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CHELLIE PINGREE

1ST DISTRICT  
MAINE



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EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 14, 2011

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

I sincerely appreciate your leadership at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). I'm writing to you today to urge you to immediately end the use of "finely textured lean beef trimmings" or "pink slime" in our children's school food.

As you know, "pink slime" is a term used for an industrial slurry of beef scraps and connective tissue. This product, produced by two companies in the United States, Cargill Meat Solutions and Beef Products, Inc., is treated with ammonia hydroxide to remove E. coli and Salmonella.

Although fast food restaurants like McDonald's and Burger King have stopped using pink slime in their food, the USDA has not yet made this policy change, and recently authorized the purchase of ground beef containing an additional seven million pounds of pink slime destined to be served in school cafeterias. If these fast food chains won't serve pink slime, why should school cafeterias?

I share the concerns of people around the country about this bi-product being fed to our children. It is wrong to feed children a slurry that was formerly only used for dog food. I hope you will do everything in your power to eliminate it from school lunch programs around the country.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue, and please put a stop to the use of pink slime in the National School Lunch Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chellie R." followed by a long horizontal line.

Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress