

FSIS Docket Clerk  
Docket 03-0251F  
Room 102, Cotton Annex  
300 12th and C Street SW.  
Washington, DC 20250-3700  
February 4, 2004

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Dear Sir/Madam,

The USDA has indicated that it's impossible to determine by visual inspection which downers have BSE or to establish why an animal is downed. In fact, the Washington State cow and the first BSE-positive Canadian cow (in 1993) were both believed to be non-ambulatory because of injuries, not illness. Before signs of neurological impairment become obvious, an animal's ability to walk may well be affected, causing the animal to stumble and break a leg or suffer some other type of physical injury. USDA's policy stipulates that "all non-ambulatory disabled cattle presented for slaughter be condemned."

I am grateful that USDA Secretary, Anne Veneman, banned the slaughter of downed cows for human consumption. I urge her to hold the line against weakening changes and maintain USDA's interpretation of downers – i.e., all non-ambulatory disabled animals, regardless of the reason they are unable to stand or walk (illness, injury, or a combination). I also urge her to extend the ban to cover any species of downed animals – not just cows, but also pigs, sheep, and other livestock – and to require their humane euthanasia.

Sincerely,  
Grace Thompson Gokturk  
570 Ocean Dr. , #1101  
Juno Beach, FL 33408

