



September 27, 2013

Mr. Steve Ells
Founder and CEO
Chipotle Mexican Grill
1401 Wynkoop St. Suite 500
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Mr. Ells:

On behalf of the members of the Animal Agriculture Alliance, we wish to express our disappointment with your animated short, "The Scarecrow" and accompanying game. While we fully support consumer choice and your need, as a restaurant, to differentiate yourself in a crowded marketplace we are concerned with your disparaging -- and often misleading -- characterizations of the livestock industry.

In particular, we were disturbed by the overwhelming impression that farmers are simply cogs in a gigantic food wheel, perpetuating the myth of "factory farming." In reality, 97 percent of farms in our country are family owned and operated, and most have been in the family for generations.

The Animal Agriculture Alliance is a broad based coalition of individual farmers, ranchers, producer organizations, suppliers, packer-processors, scientists, veterinarians and retailers, and we have been actively engaged in issues affecting animal agriculture for over 26 years. Our membership includes farmers and ranchers that represent all factions of production practices, including natural, organic, traditional and everything in between. We've never met a rancher that produces raises "beef-ish" cattle or a farmer that injects chickens with green slimy goo.

Choosing what food to serve your customers, just like choosing what food to serve your family and loved ones, is an incredibly important, and personal, decision--which is why we respect your decision to procure meat products from animals raised according to certain specifications and standards. However, campaigns like yours, which use fear and misinformation to convince consumers that one product is safer, or otherwise superior, to another are extremely damaging to the entire food industry--of which you are a part. This disingenuous campaign seems grossly out of step with your "Food with Integrity" slogan.

We understand your desire, according to several interviews you've given about the animated short, to jump-start more direct conversations about how our food is grown and raised in this country. Keeping that goal in mind, we would like to cordially invite you to tour some farms around the country and explore different production practices.

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Please understand, we are not hoping to influence--in any way--your product procurement practices or considerations. Rather, we want you to understand that those that raise our food do so adhering to the highest standards for food safety and animal well-being. We would like for you to tour some modern family farms and see for yourself how lucky we are to be fed by less than two percent of our population.

One of the farms we invite you to visit is Fair Oaks Farms in Fair Oaks, Indiana. Fair Oaks is committed to helping the public understand the ins and outs of modern farming practices. To accomplish this goal, they have opened their doors wide and created two unique experiences, the Dairy Adventure and the Pig Adventure. You can learn more about Fair Oaks Farms by visiting: <http://fofarms.com>.

Keep in mind, Fair Oaks is just one of about two million farms in the U.S., but it provides an excellent representation of the vast majority of farms across America – those which you misleadingly characterize as “factory farms.”

Again, we respect consumer choice and the choices you make as the owners of a successful restaurant company, however playing to consumer fear and disparaging America’s farmers and ranchers is a less than admirable way to increase your market share. We hope you’ll take us up on our offer and tour some truly fabulous facilities with industry professionals on hand to answer your questions.

If you truly want to have a larger discussion about food production in this country, we see this as an excellent way to start. Please feel free to contact me at KJohnson@animalagalliance.org or by phone at (703)562-1412.

Sincerely,



Kay Johnson Smith
President and CEO

CC: Mr. Christopher Arnold, Director of Communications