

January 30, 2004

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FSIS Docket Clerk  
Docket 03-0251F  
Room 102, Cotton Annex  
300 12th and C Street SW.  
Washington, DC 20250-3700  
Fax: 202-690-0486

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Subject: Comments on downed animals

To Whom It May Concern:

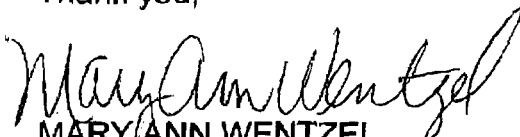
Each year, millions of animals—most of them worn-out dairy cows—collapse, so sick or injured from brutal conditions on factory farm and transport that they cannot even walk off the transport truck to the slaughterhouse. For years, animal advocates have been trying to pass legislation to ban the use of downed animals in the U.S. food supply. This would not only be safer for consumers but would also provide farmers with financial incentive to treat animals better so that they don't become downed in the first place.

For years, agribusiness did everything in their power to oppose legislation banning the use of downed animals for human food.

When mad cow disease was discovered in a downed cow in Washington State, and when countries all over the world immediately stopped buying U.S. beef, the USDA quickly announced a ban on the use of downed animals for human food. There are several problems with the ban. First, it's temporary. Second, it only applies to cows. Third, there is no provision requiring that the animals be euthanized, so they can still be dragged with cranes or forklifts while fully conscious, and they can still be slaughtered for pet food or to be fed to other animals raised for food.

Please make the ban permanent, make the ban apply to all farmed animals—not just cows, and please require that downed animals be euthanized. An animal that is downed is clearly in severe pain, and it is impossible to humanely transport a downed cow or pig (who can only be lifted with a crane or forklift).

Thank you,

  
MARY ANN WENTZEL  
3663 Robert Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63116