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Farmer Carole Morison of Food, Inc. Trades Contract Farming Blues for Rhode Island Reds

**--Former contract poultry grower and featured farmer in Food, Inc. goes sustainable at
Maryland's first Animal Welfare Approved® farm--**

Pocomoke City, MD – Carole Morison, the outspoken farmer of the Academy Award-nominated documentary *Food, Inc.*, has recently announced a new business venture – pastured poultry. With the first flock of laying hens now in production, Morison's Bird's Eye View Farm is a model for transitioning farmers throughout the region.

As *Food, Inc.* fans will remember, Carole and her husband Frank ended their contract with the industrial poultry giant Perdue in 2008. "We had reached a point where we didn't feel like farmers any more. We were completely at the mercy of the company in terms of every decision on the farm," explains Carole. "Industrial systems are not set up for the benefit of the animals or the farmer – the company is the only one that thrives."

With technical assistance from Animal Welfare Approved, the nonprofit food label and go-to resource for sustainable meat, dairy and egg production, Carole began to research alternative systems. "On farms across the country I saw chickens outside acting like chickens, and farmers doing what they do best – using their brains and experience to make the best decisions for their animals, their communities and the environment. I also realized that people value food from sustainable systems and that demand is greater than the available supply. We decided to give it a try." On their decision to pursue Animal Welfare Approved certification, Carole explains, "This is the only food label that guarantees high-welfare production, outdoors on independent family farms – it's a natural fit."

At Bird's Eye View Farm, the Morisons now raise a flock of 500 Rhode Island Red hens on pasture. Their transition from conventional to pasture-based management was made easier by using the infrastructure they already had. In a resourceful move, the Morisons repurposed one of their chicken houses for their new pasture-based system. They removed the black-out curtains, and instead of using fans for air exchange they now use nature's own ventilation system - fresh air and sunshine. The building that used to crowd 27,200 birds indoors now gives hens a safe place to nest while allowing them to range out onto the surrounding pasture. This model produces healthier hens and tastier, more nutritious eggs, and

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allows the Morisons to add value without the huge capital outlays required for conventional indoor operations. “Waste not, want not,” says Frank, who enjoys the new working environment. Carole agrees: “We used to have to wear masks against the dust inside these houses. Now that the chickens can roam outside, the environment is much more pleasant – for us and for our birds.”

With their new flock just beginning to lay, the Morison’s already have interested buyers for their tasty, high quality eggs and are actively creating new relationships with restaurants and retailers. Demand for high-welfare, pasture-raised eggs is growing as consumers discover their culinary and nutritional benefits. Research shows that pasture-raised eggs contain three times as much vitamin E, seven times more beta-carotene and twice the amount of Omega 3 fatty acids than intensively produced eggs.

AWA Program Director Andrew Gunther applauds their efforts saying, “The Morisons’ first innovative steps demonstrates the tremendous potential of pasture-based farming and offers a new model for conventional farmers interested in alternative systems. Consumers and farmers alike appreciate the benefits in product quality and nutrition, as well as the positive impact on animal welfare and farm viability. We are so proud to have Bird’s Eye View Farm in the AWA family and look forward to welcoming more Maryland farms into the program.”

[Animal Welfare Approved](#) (AWA) is a national nonprofit organization that audits, certifies and supports farmers raising their animals according to the highest welfare standards, outdoors on pasture or range. Called a "badge of honor for farmers" and the "gold standard," AWA has come to be the most highly regarded food label when it comes to animal welfare, pasture-based farming, and sustainability. All AWA standards, policies and procedures are available on the AWA website, making it one of the most transparent certifications available.

AWA's online directory of farms, restaurants and products enables the public to search for AWA farms, restaurants and products by zipcode, keywords, products and type of establishment. Visit www.AnimalWelfareApproved.org/product-search.

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