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Frank Burris, Mgr.

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January 21, 2004

FSIS Docket Clerk
Docket #03-0251F
Room 102 Cotton Annex
300 12th & C Streets SW
Washington DC 20250-3700

CUSTOM
• MEAT PROCESSING
• CATERING
• DEER PROCESSING

HICKORY SMOKED
• HAM
• BACON
• SAUSAGE

Phone:
316-285-6376
316-285-3034

6-20

(1)

Greetings:

We are writing this letter to you in the fervent hope that the people responsible for making the new regulations regarding the "Downer Ban" on animals to be slaughtered will take time to rethink this.

We own and operate a small meat processing plant in Kansas, and this ruling definitely affects our business. We are State inspected and have been in business in this building over 30 years. We are asking for reconsideration on this issue because we feel it is unjust to the cattle owners and the processors also. We heartily agree with the rules of not killing any chronically ill animals, as do the cattle owners. However most of the "downer" cattle that we do slaughter are the result of broken legs or other similar injuries from falls, or even birthing injuries from calving. These animals were fit and healthy in all aspects prior to their injury, why then should they be not consumed as meat? Meat from injured animals has traditionally been considered safe for consumption.

In many rural areas like ours, the small meat processors do not process large amounts of animals. We rely on the farmers and stockmen for much of our business, and they rely on us to help them salvage what they can when their animals have an accident. Refusing to slaughter these animals will only encourage the owners to make other arrangements, like "shade tree" butchering in primitive conditions.

All animals that cannot or will not rise due to a broken bone or other similar injury should NOT be categorized with chronically ill or diseased animals. Let's lose the "blanket generalization" of non-ambulatory animals. A downer is not necessarily a sick animal. Please redefine and readjust these rulings so that everyone can live with them. This is why we pay our veterinarians and meat inspectors to watch over us, let them do their jobs as efficiently in the future as they have done in the past.

We appreciate your time and assistance on this matter. Our phone numbers are listed above should you wish to communicate with us, or our email is: fsburris@kans.com.

Sincerely,

Sande Burris
The Butcher Block, Inc