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FACT Petitions FDA to Ban Poultry Litter as Cattle Feed

New campaign launches to end dangerous agricultural practice

Chicago, IL – Dead rodents, bacteria-laced manure, rocks, glass shards – is this really what you want your dinner to be eating? Probably not. It's dirty, disgusting and clearly unsafe.

To curb the serious health risks caused by the practice of feeding poultry litter to cows, Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT) is launching its Filthy Feed Campaign. The Campaign is a national initiative to educate consumers about this unhealthy and inhumane practice, and to leverage public interest to bring about policy change at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The first phase of the Campaign kicked off today when FACT formally petitioned the FDA to prohibit the practice. The Campaign shines a spotlight on the dangers of poultry litter as feed and responds to consumers' expectations that there is not filth in their food. (The URL for the campaign is <http://www.filthyfeed.org>)

"It wasn't long ago that contaminated pet food poisoned hundreds of cats and dogs," remarked Richard Wood, FACT's Executive Director. "We've learned the hard way that cheap feed doesn't always equal good feed. Cows deserve better than toxic leftovers."

Poultry litter consists primarily of manure, feathers, spilled feed and bedding material that accumulate on the floors of the buildings that house chickens and turkeys. It can contain disease-causing bacteria, antibiotics, toxic heavy metals, restricted feed ingredients including meat and bone meal from dead cattle, and even foreign objects such as dead rodents, rocks, nails and glass. Few of these hazards are eliminated by any processing that might occur before use as feed. The resulting health threats include the spread of Mad Cow Disease and related human neurological diseases, the development of antibiotic resistant bacteria, and the potential for exposure to toxic metals, drug residues, and disease-causing bacteria.

An FDA ban on feeding poultry litter to cows is not out of the question. In 1967, the FDA banned the use of poultry litter as cattle feed. It later revoked this policy in 1980. Currently state agricultural agencies have the authority to regulate the substance, but few monitor it, allowing serious health threats to go undetected and unchecked. FACT believes this blatant disregard for animal and human health should no longer be permitted.

"The FDA must step in and ban poultry litter as cattle feed once and for all," stated Wood.

The Campaign includes an on-line grassroots component, media relations, and consumer advocacy efforts. Individuals are encouraged to visit <http://www.filthyfeed.org> to sign a letter of support, download a comprehensive scientific report of the practice and learn more about the issue. FACT's petition to the FDA has been endorsed by 12 major consumer, environmental, and sustainable agriculture organizations.

About FACT: Based in Chicago, FACT believes that healthy animals are essential for maintaining a safe food supply. For more information please contact Richard Wood at (773) 525-4952 or visit www.foodanimalconcerns.org.