

Lyle D. Jaffe
Dockets Management
FDA/DHHS
12420 Parklawn Drive
Room 1-23
Rockville, MD 20857

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April 19, 1998

Dear Mr. Lyle D. Jaffe,

I fully support the petition to ban the forced molting of layer hens. I find the practice of forced molting to be inexcusably cruel.

Aren't hens' lives miserable enough? They must endure unnatural, unbearable, crowded conditions. They are not allowed to move freely; their beaks are cut off to stop them from mutilating each other out of desperation. Their lives of just 1 to 2 years are hardly worth living. (A happy, healthy chicken lives 15 to 20 years.)

Forced molting is used to trick hens into laying more eggs. The hens are starved to the brink of death. They are deprived of food, water, and light for weeks. The trauma leaves the hens' bodies susceptible to disease, bone breakage, and salmonella infections. The result is sick birds and contaminated eggs. After a lifetime of abuse, the hens' battered bodies must be disguised from consumers by being cut up for chicken soup or dog food.

Mr. Jaffe, forced molting is so cruel that it was already banned in Great Britain 12 years ago. Most European countries have laws protecting hens from food deprivation for more than 24 hours. Why doesn't the United States have laws protecting these birds?

Our nation is recognized for democracy and fairness. Let us set a good example by showing some compassion for the poor birds. Let the world know that Americans hold a respect for life; that we will not allow cruelty in exchange for a greedy profit.

Mr. Jaffe, I urge you to help put a stop to the forced molting of layer hens.

Sincerely,

Sara Blaylock

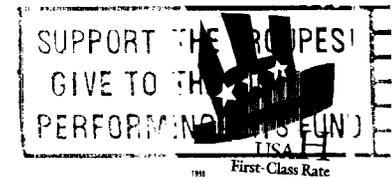
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