

50

February 8, 2004

Ms. Maria Kalipetsis  
90 72<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11209

FSIS Docket Clerk  
Docket 03-0251F  
Room 102, Cotton Annex  
300 12<sup>th</sup> and C Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-3700

RE: Docket Number 03-0251F

Dear USDA:

I feel very strongly that the USDA's ban on the slaughter of downed animals for human consumption should be made permanent. Consuming sick and injured animals poses a very real threat to public safety, as we saw from the tragedies in England. Fortunately, the U.S. was able to avert any deaths and serious illnesses, but this resulted more from luck than good public policy.

It is fairly obvious that the meat industries cannot police themselves. They have fought this ban since the early 1990's. Then they embraced it when they started losing billions of dollars. And now that their industry is recovering and the public is more at ease, they want to go back to their original position of allowing downed animals in the food supply. I am disgusted and outraged over this. I hope the USDA will not give in to these giant agribusinesses that have shown a total disregard for the public's safety.

I would like the USDA to not only keep the ban in place permanently, but to also strengthen it by extending it to downed pigs, sheep, and other animals. If downed cows are more likely to have Mad Cow Disease, then why can't other species? We may be able to protect the beef supply, but what about the pork, poultry, etc. supplies?

Respectfully,

*Maria Kalipetsis*