



December 22, 1999

Karen Davis, Ph.D.
President
United Poultry Concerns, Inc.
P.O. Box 150
Machipongo, Virginia 23405-0150

Re: Docket No. 98P-0203/CP1

Dear Dr. Davis:

This is in response to your November 10 letter inquiring as to the action FDA will be taking on the issue of forced molting. Your organization submitted a citizen petition (Docket No. 98P-0203/CP1) in April 1998, which requested that FDA prohibit the forced molting of laying birds in the United States. While FDA has not yet taken action on the petition, we did issue an interim response on December 8, 1998, and a follow-up response on September 30, 1999.

An inter-agency egg safety task force recently completed an action plan which outlines a comprehensive system to assure the safety of eggs and egg products. The Egg Safety Action Plan was sent to the President through the President's Food Safety Council and was announced by the White House on December 11, 1999. This comprehensive plan, which considers the most effective means to address food safety risk factors associated with eggs, outlines the recommended research, monitoring and surveillance, inspection, and education to be undertaken to achieve a 50 percent reduction in egg-associated *Salmonella* Enteritidis (SE) illnesses by 2005.

As stated in Dr. Troxell's letter of September 30, the issue of forced molting is one of many production practices the task force examined in the development of the plan. Specifically, objective 7 in the Plan is to ensure adequate, current information is available to make decisions about SE preventive controls, surveillance, and education based on sound science. This will be accomplished by conducting research to develop and evaluate on-farm intervention strategies or technologies, including forced molting and other stress factors. Therefore, we anticipate the Agency responding to the referenced petition as part of its development of preventive control requirements.

We appreciate your continued concern regarding the safety of eggs and health of animals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy S. Bufano".

Nancy S. Bufano
Consumer Safety Officer
Office of Plant and Dairy Foods
and Beverages
Center for Food Safety
and Applied Nutrition