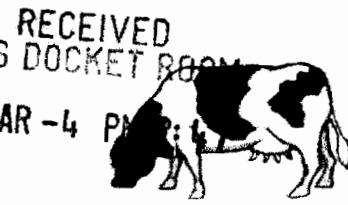




409

LAR-PAT FARMS  
Larry E. & Patricia M. Hege  
712 Kauffman Road West  
Greencastle, PA 17225  
(717) 375-2811



February 25, 2004

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

Dear Sirs,

We are writing to you concerning reference number "03-025 I F", the ban on downer cattle being considered as unsafe for human consumption. This ban has been causing us to put down our cattle that may have sustained 'acute injuries' and were not sick or treated with antibiotics prior to the injury.

With the extreme winter conditions we had here in south central Pennsylvania this year, the ban has caused us economic hardship because of having to put down several animals due only to injury on the icy terrain. We also put down one animal due to a pinch nerve in her back brought on by the stress of a difficult calving.

We here at LAR - PAT Farms implore you to reconsider the way a "downer cow" is determined and or defined, so that animals with "acute injuries" would not have to be wasted.

Sincerely,

*Larry E. Hege*  
*Patricia M. Hege*

Larry E. Hege

Patricia M. Hege