

414
FSIS Docket Clerk
Docket 03-0251F
Room 102, Cotton Annex
300 12th and C Street SW
Washington, DC 20250-3700

RECEIVED
FSIS DOCKET ROOM 2/27/04
04 MAR -8 PM 3:21

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing to express our pleasure that the USDA has finally taken the sensible step of banning the slaughter and sale of "downed" cattle for human consumption. We wonder, however, why the public and the animals had to wait until there was no shadow of doubt that a horrifyingly deadly disease had entered our food supply, for this to occur.

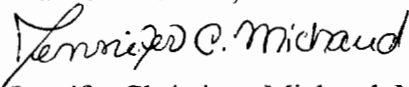
We also wonder why this ban has not been extended to include other animals. It is not only cattle, but also pigs, chickens and sheep raised, transported and killed under brutal "factory" conditions that carry serious risks to human health. As you probably know, there is significant evidence pointing towards pigs, not cattle, as America's major vector of spongiform encephalopathy. It is unconscionable that the USDA uses the difficulty of distinguishing between death from Alzheimer's disease and death from nvCJD as an excuse to avoid requiring the sensible preventative measure of banning slaughter and human consumption of ALL downed animals.

Finally, we don't understand why the USDA allows "factory" methods of farming to exist in the first place. If the role of the USDA is to safeguard the purity and integrity of the American food supply, how can you even *begin* to justify raising and transporting farmed animals under conditions *guaranteed* to make them sick? Furthermore, why does the USDA turn a blind eye and deaf ear to cruelty of such inventiveness and mass proportions that it would make Adolf Hitler or Pol Pot blush? As a branch of the most powerful and supposedly advanced civilization on earth, can you not find it in yourselves to enforce a measure of humaneness and decency towards those who are victims of our system? Even better, could you possibly put ethics just a bit ahead of profit, especially in the wake of e. coli and "mad cow", and encourage Americans to eat a more healthful diet balanced towards the vegetarian side? Not only would you be helping out the animals, but you would also go a long way towards solving America's "health care" crisis.

Sincerely,



Mark J. Michaud, M.D.



Jennifer Christiano Michaud, M.A.
1668 Riverstone Lane, #208
Boise, ID 83706
(208) 344-2183