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February 9, 2004

United States Department of Agriculture
FSIS Docket Clerk
FAX 202-690-0486

03-0251F
03-0251F-57
Robert G. Stagman

Re: Docket 03-0251F

I am writing concerning critical modifications that must be made to the recently enacted ban by USDA on the use of downed animals for human food:

1) The ban currently is temporary and must be made PERMANENT. The risks of mad cow disease in our food supply will be present for the indefinite future, and a temporary ban is totally inadequate;

2) The ban currently applies only to cows. An identical form of spongiform encephalopathy exists in sheep, and at this primitive stage in our knowledge it must be presumed that the disease can be present in any livestock. Therefore, the ban on use of downed animals for human food must be extended to ALL SPECIES OF LIVESTOCK.

3) There is no provision that downed animals be given immediate HUMANE EUTHANASIA, and this must be added to the bill. All nonambulatory disabled animals, regardless of cause, must be euthanized. Mad cow disease may initially present as staggering which can lead to fractures. Allowing live downed animals to be dragged by chains or transported by crane, tractor, or forklift constitutes both unconscionable animal abuse and allows introduction of possibly contaminated material that will be converted into pet food or processed into feed that will be fed to other animals raised for food

The above modifications will make this ban both far more effective in protecting our food supply and far more humane in treating farm animals. Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert G. Stagman, M.D.