



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DECEMBER 29, 2010

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USDA'S NEW MEAT LABELS- GREAT, BUT WHERE DOES YOUR MEAT REALLY COME FROM?

Washington, DC—The new nutrition labels for meat products from the USDA are a terrific step forward. But even with all the listings for fat, protein and vitamins, you still can't tell where your meat really came from or how it was produced. Current law in the United States only requires a farmer to hand over an affidavit saying that he/she raised a meat animal. But that affidavit doesn't require notarization, audit or any other kind of verification. That animal could have been raised under brutal, unsanitary conditions and the consumer and the government would never know.

Meat safety is so much more than fats and calories. If you want a safer, healthier product, then you should be looking for the Animal Welfare Approved label. The AWA process is completely transparent. We follow the life of an animal from birth to slaughter, so we know exactly where it's been and how it was raised. AWA products are pasture raised, without added hormones or non-therapeutic antibiotics. The health benefits of eating pasture based meat products are now widely recognized.

In addition, AWA has the highest standards for animal welfare, according to the World Society for the Protection of Animals and Certified Humane. And AWA is the only USDA approved label that prohibits feedlots, cages and crates.

Animal Welfare Approved audits and certifies family farms that raise their animals with the highest animal welfare standards, outdoors, on pasture or range. The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) has lauded these standards for two years running as being the most stringent when compared to other third-party certification programs. Visit www.AnimalWelfareApproved.org for an online directory of approved farms, as well as restaurants, shops and markets where AWA farmers' products are sold. Choose the one independent food label that means healthy, safe, environmentally responsible and humanely raised.

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