January 8, 2003

Livestock and Seed Programs
Agriculture Marketing Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Stop 0249, Room 2092-S
Washington, DC 20250-0249

Dear Sir or Madam,

I strongly oppose the use of irradiation on meat served to children in the National School Lunch Program. When meat is subjected to the equivalent of more than 100 million chest x-rays, new chemicals are formed that have never been tested.

In addition, irradiation damages vitamins and creates free radicals that can damage the body's cells over time.

Without long-term human studies showing the safety of irradiated food, I am not confident in this technology right now. Children shouldn't be exposed to it-certainly not without parents' consent. That means, at the very least, parents must be informed in advance and the food must be labeled as having been irradiated.

Sincerely,

MARY LYNN CATLEDGE
1199 GERARD ST
MANDEVILLE, LA 70448