

November 21, 2011

President Barack Obama  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President Obama,

I am the founder of this nation's oldest farm animal protection organization, and I want thank you for your offer to "pardon" two turkeys on Thanksgiving, giving them an option to live out their lives in relative comfort.

On behalf of the millions of Americans who care about their fellow creatures, we ask you to do better than that by "pardoning" all turkeys bound for White House dinners this holiday season. We ask you to be the first president to observe a truly nonviolent holiday season.

Of course, it's the depth of irony that we should even have to request a "pardon" for animals who have committed no crime by anyone's definition. Yet, we treat these innocent creatures worse than hardened criminals.

Turkeys are forcefully inseminated and bred to gain enormous amounts of weight in a short time, leading to heart attacks, lameness, and death. They are forced to endure severe crowding. Their snoods, parts of their toes, and their beaks are cut off without painkillers. Conditions are so harsh that the birds must be pumped full of antibiotics, and 13% never make it to the slaughterhouse.

Celebrating over a dead bird betrays the life-affirming spirit of Thanksgiving. By serving a vegan menu, we spare a turkey's life and add years to our own lives.

Countless studies have shown that eating a whole-foods, plant-based diet greatly reduces the risk of heart disease, diabetes, cancer and other deadly diseases. At a time when one-third of U.S. adults and about 17% of children and adolescents are obese, we can nourish our bodies with vegetables, whole grains, legumes and the traditional "three sisters" plants - squash, beans and corn - that were the focus of the first Thanksgiving celebration.

I am so pleased that you and your family have already made it clear that healthy eating is important to you; with Mrs. Obama even making this a top priority in her work. By pardoning all turkeys, you can put your values into practice and make a statement for compassionate, wholesome eating.

Thank you for your kind consideration,



Dr. Alex Hershaft, PhD  
President & Founder  
Farm Animal Rights Movement (FARM)