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03-025IF  
03-025IF-64  
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FSIS Docket Clerk  
Docket 03-025IF  
Room 102, Cotton Annex  
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Washington, DC 20250-3700  
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RE: Docket 03-025IF, USDA's Downed-Animal Ban Is Too Late And Too Little

I am so tired of hearing about sick individuals being cruel, on purpose, to animals. Last Friday I watched a film of men abusing and torturing farm pigs and sat at my desk and cried. I can not believe how the USDA lets these sick individuals get away with torturing and abusing these poor innocent creatures. One sick individual lifted a cinder block above his head and threw it down on a sows head, they also kicked her and made her walk outside without caring that she had a broken shoulder. The cries from this poor sow were wrenching. I also watched another pig being beaten and another had a metal stick put into her anus and the screams were horrendous. The idiots laughed, cursed at the pigs and then told of their co-workers who did the same thing to other pigs the day before. What is wrong with these people? And why doesn't the USDA protect these animals??? The tax payers pay your salary but you sure don't do a good enough job at protecting the animals.

I don't eat meat because of the torture and abuse that animals go through before their death. I see pictures and films of so many farm animals being abused and nothing is ever done about it. When is the USDA going to step up and respect the lives of these animals and make sure they are treated humanely before their death?

The welfare of these animals is non-existent and that is very wrong.

Noticeably missing from the administrative ban are:

- Regulations applying to farmed animals other than cows;
- Restrictions on the use of downed cows as food for companion animals or "livestock" feed;
- Requirements to humanely euthanize nonambulatory cows;
- Directives forbidding the use of chains, forklifts, trucks and shock prods to move animals.

Why does the US law allow stockyards and slaughterhouses to drag, shock, beat and bulldoze frail and crippled animals. Under the new rule animals can still be kept alive until slaughtered for processing at rendering plants to produce tallow, meal or other goods with animal-byproducts. This is totally wrong. Have you ever watched a video of a pig being beaten and tortured? Have you ever heard the sounds of a pig crying out while being tortured or kicked or beaten?

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The U.S. government should implement an industry-wide ban on the transport, marketing and slaughter of ALL downed animals for ANY purpose. Please expand the present ban to include:

--Humane euthanasia for downed cows, pigs, sheep, goats or any farmed animals. Plainly, it is cruel to force living creatures to endure organ failure, broken bones, severed ligaments and open wounds over hours or days. **WHY IS THIS SO HARD TO DO? WHAT ON EARTH IS SO HARD ABOUT HUMANELY EUTHANIZING THESE CREATURES?** In addition, Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs) have surfaced in deer, elk, sheep, goats and other animals. No one yet knows the extent to which TSEs can cross the species barrier. All downers are suspect.

--A ban on moving downed animals. There is no way to humanely move incapacitated animals. All downers should be mercifully euthanized. At one Texas stockyard, a calf was photographed struggling to stand on a mangled leg attached by a shred of hide and ligament. **THESE KIND OF ACTIONS NEED TO BE STOPPED! PLEASE HUMANELY EUTHANIZE!**

--Mandatory training to prevent animals from becoming downers in the first place. Without incentive to maintain downers for financial gain, agribusiness might actually improve standards of care. ***According to Temple Grandin, advisor to the American Meat Institute, "Ninety percent of all downers are preventable."*** HELLO!!!

--A ban on the use of downed animals for "pet" and "livestock" foods. As long as nonhuman food is processed with elements at risk for containing dangerous prions, potential problems exist due to non-compliance with the FDA feeding ban and unintended contamination during manufacture. Furthermore, Americans cherish their companion animals. Roughly 100 cats have already been diagnosed with Feline Spongiform Encephalopathy in Europe.

--Enforceable and permanent implementation. Any effort to dilute the ban to appease agribusiness is a step in the wrong direction. Do your work USDA.

Until Congress enacts the Downed Animal Protection Act (S. 1298/H.R. 2519), the USDA's temporary rule is vulnerable. Hopefully, the Downed Animal Protection Act will codify the current ban, cover other species, and designate humane euthanasia for all.

If this legislation had passed in 2002--or not been rejected as an amendment to the Agricultural Appropriations bill last November--the mad cow in Washington state would never have entered the human food chain.

I strongly encourage the USDA to strengthen and enforce measures to protect animals and reduce risk of BSE. The USDA needs to get to work and act on the humane treatment of farm animals.

For the animals,



Sheri Inks