



Congresswoman
Rosa L. DeLauro

Press Release

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DeLauro Calls on USDA to Expedite Rule to Close Downer Cattle Loophole Following Latest Cattle Abuse Discovery

Washington, D.C. – Congresswoman Rosa L. DeLauro (CT-3), chairwoman of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, issued the following statement following another discovery of cattle abuse. The Humane Society of the United States released video and details of another undercover investigation that revealed cattle abuse at a livestock auction site in New Mexico. DeLauro included a provision pressing the U.S. Department of Agriculture to expedite the rule governing non-ambulatory cattle – downer cows in the fiscal year 2009 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. USDA had previously expedited the rule to bar the slaughter of any non-ambulatory cattle after the initial case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in January 2004.

“The repeated revelations of cattle abuse occurring at livestock auction sites and slaughterhouses are extremely troublesome. Not only are we again witnessing the inhumane treatment of cows and the illegal slaughtering of downed cows for the food supply, but also the distribution of potentially contaminated meat into the school lunch program.

“Amid this most recent discovery, we are left to wonder what action USDA has taken to prevent these abuses and threats to our food safety. Despite announcing earlier this year, that they would issue a rule to prohibit the slaughter of all downer cows – disabled, non-ambulatory cattle – little more has been done to further this rule. This is unacceptable.

“USDA must not only publish a proposed rule to close the loophole that allows downer cattle to be slaughtered for the food supply, but they must expedite this rule, so it can be implemented immediately. That is why I have included language in the Agriculture Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2009, pressing the Department to move this downer cow rule, as they previously expedited the rule in 2004 following the initial case of BSE.

“The Humane Society should again be commended for exposing this serious problem within the livestock industry and for continuing to hold USDA accountable.”

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