

20 February 2004

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RE: Docket Number 03-025IF

To USDA,

I am disgusted that USDA had been approving downed animals for human food, and I am writing in strong support for the USDA's new policy to ban downed cows from the human food supply. These animals should be humanely euthanized.

I urge you to publish a final rule banning the use of all downed cattle, those unable to stand, for human food and to require such animals to be humanely euthanized. I further urge you to include other species, such as pigs and sheep, in the downer ban. Just as downed cattle are more likely to be afflicted with neurological diseases, sheep, pigs and other animal species too sick to stand are more likely to harbor scrapie or other CNS disorders. I also urge you to ban the use of downed animals in food for other species, as many of these dangerous diseases can cross species.

Marketing downed animals for human food is inhumane and irresponsible, and the practice should be prohibited. Even if the brain and spinal column are not included in the food supply directly, through the current slaughter process, the fluid and contents of these can still be found in the meat we are consuming. I fear that because signs of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease take up to 30 years to be noticed, we will have an epidemic beyond our control. We still do not know the effects of this problem in England, as it has not been long enough to tell. Please put the safety of this country's people first in your policies. Thank you for taking these comments into consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Rachel Kersey