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# RED OAK FARM

ALLEN & MYRA CHARLESTON

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Rec'd  
RDS

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FSIS Docket Clerk  
Docket 02-015DF  
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Washington, DC 20250-3700

02-015DF-58  
02-015DF  
Myra Charleston

July 21, 2003

Subject: Opposition to FSIS 9 CFR Part 381 RIN 0583-AC97

To Whom it may concern:

I was shocked to learn about the above referenced proposal to lift import restrictions for ratites and ratite products from Australia and New Zealand. I have fought to gain acceptance as a female operating a farm, fought for USDA inspection of ratites and now I find that once again I must fight my own government in order to secure a living.

I own and operate my family's Century Farm. In case you do not know, a century farm is a farm that has had over 100 years continuous agricultural production under one family. America's small family farms are slowly being swallowed up by larger farms - and while this may not dismay you, there are those of us that don't want to see that heritage disappear. Because most traditional farming requires large acreage in order to be successful, I looked to alternative farming. I have been raising emu for their heart healthy red meat since 1994. Like every other successful emu farmer, we handle the business "farm to finish" by hatching, raising the birds, arranging for processing, for hides to be tanned and for the sale of meat, fat and feathers.

In order to remain in business I must be able to sell my products at a reasonable price. I cannot compete against foreign farmers that even now undersell American products on the open market. I have struggled to develop a market for my farm products; please do not give my hard work - my farm - to foreign investors.

Sincerely,

Myra Charleston  
Owner

cc:

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