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U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250
ATTN: Beef Division

Dear Inspectors:

I am curious to know how you track or mark your meat inspections. I see a slip of paper in my pants pocket after I buy them that says "Inspected by #12", but I never see a slip of paper or an ink stamp in or on my ground beef when I buy it from the supermarket. I know that you cannot simply put a slip of paper into the ground meat, but is there a fool proof way for me to insure that I am buying good beef?

Let me tell you, I read the book *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair Lewis and he paints a pretty nauseating picture of today's meat packing industry. I was appalled when I read that book and thought to myself that this is the very stuff I am eating on a daily basis. Somebody should do something about that and I think you are the ones who should do it. If you have not read *The Jungle*, can I send you my copy of the book to read and let you decide what and how to do anything to stop this madness? (I would need the book returned to me after you are finished with it).

And speaking of madness, I have another question for you. I really don't want to raise any alarms which would cause mass panic, so please investigate this as discreetly as you can. There is a local restaurant in my area that causes me concern. I have not eaten there myself, but I wouldn't mind going undercover to investigate if necessary, but only if I can have an EMS squad waiting in the wings to pump my stomach if need be.

The name of the restaurant is the "Angry Bull" restaurant. When I first saw the sign for this restaurant my very first thought was that it is just another name, maybe even a code name, for Mad Cow. They are probably buying their beef products very cheap because their supplier presumably has beef tainted with mad cow disease and needs to unload it quietly! But I think they still charge an arm and a leg for their various steak dinners. The profit that they are likely making at the expense of the unsuspecting public really gets my goat! There are a lot of Mexican migrant farm workers in the spring through fall months who live in that area near the Angry Bull. Many of them do not speak English, so the restaurant proprietors could very well tell them: "Our beef at the Angry Bull comes from livestock infected with Mad Cow disease. Would you like to try our prime rib?" And the Mexican fellows who don't understand any of that will just

smile and nod their unknowing heads! This cannot continue!

There is another seafood place in the area called the Angry Trout. Do you happen to know if there is any variation of mad cow disease which affects fish? I have “steaked” out the Angry Trout and notice that not many German people eat there. Perhaps this is due to my secret messages in the community that “Fish ist tote!” but I can’t really take all the credit for that. You see, we have very few German speaking residents in this part of Ohio. There are some south east of here in Amish country, but they don’t eat out much. And when they do, it is usually at Wendy’s.

Please write back and let me know how you indicate that the ground beef in the supermarket is safe to eat and also what you can do about these “angry animals” food service establishments. Can you continue to use my surveillance services? If so, I will submit an invoice and expense sheet at regular intervals for your review and approval.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rusty Lucas". The script is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Rusty Lucas

p.s. Since I may be working undercover for you folks at the USDA, do you think I might be able to get a baseball cap with your logo on it? I promise to not wear it when I am “steaking” out any possible offending restaurants. I don’t want to blow my cover! I will only wear it to baseball games -- where else would you expect to see baseball caps? -- and possibly to the public library where I might raise awareness of tainted meat to the more learned people in town. Please send me a free USDA baseball cap if you have one in my size.