

November 8, 2000

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U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Dockets Management Branch
5600 Fishers Lane, Rm. 1061
Rockville, MD 20857

Re: **Docket # 98P-0151/CP1**

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in support of the petition to prohibit the slaughter of downed animals and to end the downed animal trade. Although it has been argued that these sick, injured animals no longer able to stand are really not suitable for human consumption, this is of little concern to me. I am a vegetarian and do not plan to ingest them. The USDA, too, apparently is not concerned that these animals represent an increased risk for bacterial contamination. Otherwise it might have to reverse its decision to classify as "safe for human consumption" those animal carcasses laden with cancers, lymphomas, sores, infectious arthritis, and intestinal diseases. I'll leave it to the meat eaters to chew on that one.

What I *am* concerned about is the unconscionable cruelty of the downed animal trade. It is simply not right to let any creature suffer in pain when we have the wherewithal to prevent or alleviate it. As you know, the methods by which these animals are moved are quite inhumane; they are dragged by chains or ropes, or pushed by tractors, often after they have been beaten in an attempt to get them moving again.

These animals should not have to linger in pain, waiting for slaughter, just because it is economically advantageous or expedient. If it is true, as industry experts have claimed, that 90% of these downed animals' injuries and illnesses could have been prevented with better care and handling, then why don't we encourage the meat industry to do just that? By closing the market for downed animals, perhaps the meat industry will come up with improved methods for keeping their animals "healthy" and less prone to injury.

Mahatma Gandhi once said that "you can judge the moral progress of a nation by the way its animals are treated." Then if, as we have demonstrated here, we cannot act humanely and compassionately toward the most vulnerable members of our society, we must certainly be a people in moral bankruptcy. We must do better and end the slaughter and the sale of these suffering animals.

Sincerely,

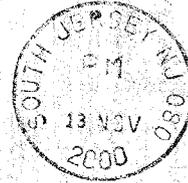


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