

Farm Animal Welfare:

**An Assessment of Product
Labeling Claims, Industry
Quality Assurance Guidelines
and Third Party
Certification Standards**

A Farm Sanctuary Report

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1. Executive Summary

The care and handling of farm animals is mostly unregulated in the United States and, as a result, animals here are commonly subjected to a number of inhumane practices. The marketplace has been identified as one avenue for improving the lives of animals raised for food. In the past five years, more than one dozen farm animal quality assurance schemes have been developed. These include animal industry quality assurance programs, retail food animal care auditing programs, and third-party organic and humane food certification programs. In addition, developments of government-regulated food labeling and marketing claims relevant to animal welfare are underway.

Product Labeling & Marketing Claims

Food product labeling and marketing claims are governed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and, in some cases, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is the federal agency responsible for ensuring truthfulness and accuracy in the labeling of meat and poultry products. The agency also regulates the labeling of pasteurized liquid eggs and cooked eggs, but not shelled raw eggs, which are regulated by the FDA and the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of the USDA.

USDA utilizes informal working definitions for animal care labeling claims such as "free range" and "grass fed." These terms currently have no regulatory definition. USDA-FSIS pre-approves product labels based on producer testimonials only. The agency does not check on-farm compliance with meat and poultry claims. USDA-AMS neither pre-approves nor verifies label claims for shell eggs. Thus, compliance with labeling claims is not verified, with the exception of claims associated with third-party certification programs. It is likely consumers grossly over-estimate the animal welfare significance of these claims.

Animal Industry Quality Assurance Programs

Quality assurance programs and guidelines to assess farm animal rearing and handling have been created by both animal agriculture producer trade associations and individual producers. These trade associations include those representing producers of dairy and beef cattle, veal calves, sheep, pigs, meat chickens, and laying hens. Guidelines, but no quality assurance program, also have been developed for beef cattle and sheep. The National Turkey Federation is currently in the process of finalizing guidelines for the handling and slaughter of turkeys. In addition, guidelines have been developed by the American Meat Institute for the handling of cattle, sheep and pigs at slaughter. Of the various programs, only one – the United Egg Producer's Animal Care Certified program – currently features third party, pass/fail audits.

The animal industry has created these quality assurance programs in response to pressure from food retailers, including grocery stores and chain restaurants, and to avoid government regulation and third-party audits. In most cases, the guidelines were developed with little or no public input, by scientists and industry officials with expertise in animal production, not animal welfare. These guidelines allow numerous inhumane practices and fail to provide animals with freedom from hunger, discomfort, pain, fear and distress and the freedom to express normal behavior (referred to as the “Five Freedoms”). In addition, the areas of transportation, use of genetic selection, and the care of breeding animals are not sufficiently addressed. A review of animal industry guidelines for dairy cattle, pigs, meat chickens and laying hens conducted for this report noted a total of more than 50 major violations of the Five Freedoms.

A summary of current industry quality assurance programs follows:

Beef Cattle

The National Cattlemen’s Beef Association has approved guidelines for the care and handling of beef cattle. No quality assurance program has been developed to implement and audit the guidelines, and the NCBA has declared publicly that it doesn’t believe auditing of animal care is necessary.

- Access to pasture not required; confinement to feedlots allowed
- Castration without anesthesia allowed
- Hot iron branding allowed
- Use of electric prods allowed

Dairy Cattle

The Milk and Dairy Beef Quality Assurance Center has operated a registration and certification process for dairies since the establishment of its original quality assurance program in 1990, but dairies are not expected to meet all of the guidelines in order to be certified, and no third party auditing of the guidelines is required.

- Tail docking and dehorning allowed
- Use of growth hormones allowed
- Confinement of cows to tie-stalls and calves to crates allowed
- Minimum space allowances for calves not provided
- Calves may be removed from mothers immediately after birth

Veal Calves

The Veal Quality Assurance Certification Program of the American Veal Association is a general quality assurance program, the original purpose of which was to reduce the incidence of chemical residues in calves. Although it is referred to as a certification program, it is voluntary and entirely self-regulated with no third-party review.

- Tethering and continuous confinement to crates allowed
- Bedding not required
- Slatted flooring allowed
- Provision of adequate iron and fiber not required

Sheep

The American Sheep Industry Association has produced guidelines for the care of sheep. Overall, the guidelines are general and subjective. The *Sheep Care Guide* contains no forms or scoring tools for auditing compliance with the guidelines. The Guide also does not recommend any form of internal or external auditing.

