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LARRY CRAIG

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NEWS RELEASE

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BEFF: IT'S STILL WHAT'S FOR DINNER
by Senator Larry Craig

As someone who grew up in the cattle industry, I know the work that goes into the long hours of a cattleman's day. The ranch and farm families in Idaho are not only great providers to our food supply and economy, they are a source of pride to our great State. So when the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently issued a Class II recall of beef from a processing plant in California, I shared the concerns of these hard working Idahoans, as well as the consuming public.

The recall resulted in part from video evidence captured by a member of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), who was working under cover at a meat processing facility in California. Without question, the treatment of the animals on the video was egregious and clearly represented a violation of law that should be prosecuted. It is unfortunate, however, when the actions of one bad actor can misrepresent the vast majority of ranchers and processors who strive to follow the rules and regulations set forth to assure animal welfare, as well as overall food safety.

While I am very grateful that these inhumane actions have now been uncovered and corrected, I was incensed to learn that HSUS waited four months to deliver the footage to the federal authorities who could make sure our food supply was safe. As a member of the Subcommittee on Agriculture Appropriations, I recently had the opportunity to question the CEO of HSUS on this topic. In response to my questions, the Subcommittee heard that HSUS was more concerned about prosecuting the slaughterhouse than it was about the possible risk to the U.S. food supply and thousands of potential consumers, including public schools. To a beef consumer and a grandfather of schoolchildren, that response was simply unacceptable.

I think most Americans would agree that citizens have a responsibility to report crimes in their communities. In that regard, it appears this California meat packing plant is not the only culprit of egregious behavior. HSUS must shoulder some of the blame for enabling this practice to continue longer than necessary.

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I also took the opportunity at the hearing to question the Secretary of Agriculture about both food safety and animal welfare. The information that came to light demonstrated the USDA has taken the proper steps to ensure that our food supply remains the safest in the world and that those involved with these appalling events will be properly punished.

The issue now at hand is the confidence Americans have in our beef industry. I want to assure Idahoans that I will continue to support Idaho beef producers, and I most certainly will continue eating U.S. beef.

To watch Senator Craig question the Secretary of Agriculture and the CEO of the Humane Society of the United States, visit <http://craig.senate.gov>.

NOTE: To link directly to this release, please use the following address: <http://craig.senate.gov/releases/ed022908a.cfm>. A [printer friendly version \(PDF\)](#) is also available.