

## OES-Director

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**From:** alanam\_28@yahoo.com%inter2 [alanam\_28@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 03, 2006 4:13 PM  
**To:** Johanns, Mike  
**Subject:** To the USDA. Support end to meat recall secrecy!

May 3, 2006

Secretary Michael Johanns  
Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department 1400 Independence Avenue SW Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Johanns,

I'm writing to urge you to go forward with the proposed rule requiring the U.S. Department of Agriculture to make public the names of retail and commercial establishments where potentially tainted meat and poultry is being sold. I don't think it is right for government to hold onto information that can imperil my health and safety and not disclose it to me and other consumers like me.

Specifically, I refer to the rule "Sharing of Firms' Distribution Lists of Retail Consignees During Meat or Poultry Product Recalls" (RIN: 0583-AD10). It calls on the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) to "make available to the general public lists of the retail consignees of meat and poultry products that have been voluntarily recalled by a federally inspected meat or poultry products establishment."

Ultimately, Congress needs to give USDA mandatory recall authority so the USDA does not have to promise confidentiality in return for prompt - voluntary participation by meat producers and distributors. Fortunately, USDA can, through this rule, give consumer the power to identify and avoid tainted meat themselves before it is consumed.

The current misguided policy already has had serious consequences. On December 2003, a cow infected with mad cow disease was found in Washington State and the infected meat entered the food supply, mixed with 37,000 pounds of meat from other cows. It was sold in six western states, including California. Since California was one of 12 states that signed a secrecy agreement with the USDA, officials there were given the names of the retailers that were selling recalled meat. But local health officials in California were not allowed to let the public know the names of the retailers, so consumers were left in the dark, unable to protect themselves from buying and ingesting contaminated meat.

I commend FSIS for proposing this rule in the first place. The American public has too much at stake for this rule not to be considered and adopted at the earliest possible date.

Sincerely,

Ms. Carrie Bubenzer  
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