



News Release

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NMPF ASKS USDA TO END ANY USE OF DOWNER CATTLE IN HUMAN FOOD SUPPLY

NMPF, Meatpacking Groups Jointly Submit Citizens Petition To Change Regulations

ARLINGTON, VA – The National Milk Producers Federation has joined with two leading meat processing associations in urging the government to ensure that all nonambulatory, or downer, cattle, are kept out of the human food supply.

NMPF Tuesday jointly filed, with the American Meat Institute and the National Meat Association, a citizen petition that requests that the U.S. Department of Agriculture eliminate a regulation allowing a government veterinarian to reinspect animals that become nonambulatory after they initially pass ante-mortem inspection. In some cases, animals that become downers at meat processing facilities can, under present regulations, be reinspected and approved by government inspectors for further processing if the animal is found not to pose a food safety concern.

“The reality is that our meat supply is extremely safe, but the entire livestock chain runs the risk of losing consumer confidence if the perception exists that animals which may be unhealthy are allowed to be processed into food for the public,” said Jerry Kozak, President and CEO of NMPF. “NMPF agreed back in 2003 with the USDA’s decision to not allow downer cattle to be sent from farms and ranches to livestock markets and meatpacking plants, and we agree now that a further clarification of the rules preventing nonambulatory cattle from entering the food chain is a prudent next step.”

Kozak said that NMPF is developing educational materials for dairy producers to reinforce the best practices and decisions designed to keep animals from becoming nonambulatory in the first place. He said those materials will be published later this spring.

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A copy of the citizens petition can be found at www.nmpf.org.

The National Milk Producers Federation, based in Arlington, VA, develops and carries out policies that advance the well being of dairy producers and the cooperatives they own. The members of NMPF's 31 cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of more than 40,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies.

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