



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

December 15, 2023

Wes Ward
Secretary of Agriculture
Arkansas Department of Agriculture

Dear Mr. Ward:

We respectfully request your immediate attention. PETA understands that the Arkansas Department of Agriculture has started to kill hundreds of thousands of young chickens essentially abandoned on farms by Cooks Venture. We urgently seek confirmation that only killing methods approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association *for non-emergencies* will be used and that this undertaking will be done with appropriate respect and diligence.

Because this situation is not an emergency—in which chickens are suffering and dying because of a disease outbreak or a natural disaster—the department should stop using water-based foam to smother these birds. Such deaths are particularly terrifying and slow—federal standards allow some chickens to survive foaming for up to 14 minutes.

Similarly, caring individuals, including those of us at PETA, request confirmation that you won't cut these birds' throats or decapitate them while they're conscious or shut off all ventilation in the sheds and raise the heat (which is known as "ventilation shutdown plus") to kill birds slowly and painfully through heatstroke and suffocation.

Please assure us that workers will continue to treat birds respectfully and be supervised continuously by management. Those who care about these birds' welfare want to know that your staff members are properly trained in the use of containerized gassing, cervical dislocation, and captive-bolt guns to kill them as quickly as possible and with the least possible stress. May we also have your word that workers will confirm that each individual chicken is dead before disposal and rapidly destroy any surviving birds acceptably and lawfully?

In addition to legal and veterinary requirements, common decency demands that you give these chickens—who have suffered day and night in severely crowded, ammonia-ridden sheds—the quickest, most painless, and most humane death possible. Having been denied everything that's natural and important to them—such as seeing the sun, breathing fresh air, roosting in trees, and building a social structure—these animals surely deserve better than to be treated as if they were old tree branches tossed into a wood chipper or baseballs struck with two-by-fours. PETA has documented such atrocities during other "depopulation" efforts.

Washington

1536 16th St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
202-483-PETA

Los Angeles

2154 W. Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90026
323-644-PETA

Norfolk

501 Front St.
Norfolk, VA 23510
757-622-PETA

Info@peta.org
PETA.org

Entities

- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Switzerland
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

Thank you for your time and consideration. Our members and supporters look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Paden". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dan Paden
Vice President of Evidence Analysis