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USDA  
Washington, DC

Dear United States Department of Agriculture:

It has recently been brought to our attention that the USDA has decided that livestock producers can no longer butcher a "fallen" animal for their own consumption. This message was delivered to us this past month and hit us directly in the pocketbook. Let me explain. While preparing to sell a pen of cattle recently, we were moving cattle from one yard to another when, because of icy conditions, one fell and broke his leg. We immediately called our local locker to come and pick up this beautiful 1500-pound black, angus steer. At lease we could salvage the meat from the animal, or so we thought. We were informed that our locker was no longer allowed to pick up a "downed" animal, because of a USDA decision. I hope you would agree with me that this animal was "downed", not because of illness, disease, or God forbid, mad cow, but because of an ACCIDENT resulting in a broken leg.

There are many family members involved in our livestock operation including our 4 young sons. Do you believe for one minute that we would give these family members meat from an animal that is sick with illness or disease? Good heavens no!!

We as family livestock producers strive each and every day to feed and market the best quality meat that we can. When the livestock industry is hit with bad publicity, believe me, it sheds a bad light on all of us and ultimately affects our bottom line.

I would implore the USDA to reconsider their stand on "downed" animals. We, as much as you, are concerned with the safety of our food supply, but we must not let panic and misinformation guide our decisions, rather intelligence and common sense.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Jerry and Julie Brake  
Brake Feedyards  
(507)472-8777

P.S. For your information, the animal with the broken leg was hauled away in the rendering truck resulting in a loss to us of \$1200.00. I ask you, how many more "rulings" must the livestock industry have to deal with? These "rulings" ultimately cost the livestock producers, and in this case, the local locker plants as well.