

Former Chicken Inspector Decries New USDA Program

ALBERTVILLE, Ala. — Phyllis McKelvey, a retired chicken inspector and grandmother of eight from Guntersville, Alabama, is [petitioning the USDA on Change.org](#) [1] to stop expansion of a new pilot program she says is already letting bile, feces, pus, and scabs into the nation's poultry products.

McKelvey launched an online [petition on Change.org](#) [2] to rally support from consumers concerned about the USDA plan, commonly known as HIMP, which increases line speeds while decreasing the number of inspectors tasked with protecting the nation's food supply.

"I have seen contaminated chickens go down the line, but inspectors like me were able to stop them before they reached consumers," said McKelvey. "But under the USDA's new plan, I'm afraid that birds covered in bile, feces, and pus will become chicken nuggets and be served to young children. More than 170,000 people signed my petition so far, and I'm sure support will keep growing – because no one wants to eat chicken covered in glops of feces."

"If you knew an inspector had just one-third of a second to inspect a chicken for a whole host of problems, would you eat it?" McKelvey added.

McKelvey worked in the poultry industry for 44 years, with over a decade of these spent working as a USDA inspector. Prior to her retirement in 2010, she was stationed at the first HIMP pilot program in the county of Guntersville, Alabama.

McKelvey says that unlike at standard inspection facilities, inspectors at HIMP plants cannot see inside the carcass, where most of the feces and pathogens can be found. Because the entire carcass cannot be inspected, McKelvey says, inspectors may not be able to detect potential fecal contamination inside the birds.

"What I saw in the pilot program was shocking," said McKelvey. "As someone who has spent most of my life on poultry inspection lines, I was shocked by how little oversight there is when plants are allowed to self-regulate. I'm not just speaking out for my grandkids but for everyone's kids."

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Links:

[1] <http://Changeorg.pr-optout.com/Url.aspx?1091510x10897054x4375544>

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