- Early weaning allowed
- Tail docking and castration allowed
- Access to grazing pasture not required
- Minimum space allowances not provided

Pigs

The National Pork Board's Swine Welfare Assurance Program (SWAP) consists of a manual with assessment forms. No third party auditing is offered at present. In the first year of SWAP, assessments were performed at only about 100 of the 73,000 U.S. pig operations.

- Bedding and rooting materials not required
- Tail docking, teeth clipping, ear notching and castration without anesthetic allowed
- Confinement of sows to gestation and farrowing crates allowed
- Access to outdoors not required

Chickens

The National Chicken Council's (NCC) Animal Welfare Guidelines were developed with input from an animal welfare task force, whose members included industry representatives with backgrounds in production. Auditing is voluntary on the part of individual producers. When the retail food industry developed its animal welfare-auditing program, there were more areas of disagreement between the retail industry's recommendations and the NCC guidelines than any other animal agriculture guidelines.

- Feed/water restriction of breeding animals allowed
- Litter for dust bathing not required
- Debeaking, toe clipping and comb dubbing allowed
- Access to outdoors not required

Laying Hens

United Egg Producers has developed Animal Care Certified, the only industry-sponsored, third party animal care certification program. Initial audits must be conducted at each of the company's facilities, but subsequent audits may be reduced to only 50% of facilities. Auditors provide producers with a minimum of 48-hour notice prior to the on-site audit, and only a small percent of layer houses are inspected for compliance.

- Debeaking allowed
- Confinement to small cages allowed
- Access to the outdoors not required
- Forced molting allowed (to be phased out in January 2006)
- Humane slaughter not addressed

Retail Food Auditing Programs

Animal care audit programs have been developed by both retail food trade associations and individual retailers.

FMI-NCCR

In 2001, the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) and the National Council of Chain Restaurants (NCCR), the trade associations for grocery stores and restaurants, respectively, formed an alliance to address the care of animals used for food. They created the Animal Welfare Audit Program (AWAP) to assess their suppliers' compliance with voluntary animal agriculture industry guidelines.

The FMI-NCCR program has adopted audit criteria for the care and handling of beef cattle, dairy cattle, pigs, egg-laying hens and meat chickens, and for the slaughter of livestock and meat chickens. Guidelines for turkey production and slaughter are being reviewed but have not been finalized as of July 2005.

Current AWAP audit criteria are inadequate to ensure animal welfare. Even so, in many cases where NCCR and FMI members ask their suppliers to participate in AWAP, the suppliers refuse to comply. Producer associations, such as the National Pork Board, are pressuring food retailers to accept industry quality assurance assessments as an alternative to AWAP.

Individual Retailers

Fast food giants McDonald's, Burger King and Wendy's were the first retailers to establish programs to monitor the treatment of animals by the animal agriculture industry. Their efforts in this area influenced the creation of the FMI-NCCR audit program. They continue to perform their own animal care audits as well as participating in AWAP. One grocery chain, Whole Foods Market, has initiated a project to create animal care guidelines to cover the care of all farm animal species whose products are sold by the company.

Third-Party Certification Programs

At present there are three independent, third party food certification programs that include standards for the care and handling of animals. These programs are the Certified Organic, Certified Humane and Free Farmed programs. Although not a formal certification program, the Animal Welfare Institute has also developed farm animal husbandry criteria.

Certified Organic

The National Organic Program (NOP) was created by passage of the Organic Food Production Act of 1990. The regulations implementing the program were established as a

result of one of the largest rulemaking efforts in U.S. history, in which more than 300,000 public comments were received on two proposed organic rules.

Organic producers are certified following an on-site inspection. Inspections, either announced or unannounced, are then conducted annually and as needed to verify compliance with the regulations. There are more than 1,000 certified organic farmers raising livestock and/or poultry in the U.S. Approximately 2% of egg-laying hens, 2% of dairy cows, and less than 1% of beef cattle, pigs and meat birds are being raised under organic conditions. While still small, the organic segment of the food market is growing at a rate of about 20% per year.

NOP regulations are written to apply to all farm animal species. The federal standards do not address handling practices such as electric prod use, management practices such as forced molting and weaning, minimum space allowances, euthanasia or transport. They also allow physical alterations such as debeaking and tail docking.

NOP regulations allow animals to be temporarily confined under certain circumstances. Some certifying agents have permitted poultry and egg producers to use this loophole to keep birds confined indoors most or all of the time, sometimes in barns holding thousands of birds. Also, some organic mega-dairies have been allowed to house cows without access to pasture as required by the regulations.

Certified Humane

The Certified Humane program is administered by Humane Farm Animal Care and endorsed by several animal advocacy organizations. Standards have been created for beef cattle, dairy cattle, young dairy beef, pigs, sheep, goats, turkeys, meat chickens and egg-laying hens. The standards were developed by animal behavior scientists and veterinarians with expertise in farm animal care. These advisors recommend revisions to the standards and assist with audits.

