

BIOHAZARD-SUITED PROTESTERS WARN: AVOID POULTRY FLESH LIKE THE PLAGUE

Contact :

Karen Chisholm +44 20 7357 9229, ext. 229

PETA Offers Free Emergency Vegetarian Starter Kits in Response to Deadly Strain of Bird Flu Found on Bernard Matthews Farm

London – In response to the discovery of the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu on a farm linked to Europe’s biggest turkey killer, Bernard Matthews, members of PETA Europe, carrying signs reading, “Bird Flu Kills – Go Vegetarian”, and kitted out in biohazard suits, will distribute emergency vegetarian starter kits to shoppers at Sainsbury’s.

The activists will use barrier tape to emphasise the potentially deadly dangers of bird flu and tout the health benefits of a vegetarian diet, which excludes poultry and other meat. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, bird flu can be caught by eating undercooked meat or eggs which are contaminated with the disease, by eating food prepared on the same cutting board as infected meat or eggs or even by touching eggshells contaminated with the disease:

Date: 6 February 2007

Time: 12 noon

Place: Sainsbury’s Central Aviation House, 129 Kingsway, London

This isn’t the first time Bernard Matthews has come under fire. Investigators have found dead turkeys in one of the giant Bernard Matthews sheds and other birds with festering wounds. Hundreds of turkeys were seen milling about rotten carcasses. Live birds occasionally pecked at the bodies of the dead ones. Just last year, Bernard Matthews workers were filmed kicking birds, throwing them up into the air and using pipes as baseball bats to hit them.

Bernard Matthews and other poultry farms are breeding grounds for disease. A single factory-farm chicken or turkey shed can house tens of thousands of birds, who are forced to live in their own waste, allowing disease to spread quickly among them. Laying hens are kept in batteries of small stacked cages until slaughter.

“Mad cow, SARS and now avian flu – these are all predictable consequences of sickening and cruel industries that use and exploit animals for food”, says PETA Europe’s Anita Singh. “With diseases running rampant in crowded, filthy factory farms – and the known link between meat-eating and heart disease – the safest thing to do with any meat in your freezer is to throw it in the trash.”

Avian influenza threatens to be one of the greatest public health crises in recorded history. Outbreaks of various strains of bird flu are regularly detected around the world. PETA’s free vegetarian starter kit can be viewed online or ordered at PETA.org.uk