September 2, 2008

Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service
Room 2534 South Agriculture Building
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

RE: Docket Number FSIS-2008-0022

I am writing regarding Docket Number FSIS-2008-0022.

I urgently ask the USDA to adopt the proposed rules regarding the Disposition of Downer Cattle.
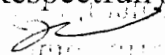
Specifically, I fully support the USDA's proposal to exclude all downed cattle, including those who may become downed after inspection at slaughterhouses, from being slaughtered. Instead, these animals should be humanely euthanized on the spot. The USDA should implement and duly enforce this ban ASAP.

I also urge the FSIS to extend its ban on the slaughter of downed cattle to cover ALL downed livestock including pigs, goats, sheep, and others. No crippled or sick animal should suffer gratuitously; and the public deserves the assurance that their health is being treated as a priority when it comes to the food supply.

The latest rule is a vast improvement over previous USDA regulations, which attempted to sidestep the issue of downed animals. Aside from being cruel, slaughtering injured crippled animals still threatens food safety. One of the leading signs of mad cow disease is lack of coordination, and even if a downed cow is found to be "down" due to injury, it does not rule out mad cow disease. And while the USDA's proposed rule marks notable progress in the agency's treatment of downed animals, it urgently needs to address all downed livestock in addition to cattle.

Thank you for your help in this urgent matter on behalf of the welfare of both people and animals.

Respectfully,

J. Capozzelli
New York