available.

How can we rescue lions and tigers but keep them alive by feeding them meat from unethical resources? What is the alternative? To euthanise the big cats? These are the questions we have to ask ourselves. The fact is, that there is no such thing as “humane killing.” In our opinion, there are no true ethical sources of meat for captive big cats in South Africa.

Having made the decision to feed the best possible meat, Emoya acquires carcasses of culled surplus antelope directly from farmers, professional cullers, and since 2016 from service providers.

Professional cullers are mostly qualified as professional hunters.

Whether or not the carcasses were purchased directly from the farmer, culler or service provider, the animals would have been destroyed by the culler(s) or farmer.

What is a professional hunter (PH)?

A PH is generally known as a person who takes clients on organised hunting expeditions. He/she tracks down the animal and assists the client to shoot it. Thereafter the PH oversees the skinning of the carcass and if necessary preparation of a trophy. A PH is also qualified in Nature Conservation law, SCI & RW measuring methods and other applicable subjects to hunting and or culling, including ballistics, spoor ID theory, bird and mammal identification, tree identification and veld interpretation, CITES etc.

What is a culler?

A culler is a person employed to cull animals. There are many arguments for and against culling. In South Africa culling is executed by professional marksmen (PH's).

Emoya is situated in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. Limpopo is well known as one of the "hunting meccas" of South Africa. Most farm

owners are either qualified as professional hunters or employ professional hunters to manage their farms.

From 2013 to May 2016, some carcasses Emoya bought were delivered either by the farmer or the culler, however most of the carcasses, (bought or donated), were collected by Emoya.

It is true that a few of our neighbours, their managers or their workers have been on Bahati Estates, on which Emoya is situated. In South Africa many farm workers are skilled as skinners.

Coert Erasmus, whom we bought carcasses from occasionally between 2015 and May 2016, delivered carcasses to Emoya. Erasmus stayed over at Bahati Estates infrequently, assisting with slaughtering. Erasmus never lived with Savannah Heuser as stated by ADI, Kim Dijkman and Jay Marie. Erasmus and Savannah never were in a relationship.

Erasmus was paid R80,000 during March 2016 to procure meat for the lions rescued by ADI. Mid May 2016, Erasmus informed Emoya that he could not supply Emoya with the meat. Erasmus did not refund Emoya. Running out of meat to feed the lions, Emoya accepted a donated giraffe carcass. Since July 2016, Erasmus has only been on Emoya once. During this visit he apologised for letting Emoya down and promised to pay the money back.

From June to September 2016, there was difficulty sourcing meat for all the lions at Emoya. Emoya paid for the meat, collected the meat and when no meat was available, Emoya had to cull antelope on their property and slaughter several of their Nguni cattle. ADI was fully aware of this situation.

In July 2016, a friend of Minunette, Peet Wessels, suggested sourcing the meat accordingly to the standards required by Dr Caldwell. A quote was sent to ADI and Jan Creamer accepted the quote.

As of October 2016, meat purchased for the lions at Emoya was through a supplier. The supplier dealt with cullers, professional hunters or the farmers directly.

To supply 6,000kg of meat per month, 12,000kg of animals must be sourced. If the average antelope weighs 250kg on the hoof, it means, 48 carcasses are needed every month at Emoya.