

## U.S. is reclassifying as safe for eating animal carcasses with cancer, sores

Scripps Howard News Service ( as published in St. Louis Post-Dispatch 7-16 -00)

WASHINGTON- The Federal agency overseeing food inspection is imposing new rules that reclassify as safe for human consumption animal carcasses with cancers, tumors, and open sores.

Federal meat inspectors and consumer groups are protesting the move to classify tumors and open sores as aesthetic problems, which permits the meat to get the government's seal of approval as a wholesome food product.

"I don't want to eat pus from a chicken that has pneumonia," said Wenonah Hauter, Director of Public citizens Critical Mass Energy Project.

Delmer Jones, a federal food inspector for 41 years, said he's so revolted by the lowering of food wholesomeness standards that he doesn't buy meat at the supermarket anymore because he doesn't trust that it is safe to eat.

"I eat very little to no meat, but sardines and fish," said Jones, President of the National Joint Council of Meat Inspection Locals. The Union of some 7000 meat inspectors is affiliated with the American Federation of Government Employees.

The Union is battling related Agriculture Dept. plans to rely on scientific testing samples of butchered meats to determine the wholesomeness of meat, rather than traditional item-by-item scrutiny by federal inspectors.

A 1959 Federal law requires inspectors from the Agriculture Department's Food Inspection and Safety System to inspect all slaughtered animals before they can be sold for human consumption.

The Agriculture Dept. began carrying out the new policy as part of a pilot project in 24 slaughterhouses last October and plans to expand the system nationwide.

It will cover poultry, beef and pork. The agency has extended until August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2000 the time for the public to comment on the regulations and won't issue final rules until after the public's comments are received.

In 1998, the inspections and safety system reclassified an array of animal diseases as being "defects that rarely or never present public health risks" and said "unaffected carcasses portions" could be passed onto consumers by cutting out lesions.

Among animal diseases the agency said don't present a health danger are cancer, pneumonia of poultry called airsacculitis, glandular swellings or lymphomas, sores, infectious arthritis and diseases caused by intestinal worms.

In the case of tumors, the guidelines state "remove localized lesion(s) and pass unaffected carcass portions."

But Jones and consumer groups say production lines are moving so fast that they can't catch all the diseased carcasses and some are ending up on supermarket shelves.

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"When I started inspecting, inspectors were looking at 13 birds a minute, then 40, now it's 91 birds a minute with 3 inspectors," Jones said. "You cannot do your job with 91 birds a minute."

The Agriculture Department is also experimenting with proposed rules that would require federal food inspectors to monitor what the plant employees are doing, rather than inspecting each carcass individually.

The pilot project found chickens with high levels of fecal and other contamination, said Felicia Nestor, director of the Government Accountability Project, a Washington watchdog group. A Raymond Randolph, a federal appeals court judge said that "under the new proposed plan, federal inspectors would be inspecting people, not carcasses."

If you want to add your comments to the list of complaints and outrage, you can write the FDA at <http://www.fda.gov>. Or write Food and Drug Administration at:

5630 5600 Fishers Lane Dockets Management Branch  
Rockville, M.D. 20857 20852 P.M. 1061  
Rockville,

By the deadline of August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2000.

Dear Sirs:

This is to inform you of my feelings on the issue of using animal carcasses with cancer and open sores for human consumption. In my opinion this is an atrocity and should not be considered. The other issue of removing inspectors from the field is also unbelievable. Please consider my opinion.

Note:

Please send me the outcome results

Sincerely,

  
Debra E. Marler  
2400 Lincoln Av  
Granite City, IL  
62040

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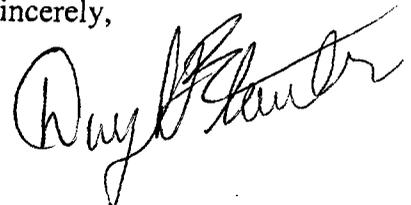
Anton Malakar

P.O. Box 71  
New Concord, Ky, 42076

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*Clyde E. Case*

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*Robert M. Case*

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Sincerely,

*Kenny L. Bart*  
520 MARGARET  
MITCHELL, IL,  
62040

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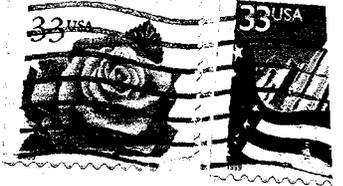
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Sincerely,

*W. J. Miller*  
2400 Lincoln  
Grange IL 62040

Mr. & Mrs. Marler  
2400 Lincoln Avenue  
Granite City, Illinois 62040



Dockets Management Branch  
Food & Drug Administration  
Room 1061  
5630 Fishers Ln  
Rockville, MD 20857-0001

