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DATE: January 22, 2004
TO: FSIS Docket Clerk
FROM: Perkinsville Meat Processing
REFERENCE: Non-Acceptance of any mobile or on-farm slaughter beef
Docket 03-025IF

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FSIS DOCKET ROOM
04 JAN 28 PM 1:15

We have just received information that we can no longer accept any mobile or on-farm slaughtered beef. We have been in business for three short years and have provided an excellent service to the farmers and ranchers in this area. All of our customers raise their own beef, have them butchered on their property then, the carcass is transported to our facility for custom processing.

We understand the severity of BSE to the beef industry, as our family has been ranching in this area for over 100 years. But from the information that we have gathered, BSE has been limited to Holsteins that were brought in from Canada. Some regulations in our country must change to get control on this problem. But do you really think that in small facilities where we are not doing resale, but custom processing beef for personal use that customers would bring in an infected cow? Several times throughout my life on our ranch, cattle have eaten locoweed and needed to be put down. We did not take those beef to a facility to have them processed for personal use.

We understand the regulations on downer beef and feel this is appropriate. The State Livestock Inspector prior to drop off has inspected all beef brought into our facility. Maybe there needs to be a time frame established, from the time of inspection to the time of kill to prevent sick or downer beef from being slaughtered.

We feel that the Federal or State Regulations being put on Official and Exempt facilities needs to be reevaluated, so that small facilities will not be put out of business. Most small meat processing businesses cannot incur the expense it takes to establish a fully inspected slaughterhouse, but is a much-needed trade. We do not want to become a large business; we just want to serve our community and the surrounding area. Many people do not want the hormone-infested beef that is sold in stores. They want to raise their own beef; feed them out, and have them processed and packaged to their specifications. Eighty-five (85%) of our business is doing custom beef. If the regulations stand as they are now, ourselves and other facilities like ours may be forced out of business. Please take this information into consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark and Cyndy Ducote
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