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Michael Friedman, M.D., Commissioner  
Food and Drug Administration  
Dockets Management Branch  
Room 1-23  
12420 Parklawn Drive  
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Dr. Friedman:

This letter has been sent to you to express my opinion that the FDA should prohibit the use of downed animals for human consumption (as petitioned in docket number 98P-0151/CP1). Downed animals endure tremendous suffering, and the use of sick animals for consumption threatens the health of humans.

A downed animal is too weak to stand on its own. The long transit to the stockyards and slaughterhouses subjects the farm animals to harsh weather and to disease. The sick animals are abandoned in the stockyards. Unable to get to the food troughs, an ailing animal will go several days without food and water. Lacking veterinary care, many downed animals die of neglect. Some of the tortured animals are thrown onto dead piles, and left to suffer for the last hours of their lives.

Transportation of the surviving downed animals to the slaughterhouse is never carried out humanely. The sick usually incur bruises and torn ligaments as they are dragged by chains to the slaughterhouse, where their suffering will eventually end.

The torture inflicted on these animals is intolerable. The suffering endured by downed animals is created and perpetuated by humans. In order to produce cheap meat, countless animals suffer as they are transported in trailers where they are exposed to harsh weather, overcrowding, stress, and disease. The suffering and death that result from this transportation is ignored by the industry because it does not damage their profit. The industry uses the meat of the diseased animals just as it would from a "healthy" animal.

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Voluntary efforts by certain stockyards and slaughterhouses to refuse downed animals have been unsuccessful. Downed animals have been found at facilities that have "no downer" policies. Although these stockyards say they do not accept downed animals, they often make exceptions to the downer policy because it is self-imposed and not firmly outlined. The industry can also throw live animals into dead piles. This is legal because there are no government regulations protecting the animals from cruelty. It is legal for a slaughterhouse to injure and wreak suffering upon an animal because there are no laws protecting them.

The suffering needs to end. If it is too much to say that no animal should be slaughtered for consumption, at least downed animals should not be butchered. Veterinary care needs to be provided to the tortured animals. Recovering animals can be sent to shelters, like the Farm Sanctuary, to live out the rest of their lives. Legislation is needed to save the sickly animals, and to save the human consumers from health risks.

The FDA needs to prohibit the use of downed animals for consumption. To sell the meat of an animal suffering from malnutrition on the meat market is a threat to human health. If eating meat from animals raised on growth hormones and suffering from metabolic disorders is not bad enough, I am sure that throwing in a few ailing animals to the product will raise some concern. Or are thousands of people dying of cancer a justifiable casualty for the industry's goal of producing cheap meat?

I am asking you to prohibit the use of downed animals for human consumption, and to support and promote the Downed Animal Protection Act. By stopping the torture, we will display our sympathy and concern for the animals and the people of our country.

Thank you,

  
Kimberly Wampole

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