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September 13, 1999

USDA/FSIS Hearing Clerk
300 12th St. SW
Room 102 Cotton Annex
Washington, DC 20250-3700

Re: Docket No. 98-045N

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing in regard to the above mentioned docket. Some of the current horrendous conditions that farm animals are forced to live in. These include the following:

1. Overcrowding
2. Subjecting animals to stressful procedures and conditions
3. Feeding them chicken litter and feces
4. Rendering diseased animals into animal feed
5. Excessive use of antibiotics and other drugs
6. Inhumane and unhygienic transport and slaughter

Food safety hazards first and foremost need to be addressed at the source, with mandatory safeguards at the animal production stage. These include more humane and hygienic treatment and conditions for farm animals. Short of this, any food safety plan is doomed to fail. The regulatory authority at the production stage must be expanded, with adequate funding actively sought.

These farm animals must be kept healthy and hygienic. The root cause of diseases, such as e-coli, salmonella, and botulism, begin with animals who have been overcrowded, unhealthy, and who have been feed animal feed that is made with those same diseased animals.

Please remember these issues when determining the President's Food Safety Plan.

Sincerely,

Lauren Reichert

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