



Animal Welfare Institute

900 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20003 • www.awionline.org

telephone: (202) 337-2332 • facsimile: (202) 446-2131

June 2011

Dear Retailer:

Poll after poll tells us that today's consumer cares about how farm animals are treated. Consumers say they want more information about how animals are raised, and they're becoming increasingly aware that they hold the power to impact the lives of animals through their shopping decisions. Animal welfare has been identified as a hot trend in food marketing; some experts even predict that "humane" will surpass other claims like "natural" and "local" in importance to consumers.

For the past decade animal protection organizations have asked food retailers to consider animal welfare when choosing meat, dairy and egg suppliers. Unfortunately, the only way a retailer can know whether farms and slaughterhouses actually comply with established animal welfare standards is via independent, third-party verification. Relatively few producers, however, participate in third-party certification programs that audit animal welfare. With limited exceptions, there is also no government oversight of the on-farm treatment of animals raised for food.

The government does, however, monitor the slaughter of all "red meat" animals (cattle, pigs, sheep and goats) for compliance with the federal humane slaughter law. While the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) feels the level of government oversight is insufficient to ensure humane slaughter, we acknowledge that enforcement has increased in recent years.

Since January 2008, 168 federally-inspected plants have been suspended for humane slaughter violations. Of these, 56 (or 33 percent) have been suspended on more than one occasion within a one-year period. Suspending a plant is one of the most serious enforcement actions the USDA can take and typically only occurs in response to an incident of an egregious nature.

To assist retailers in assessing the animal welfare record of a supplier, AWI has created a list of slaughter establishments that have been suspended by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for violations of the humane slaughter law. (Information contained in the list was obtained from the USDA under the Freedom of Information Act.) Enclosed with this letter is a list of 48 repeat offenders that are currently operating. Additional information, including a complete list of humane slaughter suspensions and the actual enforcement documents

describing individual violations, is available on AWI's website at www.awionline.org/humaneslaughterviolations.

AWI appreciates your company's interest in providing high-quality, sustainable and socially responsible products for your customers. In pursuit of this goal, we urge you to routinely monitor the humane handling record of your meat suppliers and the slaughter establishments they use or operate, and to **not do business with any suppliers that engage companies on the repeat offender list.**

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and please feel free to contact me if we can answer any questions or provide additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy Liss". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cathy Liss
President

Enclosure