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February 18, 2004

FSIS Docket Clerk
Docket 03-025IF
Room 102, Cotton Annex
300 12th and C Street SW
Washington, DC 20250-3700

Dear Sir or Madam:

Please continue the ban on the slaughter of downed animals. Do not let Big Meat and Big Dairy win, at the expense of public health and animal welfare.

The slaughter of downed animals poses a risk to public health. In addition to the potential risk of slaughtered downed animals spreading mad cow disease, continuing to allow the American public to consume downed animals may increase the public's risk of leukemia. A study by Dr. Gertrude Case Buehring of the University of California at Berkeley showed that seventy four percent of the individuals studied produced antibodies to Bovine Leukemia Virus.¹ More disturbingly, primates fed high concentrations of milk infected with BLV died from leukemia. ²Some may suggest these results do not indicate risk to humans. However, a study in Iowa showed areas with the highest rates of BLV infection also had the highest leukemia rates.³

Aside from being a public health risk, the slaughter of downed animals is inhumane. Downed animals commonly lie in alleyways, without food, water, or veterinary care, until it becomes convenient for them to be taken to slaughter. Downed animals are moved by the easiest, but least humane ways: by dragging them with chains or pushing them with tractors. In short, downed animals suffer, so that Big Meat and Big Dairy can increase their profit margins.

A Zogby Poll taken in September 2003 showed over three quarters of the respondents found the slaughter of downed animals to be unacceptable. Please follow the popular will, and make the humane and intelligent choice to maintain the ban on the slaughter of downed animals.

Sincerely,


Jeri Behrman

¹ *Cancer Research* 34 (1974): 2745.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*