

March 14, 2001

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Dockets Management Branch
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

5407 '01 MAR 21 P4:26

Re: Docket number 98P-0151/CP1

Dear Sir or Madam:

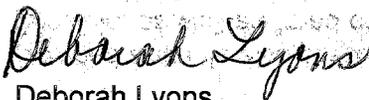
I am concerned about all the abuses of "downed" animals in slaughterhouses and docks across the United States. These unfortunate animals are too sick and weak to walk or even stand on their feet, due to the mistreatment inherent in factory farming and the rigors of the transport to slaughter. Workers routinely beat, kick, push, and drag these animals and apply electric prods to sensitive areas in an attempt to move them. Living animals are moved by forklift, animals are dragged off trucks by chains attached to their legs, living animals are dumped onto heaps of dead animals and left for hours and days. These suffering "downers" are left for days exposed to rain, blazing sun, and subzero temperatures without food and water. No attempts are made to make them more comfortable or anesthetize their pain. Packing houses refuse to put these animals immediately out of their misery because they can still be slaughtered for profit.

Downed animals also present health risks to human beings. Bacterial contamination is possible, as well as "mad cow disease," which has been linked to the fatal illness Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced last year that it would stop buying meat from downed cows, reflecting the growing consensus even among government officials that the marketing and slaughter of downed animals is unacceptable.

The FDA can stop the flagrant abuse of innocent animals and the risk to human health by granting petition 98P-0151/CP1, which prohibits the slaughter of downed animals. This regulation would prevent much suffering to animals and would eliminate certain health risks. Downed animals comprise a very small percentage of total animals slaughtered, and prohibiting their marketing would cause no real economic hardship. Finally, industry experts have estimated that 90% of downed animals can be prevented by better care and handling. Removing the market for downed animals will provide incentive to the meat industry to prevent downers in the first place. Please grant petition 98P-0151/CP1. Thank you very much for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

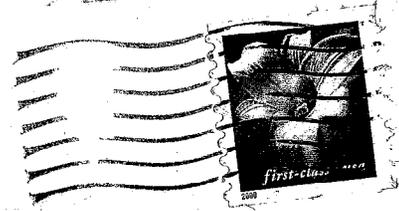


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98P-0151

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