

June 12, 2003

VIA EMAIL: humane_standards@ag.state.nj.us

Dr. Nancy Halpern, Director
Division of Animal Health
New Jersey Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 330
Trenton, NJ 08625-0330

Dear Dr. Halpern,

I am writing pursuant to the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's legal obligation to enact standards ensuring the humane treatment of farm animals. This issue is of particular significance to me, as the advisor and coordinator to several small farmers in North Carolina. Our farmers adhere to strict humane husbandry standards in our attempt to compete with the corner-cutting, abusive methods employed by large industry production.

After reviewing the "humane" standards proposed, I was appalled to note that farming practices which are widely known to be inhumane seem to be sanctioned by the department and deemed "routine". I can assure you that "routine" and "humane" are opposing concepts in reference to your proposed standards. Such methods as gestation crates, the confinement of breeding sows to a two foot wide area their entire life, is not only unacceptable, it is incongruous with the definition of humane. The practice is atrocious and cruel, and therefore, should be not be endorsed by the department as a "humane" practice. Moreover, the tethering of sows was astoundingly not addressed in the standards at all, although this practice is broadly considered abhorrent and intolerable, and dangerous to not only the sow, but the handler attempting to wrestle with a 200 plus pound terrified animal to apply the tether.

Certain farming practices as battery cages, forced molting, and veal crates, are completely unspeakable in animal production. These practices are widely known by both farmers and consumers to be cruel. It is with much disappointment that we find these farming methods have not been barred by the department and designated cruel and unacceptable.

As the purpose of these standards is to address humane treatment of animals, we suggest a redrafting which addresses farming methods which are obviously inhumane and unnecessary.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Michael Jones
Farmer Coordinator
North Carolina A & T University