



January 14, 2021

Alan L. Grant, Ph.D.
Dean
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Dear Dr. Grant:

I'm writing on behalf of PETA and our more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide—including more than 130,000 here in the Commonwealth—regarding the four turkeys “pardoned” by President Donald J. Trump who are now being kept confined to barren, inadequate stalls on your campus. **Will you please allow us to relocate these birds to a reputable sanctuary so that they can enjoy what remains of their lives in comfort and with dignity?**

The American public would be shocked to see the conditions in which these turkeys—named Peas, Carrots, Bread, and Butter—are being kept at Virginia Tech. They're deprived of the opportunity to express their most basic needs, such as perching and roosting, bathing in the dust, smelling fresh air, foraging, and feeling the sun on their backs in your “Gobbler's Rest” pavilion. They don't even have a way to hide from the bright artificial light or retreat from view if they wish. Turkeys are highly social birds, but two of these four are penned up alone. According to a veterinarian who reviewed video footage of the abysmal conditions in which they're being kept or stored, they present “numerous, cumulative, and chronic stressors that severely compromise the physical and psychological well-being of these turkeys.”

The turkeys' physical state reflects the total inadequacy of their living conditions. They are evidently pulling out their own and each other's feathers. The inability to escape the hard floor may have caused the featherless patch on Carrots' chest. The brown staining on the tail feathers of both Bread and Butter could be symptomatic of stress and gastrointestinal ailments or simply underline that they cannot avoid their own waste in the cramped pen.

We know that your college has worked closely for many decades with an industry that promotes the mass breeding and slaughter of turkeys, an industry that fattens these birds up to such an unnatural size that they can collapse under their own weight, endure terrible discomfort, and even suffer heart attacks. However, times and minds change. If Peas and Bread like “[w]atching planes and jets” and “[l]eaf peeping,” as the college's signs indicate, how about letting us give them the chance to see the sky and some trees?

We would gladly find placement for these birds and transport them without cost to a place of *true rest* for what remains of their trying lives. Please, make the compassionate choice for them. Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to hearing that you will do the right thing.

Sincerely,

Daniel Paden
Vice President of Evidence Analysis

PEOPLE FOR
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OF ANIMALS

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