

Stephanie Schuele, P.E.
1041 North 475 East
Chesterton, IN 46304

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Food & Drug Administration
Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
5630 Fishers Lane, #1061
Rockville, MD 20852

Topic: Docket No. **97N-0074**

As the USDA is accepting public comments on how to decrease foodborne illness (Docket #97N-0074), I suggest the elimination of forced molting, a process that is not only inhumane but increases the risk of salmonella in egg-layers.

On July 26, 1999, the National Turkey Federation held a meeting. Food Chemical News reported, "Feed withdrawal from turkeys and chickens has long been shown to markedly increase contamination with both Salmonella and Campylobacter. The birds look for other food sources during feed withdrawal, eating litter [the contaminated material the birds are forced to live in] when they are hungry. Since hens being starved in their cages do not have access to litter, they are driven to 'pluck and consume' cage mates' contaminated feathers."

Even the industry that promotes forced molting concedes that it is unhealthy for the birds and the people who consume eggs. In the Vol.12, No. 9, (1996) edition of World Poultry was the following excerpt: "While unmolted hens usually have to ingest about 50,000 Salmonella cells to become infected, molted hens need fewer than ten."

I would like to see an end to forced molting. Please seriously consider this action.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Schueler, P.E.

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