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U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Dockets Management Branch
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

Re: Docket#98P-0151/CP1

February 28, 2001

I am writing in support of the petition to prohibit the slaughter of downed animals. The thought of animals too sick to stand on their own, welcomed into our food supply scares me.

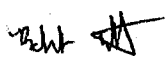
The illnesses that may cause cattle to collapse and lose their ability to move poses an increased health risk to consumers from bacterial contamination and disease. Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) may not yet have been found in this country, but scientific investigation suggests the presence of BSE-like diseases in cattle. Sheep with scrapie, mink with TME (transmissible mink encephalopathy), and even deer and elk with a form of mad cow disease prove this problem is not going away.

Industry experts estimate that ninety percent of downed animals can be prevented with better care and handling. Removing the market for downed animals provides an incentive to industry to prevent downed animals in the first place. Since downed animals comprise a very small percentage of animals slaughtered, prohibiting their marketing would cause no undue economic hardship. However, the potential threat to human health far outweighs any economic consideration.

Last year, the USDA revised its policy on the purchase of ground beef for the National School Lunch Program and other federal food and nutrition programs. According to an agency statement, "USDA will no longer accept ground beef that includes product from non-ambulatory cattle, commonly known as 'downers'." This was a major step in ending the downed animal trade.

Consumers have a right to trust their government and rely on the safeguards that it establishes. Please protect the health of consumers and stop the introduction of diseased animals into our food supply by granting the petition prohibiting the slaughter of downed animals.

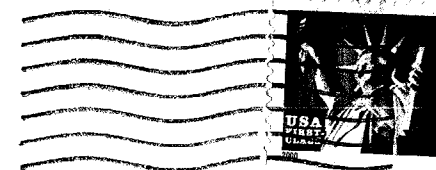
Sincerely,


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98P-0151

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