

MERRICK FARM
98 MERRICK ROAD
FARMINGDALE, NEW JERSEY 07727
JUNE 15, 2003

DR. NANCY HALPERN, DIRECTOR
DIVISION OF ANIMAL HEALTH
NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
P.O. BOX 330
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08725-0330

DEAR DR. HALPERN,

We are the owners of a farm, preserved through the New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program, and Certified by the Northeast Organic Farming Association. As a farm engaged in the humane treatment and raising of farm animals, I am writing to convey my disappointment in the New Jersey Department of Agriculture regarding your standards for humane treatment of farm animals. I am shocked to find that your proposed standards do not address many issues which are inherently cruel and unnecessary in animal production, sanctioning their existence under the premise of being "routine". I can assure you that the practices allowed in your standards are neither "routine" nor humane. These methods are utilized purely in pursuit of profit, at the expense of the animals.

Your endorsement of these methods impairs all small farmers, creating an economic and competitive disadvantage, wherein it can be construed as the department's indication that profit supersedes humane treatment of animals.

How appallingly cruel must the treatment of an animal be to be considered inhumane by your department? Which sensible individual would not view the intentional starvation of an animal (forced molting) to be unspeakably cruel? The confinement of a pregnant sow to a TWO-FOOT WIDE area for the duration of her wretched, derisory life, is obviously cruel, as well as unjustifiable. Other production methods, such as tethering, battery cages, forced molting, and particularly veal crating are blatantly cruel!

These proposed standards fall very short in the protection of animals and should be redrafted to address the aforementioned farming methods, which are plainly inhumane.

We had a lot of problems with the National Organic Standards, but "right" way did prevail; it can here too.

Thank you for your attention to this most serious legislation.
Susan Keymer/Juan George

Susan Keymer

