

October 28, 2000

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U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Dockets Management Branch
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852
Docket Number 98P-0151/CP1

Dear Docket Management Staff:

The purpose of this letter is to urge you to grant petition 98P-0151/CP1 to prohibit the slaughter of downed animals. The treatment of downed animals in stockyards and slaughterhouses is some of the cruelest that I have heard of in the agricultural industry.

Animals who are too sick or injured to even stand up independently should not be included in the human food chain, since it is not clear how their illnesses may affect the quality of the meat. Bacterial contamination is only one of the possible problems. Animals who are downed may be afflicted with a form of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy or "Mad Cow Disease", which has been linked to the fatal Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease in humans.

It is almost impossible to move a downed animal in a humane manner. Animals are pushed with tractors, pulled with chains, and pushed off the back of trucks, all of which cause stress and injuries ranging from bruises and abrasions to broken bones and torn ligaments. Downed animals are often left to die without shelter, food, water, or proper veterinary care. All these factors add up to an unnecessarily cruel practice.

Downed animals represent only a very small percentage of animals slaughtered, so preventing their sale will not cause any undue financial hardship. Interestingly, industry experts have estimated that 90% of downed animals can be prevented with better care and handling. If stockyards are unable to sell downed animals for meat, perhaps they will have an incentive to prevent the problem before it starts.

Thank you for considering my letter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


Bridget Blitz

98P-0151

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