



ASPCA[®]

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE
PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

August 30, 2001

Attorney General Elliot Spitzer
State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224-0341

Dear Attorney General Spitzer:

As the Director of New York State Government Affairs and Public Policy for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), I write to ask for your assistance in addressing a practice going on in New York State which involves extreme cruelty to animals. Pate de Foie Gras, an expensive delicacy, is the grossly enlarged liver of a duck or goose, produced by restraining the animal and inserting a tube down its throat, through which large quantities of food are forced into its stomach. This procedure is repeated numerous times each day for the last several weeks of the bird's life.

The birds' livers become so enlarged—several times its normal size—that, according to documentation by veterinarians, the animals must experience unspeakable pain and suffering. Birds have literally exploded from these forced feedings. The results of necropsies on dead birds that have been force-fed reveal ruptured livers, throat damage, esophageal trauma and food spilling from the dead animal's throat and out of its nostrils. Sadder still, countless birds suffer so terribly—not to provide necessary sustenance for people—but to supply a pricey appetizer prohibitive to the average consumer

Unfortunately, one of only two foie gras producers in the United States is located in New York—in Sullivan County. As the public learns of the senseless cruelty perpetuated against ducks and geese to manufacture an entirely nonessential luxury food item, the collective outrage against foie gras production continues to grow.

It is time to stop the needless, inhumane suffering of these animals in New York State. The ASPCA respectfully urges the Attorney General's office to invoke our cruelty law to stop this practice within our borders. Section 353 of the agriculture and markets law makes it a misdemeanor to torture or to unjustifiably injure, maim, mutilate or kill any animal. Production of foie gras involves just such unnecessary and unjustifiable torture and injury. While humane slaughter of animals for food is of course lawful, causing prolonged pain prior to death is cruelty. Foie gras production involves, indeed necessitates untold suffering prior to death and therefore violates section 353.

Please feel free to contact me for additional information or to discuss this matter further. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stacy Wolf

Stacy Wolf, Esq.
Director, New York State
Government Affairs & Public
Policy