



**NEWS RELEASE
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Public Interest Law Firm Launches Food Safety and Health Project; Will Challenge Factory Farm Abuses, Other Threats to Public Health

Amid growing concern about food safety nationwide, Public Justice has expanded its wide-ranging docket to hold corporations accountable for the manufacture, distribution, and deceptive marketing of food and other products that endanger consumers' safety, health, and nutrition.

The national public interest law firm's newly launched Food Safety and Health Project will initially focus on health and safety risks created by enormous factory farms – a.k.a., “Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations” (CAFOs) – a major source of food-borne illness in the U.S.

Mismanaged CAFOs have been associated with the widespread adulteration of meat, eggs, and poultry, which has prompted several recent nationwide recalls; the massive overuse of antibiotics, which has been linked to the growth of antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria that, in some cases, have proven deadly to humans; and the use of dangerous hormones and other growth supplements in meat and dairy. In addition to these well-documented safety risks, CAFOs have become a notorious source of environmental degradation, worker abuse, animal cruelty, and consumer deception.

“America's food-production systems are broken,” said Jessica Culpepper, Public Justice's lead attorney working on food safety litigation. “The Center for Disease Control estimates that each year nearly 50 million Americans get sick from food-borne bacteria. Our aim is to bring some light to this very serious issue – and to hold food corporations accountable if they're threatening consumers' health and safety.”

Culpepper, who recently joined Public Justice after a five-year stint working on food safety and animal welfare cases at The Humane Society of the United States, noted that food safety litigation is a natural extension of Public Justice's existing work: it combines five areas of law – workers' rights, deceptive corporate practices, pollution, consumer rights, and access to justice – in which the law firm already practices.

The Food Safety and Health Project is being directed by Public Justice Senior Attorney Leslie Brueckner.

The Project's first major case is *National Meat Association v. Brown*, a U.S. Supreme Court fighting to reject a CAFO industry lawsuit seeking to overturn a law preventing California slaughterhouses from putting diseased or injured animals in the food supply. Public Justice is co-counsel for the Animal Legal Defense Fund, who has intervened in the case on the side of the state of California.

The intervenors' brief, which was filed Monday, is posted on the Public Justice website:
http://www.publicjustice.net/Repository/Files/RespondentBrief_NMAvHarris_3Oct11.pdf

In fighting the myriad abuses against consumers, workers, animals and the environment caused by mismanaged CAFOs, the Project will also deploy the skills and resources of the more than 3,000 member attorneys committed to serving the public interest by supporting and working with Public Justice.

In addition, Culpepper and Brueckner will work with other public interest groups, not only on litigation, but also in educating consumers about food safety and health issues.

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Public Justice is a national public interest law firm that fights injustice and holds corporate and government wrongdoers accountable. See www.publicjustice.net.