

PETA and KFC

February 27, 2003

David Novak, Chair and CEO
Yum! Brands
1441 Gardiner Ln.
Louisville, KY 40213

2 pages via fax: 502-874-8567

Dear Mr. Novak,

On behalf of the 750,000 members and supporters of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), I am writing to inform you that PETA has formally requested that criminal charges be filed against Tyson Foods, Inc., KFC's largest supplier of chickens, based on eyewitness testimony of egregious cruelty to animals that apparently took place within the past year at the company's Grannis, Ark., slaughterhouse. Please see the enclosed letters to the U.S. Food Safety and Inspection Service and the Polk County Prosecutor's Office, as well as the enclosed testimony of eyewitness and former Tyson employee Virgil Butler, for the details of the allegations.

As you can see from the enclosed documentation, both unavoidable abuse and sadistic cruelty to chickens run rampant at this particular Tyson supplier, and it requires no stretch of the imagination to suspect that such abuses (of the unintentional kind, at the very least) are prevalent at other Tyson suppliers, and indeed throughout the broiler-chicken industry as a whole. We present this testimony to you as clear and undeniable proof that the animal welfare improvements PETA has requested of KFC, such as gas killing of birds, mechanized chicken gathering, and cameras in slaughterhouses, are not only perfectly reasonable but in fact vitally necessary improvements. If such cruelties are taking place at a facility belonging to Tyson, they could be taking place at any Tyson facility, and in fact at any facility belonging to any company that supplies KFC. By refusing to buy from suppliers who allow such unfathomable disregard for the welfare of these animals, KFC could help put an end to such suffering and misery, yet after two years of opportunities, KFC still refuses to act. Why?

As Mr. Virgil's statement and the Tyson records make clear, even under the best of circumstances, animals are snapped, violently, into metal shackles while still conscious; animals are shocked in the water bath that is supposed to



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stun them, but often doesn't; and finally, lines moving at 11,000 birds per hour will miss more than 1,000 animals per hour—about 26 per minute; this is the **goal** for the line. No one, not even a well-trained employee, can stand and slit the throats of 26 chickens per minute. Consequently, these animals will, routinely, be scalded to death. As Mr. Butler explained, when this occurs, “the chickens flop, scream, kick, and their eyeballs pop out of their heads. Then, they often come out the other end with broken bones and disfigured and missing body parts because they’ve struggled so much in the tank.”

Furthermore, this documented incident serves as indisputable proof that the claims KFC has been making about its animal welfare program are false. How can KFC insist that “all birds are slaughtered quickly and without pain,” as it does on its Web site, when its top supplier sets as its goal an 86 percent throat-slitting rate and only has one person to pick out and slit the throats of the 26 birds per minute who miss the throat slitter? How can KFC claim that “all birds are handled humanely and suffer no pain” when a man with eight years experience in Tyson slaughterhouses can say that the sadistic abuse he witnessed is the rule, rather than the exception? How can KFC claim to have any sort of animal welfare program when its own suppliers allow such hideous acts of cruelty to take place, *under the watching eye of the plant superintendent?*

Once again, on behalf of the 700 million chickens killed for KFC every year, we ask that you adopt the animal welfare recommendations that PETA has put forth, as approved by leading experts and validated by the latest scientific research. Only then will the sorts of grotesque cruelty described in the enclosed documents be stopped. Until then, KFC can expect that its birds will continue to suffer because of outdated handling and slaughter techniques and at the hands of disturbed employees and that PETA's campaign will continue.

Mr. Butler would be happy to speak with you about the events he witnessed at the Grannis plant. Please let me know if you would like for me to arrange this.

Sincerely,

Bruce Friedrich
Director of Vegan Outreach
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

cc: Richard Lobb, National Chicken Council
Dr. Temple Grandin, Colorado State University
Dr. Ian Duncan, University of Guelph, Ontario
Dr. Joy Mench, University of California, Davis
Adele Douglass, American Humane Association
Dr. Bruce Webster, University of Georgia
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