

508

TO THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

I am writing this letter in regards to the slaughtering and processing of downer cattle since the discovery of a case of mad cow disease in the United States.

As an owner of a custom processing plant, we to are very much concerned that the animals we process for our customers are safe for their consumption.

In regards to slaughtering a downer beef or which at our plant we call this an (emergency). In many cases we receive a phone call from a farmer who is loading cattle and one will get his leg caught between the shutt and truck and break his leg or cattle will be just messing around and one will get injured. As I have been in this business for many years and I can tell you that if this animal is taken care of as soon as possible it will be salvaged by the farmer for his freezer.

I believe we should be able to slaughter downer cattle under the guidelines set by the Mn. Department of Agriculture that the reason for the animals inability to stand is (clearly identified) broken leg, tendon or other injury.

I agree totally that no animal should be slaughtered at any plant custom or otherwise that is sick or the reason for being down is unknown.

Please remember, as a custom processing plant we slaughter and process these animals only for the farmer. This meat is not for the retail chain, but for their own consumption and by doing this this animal is not a total loss to them.

If we as a custom processer were not able to give this service to the farmer, we would suffer a loss in business.

So in facing this matter, I ask you to PLEASE take this into serious consideration.

Sincerely,

Verlyn Ruiter  
Owner - V & M Locker  
Box 336  
Leota, Mn. 56153