



August 21, 1998

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Marketing and
Regulatory
Programs

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

Washington, DC
20250

Dr. Karen Davis
President
United Poultry Concerns, Inc.
P.O. Box 59367
Potomac, MD 20859

Dear Dr. Davis:

Thank you for your letter of August 5, 1998, regarding the response of the USDA Farm Animal Well-Being Task Group to the petition from the United Poultry Concerns, Inc., (UPC) regarding the forced molting of poultry.

It was clear from the discussion on this issue during the USDA Farm Animal Well-being Task Group meeting that the group has some serious concerns regarding the practice of forced molting of poultry. We understand and share your concern about the humaneness of this practice as well as the food-safety issue. USDA cannot consider taking action relative to the practice of molting without the legislative authority upon which to base such an action.

However, USDA has chosen to take a proactive position on this issue. We have already initiated a dialogue with the Food and Drug Administration, and will carefully evaluate whatever action they may take in response to the comparable petition that UPC has sent them. As opportunities develop, we will also initiate a dialogue with the poultry industry regarding this practice and encourage additional research as needed. The UPC campaign on the forced molting of poultry will help to raise the public consciousness on the issue and create opportunities for action from interested parties.

Again, thank you for your letter and continuing interest in this issue.

Sincerely,

Craig A. Reed
Administrator

