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January 19, 2004

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

RE: Proposed Guidelines for BSE

Dear Clerk:

It has come to my attention that recently, the federal government and the USDA implemented several measures to address public concern over the discovery of mad cow disease (a.k.a. bovine spongiform encephalopathy or BSE) in the United States.

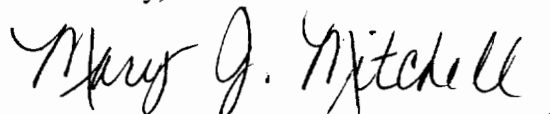
The USDA banned the slaughter of "downed" cattle-those who are too sick or injured to stand or walk on their own. While this ban protects downed cattle right now, it is only a temporary measure. To enforce this prohibition permanently, a final, formal version of these rules must be approved.

On Monday, January 12, the USDA published its proposed guidelines for dealing with BSE, including a prohibition on the slaughter of downed cattle. These rules stipulate "all non-ambulatory disabled cattle presented for slaughter be condemned."

I urge the USDA to make the ban permanent and further to include all downed animals - sheep, pigs and other livestock, as well as all downed cattle - in the final ban. Finally, I urge the USDA add a requirement that all downed animals be humanely euthanized immediately, wherever they become downed.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



Mary J. Mitchell

/rs