



November 21, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States

Dear Mr. President:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our more than 3 million members and supporters to urge you, with all due respect, to cancel the presidential "turkey pardon," or, as we call it, the presidential "pimping for poultry producers." As president, you don't endorse soft drinks or shoes, so please stop promoting an industry that wreaks havoc on the health of the American people, contributes to environmental devastation, and abuses millions of animals every year.

The turkeys you "pardon" for simply being born turkeys may be spared having their fragile legs forced into shackles, being dragged upside down through an electrified stun bath, having their throats slit, and being scalded to death in hot water, but by participating in this ceremony, you will be supporting an industry that, this Thanksgiving alone, will kill more than 45 million turkeys *in exactly those cruel ways*. Do you know why there are two turkeys? It's because they are at such a high risk of falling ill or even dying before the ceremony: On today's factory farms, the birds are bred and often drugged to grow so large so fast that they might well experience a heart attack. Up to 10 percent of turkeys on factory farms die before they even reach the slaughterhouse. Factory-farmed turkeys are so unnaturally large that many can barely stand without pain. Both of the 2012 "national turkeys" died within a year of the ceremony.

These smart, sensitive birds—who have been known to enjoy clucking along to music and love to have their feathers stroked and whom Benjamin Franklin wished to make our national bird—deserve some respect, not a presidential endorsement of their suffering. Meat is also laden with saturated animal fat and cholesterol, primary contributors to some of our nation's top killers, including heart disease and strokes. Eating meat wreaks havoc on our health and the environment. According to the Worldwatch Institute, the animal agriculture industry accounts for at least 51 percent of human-caused greenhouse-gas emissions.

With ever more Americans going vegan for all manner of good reasons, including concern for their health and the environment—issues you care deeply about—it's time to put an end to the White House's annual "turkey pardon." Please discontinue this pathetic, outdated promotion of a violent, environmentally irresponsible, and unhealthy industry. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you were remembered for advocating a new Thanksgiving tradition—a healthy, humane, eco-friendly *vegan* Thanksgiving?

Very truly yours,

Ingrid E. Newkirk
President

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