

February 19, 2004

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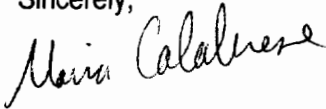
Re: Docket 03-251F

I want the USDA to make the ban on downed animals permanent. Eating the carcasses of sick and diseased animals is unnatural and poses serious health risks, as we saw from the outbreak of Mad Cow Disease in the U.K. I also want the ban expanded to all species, not just cows. It's ridiculous to think we can become sick from eating diseased cows, but not diseased chickens, sheep, and pigs.

I also strongly support the ban because it gives ranchers and everyone else involved in handling livestock an incentive to treat the animals more humanely so they don't become downers. It is disgraceful that sick and injured animals are routinely kicked, pulled, electrically prodded, and dragged from the stockyard to the slaughterhouse.

As a consumer, I want the USDA to know how important the ban on downed animals is to me. If it is lifted I will either purchase only organic meat or refrain from eating meat altogether. I refuse to play Russian roulette with my health.

Sincerely,



Maria Calabrese
39 E. Brandis Ave.
Staten Island, NY 10308