

Tigress to track the story of an elephant's carcass

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Tigress Productions has won an order from Animal Planet US and Channel 4 for a doc about the scavengers that slowly demolish a dead elephant.

The one off **Food Chain** will follow an elephant from the moments before its death until there is nothing left but the bones - documenting all the animals that feed on its 15,000lb carcass in between.

"First in are the vultures, which don't even wait for the moment of death before pecking out the eyes. Their squabbling and screeching alerts every lion and hyena in the vicinity - and then come the flies, the jackals, the rats, the ants, the beetles and the worms, until there's nothing left but bleached bones," Tigress said.

The programme will show how more than 40% of an elephant carcass is consumed by flies and maggots - which collectively raise the air temperature around the elephant by as much as 20°C.

Tigress has gone into pre-production on the doc, which it will film using remote-controlled cameras, but shooting has been unexpectedly delayed.

Tigress creative director Dick Colthurst told Broadcast: "The rains in Africa have been so good that all the elephants they'd expect to start dying from starvation are in fine fettle.

"It could be October before any elephants are stressed enough to start dying, and November or December before we would be transmitting anything."

Animal Planet will air the show in the US and internationally. It will be distributed by Endemol, which acquired Tigress from IMG Media last November.

Colthurst will exec the show and the producer has yet to be appointed. It was commissioned by Tanya Shaw for C4, where it will air as a 90-minute special, and by Marc Etkind for Animal Planet, which will run it at 60 minutes.