

C&L RANCH, INC.
dba FRUITLAND TRADING COMPANY
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October 25, 2001

Docket Clerk
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture
Food Safety & Inspection Service
300 12th St SW
Room 102 Cotton Annex
Washington, DC 20250

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01-030N 01-030N-152 Leon F. Smalley

Re: Docket #01-030N
Establishment #7019

Gentlemen:


The proposal pending regarding retained water in meat and poultry is just another example of big government putting an end to the small businessman. I have been a practicing Certified Public Accountant for over twenty years. During this time, I have seen the pain caused to small businesses from the continual down-pouring of governmental intervention in the free market.

I have owned this slaughtering plant for three years; however, it has been in continual production for several decades. We employ six young Navajo Indian people and two aging Anglos. We butcher mutton and lamb for sale to retail establishments, the end consumer being mostly Native American. Our only competitive edge is the quality of our product, thus we always strive to maintain complete compliance with all USDA requirements. We enjoy a reputation for quality and honest business practices.

We have not experienced any problems with water retention while checking as an internal control procedure as well as periodic checks by our customers upon delivery of our product. A plant our size simply does not have the scientific personnel nor capabilities to comply with the proposed regulation.

We respectfully hope to see this proposed regulation meet a very timely demise.

Sincerely,


Leon F. Smalley, CPA
President