

# Letters

## Producers Respond to HSUS Veal Campaign

An advertising campaign of The Humane Society of the United States against veal consumption is a slap in the face of the livestock industry, which has attempted to explore concerns of animal welfarists about confinement production of livestock and respond to them.

This campaign, if successful, would jeopardize the livelihood and investment of some 1,200 U.S. family veal producers.

Producers and others in the livestock industry, and particularly the veal industry, have been listening to the animal welfarists in an attempt to understand their concerns. The veal industry has responded, with a study of the system the animal welfarists have proposed as an alternative to the traditional calf-raising system. That study is just now getting underway. For HSUS to embark on what amounts to encouragement of a boycott of veal, completely ignoring attempts by the livestock industry to respond, and without waiting for the results of that study, makes one wonder about the real goals of the organization.

Is HSUS really interested in the welfare of farm animals? Or is this attack merely a thinly disguised membership drive by the Society? Some livestock producers feel it is part of a campaign to discourage the eating of meat, with a final goal of imposing vegetarianism on the public. This advertising campaign certainly supports that conclusion.

If the results of the test of the British calf-raising system endorsed in the HSUS ad campaign indicate that that system is better and economically practical, veal producers have indicated that they will adopt it. However, the British developer of that system has told U.S. producers it cannot be transferred intact to this country, but must be studied to

determine which portions might be applicable under U.S. conditions.

If the care of farm animals is really the major interest of HSUS, rather than contributions, vegetarianism, or simply destroying the veal industry, the organization will call off this campaign until the results of that research are in.

Animal welfarists must also keep in mind the differences in size of the British and U.S. veal industries. Only 50 producers of veal were involved in changing the British system, compared with more than 1,000 in this country.

While livestock producers feel many of the practices being objected to actually contribute to improved conditions for livestock, and deny they are treating their animals cruelly, they have been willing to listen and to fund research to obtain scientific measures of these issues. Until the research results are in and studies such as the trial of the British veal system have been completed, livestock producers feel it is totally unfair for animal welfarists to attempt to influence consumers with emotional campaigns not supported by scientific evidence. The 1,200 farm families who raise veal calves deserve better than this cruel attack on their livelihood.

When LCI asked animal welfarists to specify their concerns at a recent meeting, the welfarists admitted that some of their charges regarding veal (related to conditions of darkness and anemia) in the past have been false.

Livestock Conservation Institute is a livestock industry trade association dedicated to reducing livestock losses from disease and improper handling of livestock.

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