

PETA and KFC

October 1, 2003

Gregg Dedrick, President
KFC, Inc.

3 pages via fax: 502-874-2690

Dear Mr. Dedrick,

I am writing on behalf of the more than 750,000 members and supporters of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), as well as the more than 60 percent of Americans who believe that farmed animals should be protected from suffering. I write to you as an advocate for animals and as a fellow Christian, and I take my faith very seriously, as I know that you do.

It is important for you, as KFC's president, to understand the cruelty that is involved in raising chickens for food. Every year, nearly 750 million chickens are raised and killed for KFC, and they are treated in ways that would shock the conscience of any kind person. Chickens are inquisitive and friendly animals who would naturally form social hierarchies, build nests, dust bathe, and care for their young, but they suffer tremendously at the hands of KFC's suppliers.

The following are just a few examples of the hideous abuses that they endure: KFC's chickens are bred and drugged to grow so quickly that they suffer from massive rates of heart failure, lung collapse, and crippling leg deformities; they are gathered from the sheds using a method that guarantees that millions will suffer broken legs and wings; they are denied everything that God designed them to want and do; and they have their throats slit and are scalded in tanks of hot water, often while fully conscious and able to feel pain. I have mailed you a video that illustrates these and other abuses that KFC's chickens suffer.

In order to eliminate the worst of these abuses, PETA is asking that KFC adopt the "Animal Care Standards" (ACS) developed by Dr. Joy Mench, Ms. Adele Douglass, and other experts. The ACS have the support of Drs. Ian Duncan and Temple Grandin, who sit on your animal-welfare advisory panel. They are available online, and I have mailed hard copies of them to you with the video.

Please note that the ACS do not guarantee "humane" treatment of chickens and are not "free range" guidelines. These guidelines are designed in such a way



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that even the largest chicken factory farms and slaughterhouses can easily implement them. They do not require that chickens be given access to fresh air or sunlight or that they be allowed to raise their own young or even build nests. They merely eliminate egregious neglect and abuse on farms and in slaughterhouses. That said, the ACS would represent a real improvement, and they would prohibit some of the worst abuses.

The ACS do, however, leave a few of the most important animal-welfare issues incompletely addressed. Therefore, in addition to adopting the ACS, we are asking KFC to do the following:

- 1) Phase in humane gas killing of chickens. Poultry experts agree that humane gas killing is far better for animals than present methods, which clearly cause animal suffering in an array of ways. Dr. Ian Duncan, one of your own animal-welfare panelists, has described gas killing as “the most stress-free, humane method of killing poultry ever developed.”
- 2) Phase in humane, mechanized chicken-catching. Perdue Farms, Inc., one of the world’s leading poultry producers, reported that after introducing catching machines into some of its facilities, there was 14 percent less bruising among birds. Other studies have shown that when using manual methods, there are four times as many broken legs, more than eight times as much bruising, and increased stress indicators.
- 3) Phase in a breeding program for leaner, stronger, and less-aggressive chickens.

The ACS program represents a minimum standard and is equipped and designed to audit for stricter standards, so you can easily require the “ACS plus three” requirements of your suppliers under ACS guidance and enforcement without having to run your own independent program.

PETA’s guidelines make sense for KFC and its suppliers from a moral and religious standpoint, as well as from an economic standpoint. From a moral standpoint, it is simply wrong to deny these creatures their every desire and to so gratuitously abuse them, simply to make a profit. Just as God cares for the sparrow, God cares for the chicken. I challenge you to visit these chicken sheds, watch the gathering process, and witness the slaughter. You will feel a personal call to intervene and make things better—I guarantee it.

Fortunately, making these changes is also in KFC’s business interests: The initial cost of implementing gas killing systems and mechanized catching would be offset within two years by savings over traditional methods, including but not limited to decreased labor costs and employee-turnover rates. Improved breeding programs would decrease the number of birds who die prematurely and increase the number who can be slaughtered for profit. Furthermore, KFC’s sales were down 8 percent during the June period of this year—clearly, PETA’s campaign is driving people away from KFC and



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convincing them to take their business elsewhere. KFC could save both money and customers by addressing the issues of cruelty to animals that PETA is making the public aware of.

Once KFC agrees to adopt PETA's recommended guidelines—not overnight, but within a reasonable timeframe—we will happily call off our campaign against KFC. I would be happy to meet with you at your convenience to discuss these issues in more detail, and you can always feel free to contact me. If I don't hear from you within the next 10 days, please expect a call from Dr. Steven Gross. If you would prefer to contact him, you can reach him at 413-549-0268 or via e-mail at SteveG@peta.org.

Sincerely,

Bruce Friedrich
Director of Vegan Outreach



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