



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 24, 2007

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## SHOP FOR “ANIMAL WELFARE APPROVED” PRODUCTS FROM FAMILY FARMS FOR UPCOMING HOLIDAY MEALS

Washington, D.C. — “Family farmers are the heart of this great country,” said **Willie Nelson**, a longtime supporter of humane treatment of animals. “At their heart is a deep love and respect for the land and the animals they raise.”

As the holiday season approaches, families are planning traditional feasts to delight the palate and create life-long memories. To assure the quality of holiday meals served to loved ones, more and more cooks are searching for local foods and products which are independently verified as coming from farms that meet high standards for animal welfare. At the top of these is **Animal Welfare Institute’s (AWI) "Animal Welfare Approved."**

“Animal Welfare Approved” is a seal granted for meat, poultry, dairy and eggs raised using the highest standards for the humane treatment of farm animals. More than 600 farms comply with AWI’s standards, which provide consumers, grocers, chefs and other food buyers a single comprehensive seal to differentiate high-welfare family farms from agribusinesses that subject animals to cruel and unnatural conditions. “The Animal Welfare Approved seal is a badge of honor for family farmers, since their attention to the health and well-being of their animals results in humane practices that serve as a model for all,” continued Willie Nelson.

AWI’s standards address all aspects of an animal’s life starting with genetic soundness through opportunities to socialize and behave naturally to assurances of comfort and freedom from intensive confinement. Every Animal Welfare Approved farm is an independent family farm. The program is helping to revitalize a culture of family-owned and managed farms, out of a belief that family farmers have a true connection to and stake in the health of their animals--something that has been lost in industrial factory farming. Unlike other verification programs, farmers pay no fees to participate in the Animal Welfare Approved program.



One Animal Welfare Approved turkey farmer and nationally recognized poultry expert is **Frank Reese**, a fourth generation farmer from Lindsborg, Kansas. Frank’s operation has come a long way since he sold his first 800 heritage turkeys in 2002. Thanks to his coalition of six farmers and help from the State of Kansas and Kansas State University, more than 10,000 rare breed turkeys are being raised this year, direct descendents of the first domesticated flocks of these breeds which were raised throughout our nation's history. Standard Breds include five primary breeds: Bronze, Black and White

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Holland, Bourbon Red, and Narragansett. Before Frank's breeding program went into effect, these traditional turkey breeds had been largely lost with the onset of large scale breeding for the mass market.

Frank Reese Jr. owns and operates **Good Shepherd Turkey Ranch** where he lives out his vision to be the premiere source of high quality authentic heritage poultry in the United States. Through careful selection and breeding, high-welfare farming and safe processing, he aims to consistently satisfy the discriminating consumer's desire for authentic heritage products. Good Shepherd's turkeys have been consistently voted the best tasting birds on the market by chefs and food writers including those at *Bon Appetit*, *Saveur* and *Food & Wine* magazines. ***Good Shepherd Ranch turkeys are Animal Welfare Approved: [www.reeseturkeys.com](http://www.reeseturkeys.com).***

Consumers looking for a premium cured or uncured ham, pork roast or succulent pork chops for their holiday meals seek out **Niman Ranch** pork products, featured on many **Chipotle** restaurant menus and at fine dining restaurants nationwide. **Paul Willis**, who lives on the farm where he grew up in Thornton, Iowa, manages a network of family hog farmers for Niman Ranch. Paul's passions have always included animals and taking care of the land.



In 1995, Paul was looking for a way to market natural "free range" pigs when he met Bill Niman. Paul wanted to revitalize traditional hog farming in the Midwest at a time when economics were forcing many farmers to sell out or turn to factory/confinement keeping of hogs. Niman Ranch offered the opportunity for farmers to raise pigs the humane, old-fashioned way and these outdoor-raised pigs quickly became a favorite choice for Niman Ranch customers.

In addition to managing the Niman Ranch pork operation, Paul raises 2,500 Farmers' Hybrid hogs on the Willis Free Range Pig Farm. ***Niman Ranch pork products are Animal Welfare Approved and available through its website at: [www.nimanranch.com](http://www.nimanranch.com).***

Animal Welfare Approved products are available from Cates Family Farm, Drakes Bay Family Farms, Cane Creek Farm, Parker Farms, MAE Farm, Willow Creek Farm, Good Shepherd Turkey Ranch, Whitmore Farms, and from meat companies including Niman Ranch, Williams Meats, and Heritage Foods USA. Animal Welfare Approved products are available at select Whole Foods Markets and Trader Joe's. Visit **[www.animalwelfareapproved.org](http://www.animalwelfareapproved.org)** for more information.

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**Animal Welfare Approved** is a program of the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI). For over 50 years, the nonprofit Institute has worked to reduce the pain and fear humans inflict on animals. AWI campaigns include saving whales from commercial slaughter, ending use of brutal traps, improving treatment of animals used for experimentation and protecting endangered species. AWI promotes humane farming practices and fights the growth of animal factories for the benefit of animals, consumers, farm families, rural communities and the environment. For more information, visit [www.AWIONline.org](http://www.AWIONline.org).

Animal Welfare Approved...protecting animals, supporting family farmers,  
serving consumers and caring for our environment.