

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 8, 2006

SUPPORT HUMANE TREATMENT OF FARM ANIMALS

Dear Colleague:

Billions of animals are raised for food every year in the U.S., giving our families nourishment and helping feed the world. Today, we are introducing legislation that we hope will lead to more humane treatment of farm animals raised for consumption. Our bill requires those supplying farm animal products to the federal government to meet a set of basic humane standards for raising farm animals.

The humane treatment of animals speaks to our nation's core values. Our bill, the Farm Animal Stewardship Purchasing Act, will not ban any current methods of production, but would instead have the federal government lead by example, creating a small, but important, marketplace for producers who raise their animals in a more humane way. Estimates indicate that the total sales affected in the U.S. would be slightly more than one percent.

Humane treatment would be defined as:

1. Adequate shelter that allows animals to stand up, lie down and extend their limbs without touching any part of their enclosure.
2. Daily access to food and water sufficient to maintain the animal's health.
3. Adequate veterinary care, including prompt treatment of injuries or euthanasia for a sick or injured animal.

This bill does not mandate industry-wide compliance with these modest requirements. It would only apply to those producers who choose to do business with the federal government. This mirrors the approach that was taken when the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act was first enacted in 1958. Just as Congress decided a half century ago that farm animals deserve a merciful death, we believe they deserve a merciful life on the farm. And just as the federal government already imposes numerous standards on contractors, including wage and labor requirements and fuel economy standards for government vehicles, we believe it's time to have basic humane standards for food purchased with tax dollars.

We hope your will join us in cosponsoring this legislation. Please don't hesitate to contact Matt Meyer (Rep. Shays) at 55541 or David Dreher (Rep. DeFazio) at 5-6416.

Sincerely,



Christopher Shays
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress