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ANIMAL WELFARE APPROVED FARMER JUDE BECKER FEATURED ON OPRAH

**--Rapidly growing program recognized for having the highest standards
for farm animal welfare--**

DYERSVILLE, IOWA - Animal Welfare Approved pig farmer, Jude Becker, was featured on a segment of Oprah's show yesterday, "How We Treat the Animals We Eat." Spurred by the upcoming vote on California's Proposition 2, which would legislate increased cage sizes for laying hens, gestating sows and veal calves, the segment demonstrated the contrast between two different ways of raising farm animals: confinement, large-scale, factory farm operations versus pasture- and range-based, independent, humane family farms.

Jude Becker raises pigs under the standards set by the **Animal Welfare Approved** program and food label. Following a recent comparison, Animal Welfare Approved's standards were held up as the "most stringent" of all third-party certifiers by the World Society for the Protection of Animals.

Like many farm kids of the 1980s, Jude grew up amidst a general decline in traditional agriculture. Factory farms and confinement operations were the growing trend, and "sustainable agriculture" was not the household word it has now become. However, after attending Iowa State in the mid-1990s, Jude pursued an interest in organic and sustainable production. Later, he took this knowledge back to his family farm in Dyersville, Iowa.

Starting out with six Chester White sows and one Berkshire boar, Jude now raises 6,000 pigs a year. He has cultivated a niche market for organic pork and gourmet "Acorn Edition" prosciutto through a partnership with La Quercia, an artisan pork processor.

Jude's sows farrow on pasture, and piglets remain with their mother for 7 weeks--a sharp contrast to the 3-week industry standard. A typical piglet at Becker Lane is born into a nest with his or her mother

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Animal Welfare Approved is a Program of the Animal Welfare Institute

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and siblings, and begins to venture out into the "yard" at 10 days. Jude grows much of his own feed, and uses his livestock operation in careful rotation with his other crops. This prevents disease, allows the land to rest, and utilizes the pigs' manure rather than confining it to a lagoon.

When asked about his goals for Becker Lane, Jude says, "To maximize the morality of our process. Morality is kind of tongue-in-cheek, but it's the best word--our goal is to improve the health and wellness of our animals, staff and the environment."

"Animal Welfare Approved is the only farm animal welfare label and program that requires family ownership, prohibits confinement feeding operations, provides grants to farmers and is offered for free," remarked program director Andrew Gunther. He continued, "We applaud Jude Becker and his colleagues in the Animal Welfare Approved program for their ongoing commitment to the highest level of animal welfare and we congratulate Oprah and Lisa Ling for bringing animal welfare to the attention of the American people. We encourage consumers to always ask where their food comes from, 'Is Your Food Animal Welfare Approved?'"

For more information visit <http://www.beckerlaneorganic.com/> and www.AnimalWelfareApproved.org

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