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To whom it may concern,

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) or mad cow disease being discovered in the United States and the subsequent impending legislation has prompted me to write this letter. I am protesting the ban in effect keeping "downer" cows from being processed for human consumption. I believe, the implications of such a ban far out way the risks associated with the possible consumption of BSE infected or tainted meat. First, I will delve into the economic losses such a ban creates and then mention just some of the logistical implications it creates.

I will not try to convince anyone that such a ban is not necessary, for the most probable BSE infected cattle, but I do believe certain exceptions should be made. For instance an animal with milk fever, a metabolic disorder caused by the low blood calcium levels, which in turn will render the animal unable to stand or have coordinated muscle movements. Although, very treatable some animals may not respond leaving them immobile. In other instances slips and falls may fracture bones or damage tendons again creating an animal unable to stand. These are two of many reasons animals are down and unable to rise, but that does not mean they are not edible or safe.

As for the logistical implications the ban has created. We are now in a season when animals that are deceased can be left unrefrigerated, but spring and summer is fast approaching bringing with it warmer weather. During these times of increased temperatures animals begin to rot or decompose more rapidly leaving them of no value to the renders. Not only does the loss of hides for the renders increase the renders disposal fee but, also the rising cost land fills charge makes disposal expensive. This in the past has left some areas without renders at all. The ban will cause animals to be left longer in high temperatures creating even more lost carcasses.

I will let you know that at Mar Creek Dairy, we have tried to minimize downer cows. We have always seen them as unfortunate loss and undue animal suffering, but even under the best management strategies only 70% are avoidable. I hope you can begin to see where exceptions need to be made. BSE in the US is a new problem, but down or immobile animals have been around for some time now. It is unfortunate that there are but, do we need to stand by and allow their valuable carcasses to be wasted.

Sincerely
Mar Creek Dairy