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March 1, 2004

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

FAX 202-690-0486

I urge you to MAINTAIN and hopefully EXPAND the "no downer policy."

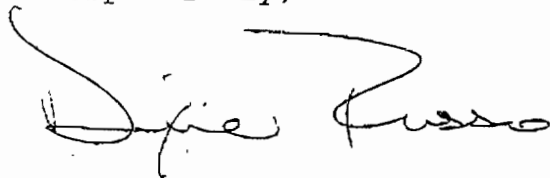
On December 30, 2003, the USDA prohibited the slaughter of downed animals too sick to stand, for human food consumption, in an effort to protect the public from Mad Cow Disease. Alarming, this has recently become an issue with the agribusiness who no longer want this protection for the public or for the animals who so desperately need the protection of the USDA.

If the agribusiness wants to slaughter as many animals as possible, tell them to treat their livestock in a more humane fashion. Bring healthy livestock to slaughter. Stop packing their cattle into trailers for 36 hours, with no food or water, under harsh conditions that cause broken legs, other injuries and illness, including Mad Cow Disease. By treating livestock more humanely, more can walk to slaughter. Downed animals, for whatever reason they are downed, must not be allowed to be sold for human consumption. The downed animals must also not be left to suffer without medical attention or protection of any kind for humane treatment.

The cruel practices of dragging, chaining, and pushing sick and injured livestock to slaughter must not only be STOP PERMANENTLY in the cattle industry but must also be stopped for any other species brought to slaughter, such as sheep and pigs.

The compounded cruel activities of neglecting downed animals, too sick or with legs too broken to make it to any food, water or shelter that may be available, must also stop across the board. Downed animals are kept out of human food but are then left to die a slow agonizing death, when simple medical attention could save or help them. There must also be a care policy for any rejected livestock.

Respectfully,



Dixie Russo