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August 6, 2006

Martin E. O'Connor
Chief Standardization Branch Livestock and Seed Program, AMS, USDA
Room 2607-S
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-0254

Re: Docket #LS-05-09

Dear Mr. O'Connor,

I am writing to thank the USDA for coming out with strong 99% standards for labelling grass-fed meat. As a consumer, I want to have faith in the 'grass-fed' label on the beef and lamb that I buy.

Grain-fed cattle are crowded together in their own filth while they are fed an unnatural diet of grain. Here are the down-stream problems with this method:

1. This increases the need for antibiotics to keep the animals from getting sick which increases the risk of antibiotic resistance in humans.
2. Fertilizers and pesticides are needed to raise the corn to feed the cattle.
3. I feel that e-coli is more of a problem because of the feed-lot method of raising cattle.
4. From what I've read about bovine spongiform encephalitis (mad-cow disease), it can be caused from feeding cattle by-products from other farming activities – foods that the ruminant does not normally consume.

It just seems to me that feeding an animal the foods its body is designed to consume is healthier for the animal and the human who consumes it. It is also healthier for the environment. As the consumer, I want to be certain that when I choose 'grass-fed', that the meat was produced with the integrity of truly feeding the animal a diet of 99% grass. I urge you to keep the standard high so that consumers can vote with their dollars.

Sincerely,

Eleanore R. Recko

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