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S & L Mellott Farms
04 FEB 25 PM 12:38
8758 Reininger Road
Mercersburg, PA 17236
February 18, 2004

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

Sir:

We are dairy producers. We are writing to you concerning the ban of downer cattle for human consumption (reference number 03-025 I F). We understand the government's valid concern over bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). However, we believe that there needs to be a distinction between acute injuries in cattle and "downer cows". Our primary income is not from cattle sales, but we do sell cull cows every year. Some of these cull cows are sold because of acute injuries such as broken legs, torn ligaments, or pinched nerves. These injured cows are downers, but pose no threat to the human food supply. If these cows with injuries are banned from human consumption, we will be forced to kill and dispose of them. This will mean the loss of income from these animals. Granted, they make up a small percentage of our business, but even one thousand dollars a year is a lot of money to us. Please consider amending the definition of "downer cow" to exclude injured animals.

Sincerely,

Stephen J. Mellott
Lisa G. Mellott