Certified Humane standards exceed those of industry quality assurance programs in various respects, including the following examples:

- Dairy cattle – Minimum of 4 hrs daily outdoor exercise required
- Pigs – Confinement of sows to gestation crates prohibited and bedding required
- Chickens – Litter for dust bathing required and wire, slatted flooring prohibited
- Laying hens – Confinement to wire cages prohibited and litter for dust bathing required

While Certified Humane standards are stronger than industry guidelines, they permit some industry practices that cause animal suffering and prevent the performance of normal behavior. For example:

- No requirement that pigs, meat chickens or laying hens be provided access to the outdoors
- Physical alterations like debeaking of hens and tail docking of pigs allowed under some circumstances

Free Farmed

Free Farmed is administered as an in-house program of its sponsoring organization, the American Humane Association. American Humane has hired a former executive director of the Colorado Pork Producers Council to manage the program. The auditing standards and process are similar to those of the Certified Humane program. However, unlike Certified Humane, Free Farmed has no formal process for the routine review/revision of standards and its advisory committee includes only one recognized expert in animal welfare. Free Farmed audits are performed by an independent professional auditing company.

AWI Husbandry Criteria

The Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) program consists of an agreement that the producer will abide by humane husbandry criteria in exchange for the right to make marketing use of the AWI name. AWI has developed humane husbandry criteria for beef cattle and calves, sheep, pigs, ducks and rabbits and is in the process of completing standards for other species. AWI requires that participating producers be family farms, and does not allow for farmers to produce products by other methods, while the Certified Humane, Free Farmed, and Certified Organic programs allow farmers to produce both certified and non-certified products. AWI husbandry criteria are superior to those of other programs in the areas of physical alterations, weaning, and access to the outdoors and pasture, and AWI criteria come closest to satisfying the Five Freedoms, but the program has no formal process for auditing compliance.

Conclusion

Various humane certification and labeling programs have been developed in response to growing popular concerns about the cruel treatment of farm animals, but their impact at improving animal welfare has been minimal. Food labeling and marketing claims, like “grass fed” and “cage free,” are generally subjective and not verified. The regulations of the National Organic Program are vague, non-specific as to species, and inconsistently applied. Organic egg and dairy producers have been allowed to use loopholes to deprive animals of the opportunity to graze and forage in a natural setting. Animal industry quality assurance guidelines are inadequate; they codify inhumane farming systems, fail to prevent suffering and distress, and do not allow for the expression of normal animal behavior. By comparison, humane certification standards disallow some cruel practices, but significant deficiencies exist in these as well. Specialty markets, like organic and “humane” foods, may help lessen animal suffering, but they affect only a very small percent, about 2%, of the billions of animals exploited for food each year in the U.S, and even animal derived foods produced according to a “humane” program are not likely to meet consumer expectations.

2. Introduction

In the past half century, animal agriculture in the U.S. has been taken over by corporations, turning family farms into factory farms. Industrialization has allowed agribusiness to profit by raising a large number of animals more quickly and for less money. Factory farms treat animals as production units, not sentient beings with complex social and behavioral needs. They operate on the principle that it is more cost effective to accept some loss in inventory than to spend money on treating animals humanely.

Factory farms commonly warehouse hundreds or thousands of animals indoors, often in small pens or cages, or outdoors in barren lots. Grazing in open pasture and outdoor access is now the exception rather than the rule. Today, more than 90% of egg-laying hens in the U.S. are confined for their entire lives to cages so small the birds can't spread their wings. More than two-thirds of sows in the U.S. are confined for most of their lives to crates that prevent them from even turning around. Dairy cows may be tied indoors inside cement-floored stalls or confined outdoors to barren dirt lots with limited or no access to shade and shelter. Cattle are fattened up in feedlots, virtual cattle cities where up to 100,000 animals are crowded into pens, breathing in noxious fumes and standing or lying in waste. And slaughterhouses have cut costs by increasing production rates, killing at lightning speed up to 400 cows, 1,100 pigs, and 12,000 chickens every hour.

The growth of industrialized farming in the U.S. has been facilitated, in part, by the near total lack of government regulation of the care and treatment of farm animals. The Humane Methods of Slaughter Act, which requires that animals be rendered insensible to pain prior to slaughter, is the only major law affecting the handling of farm animals. The humane slaughter law does not cover poultry, which comprise over 95% of farm animals who are slaughtered in the U.S. In addition, animals used in food production are excluded from the federal Animal Welfare Act, while about half of the state laws prohibiting animal cruelty and neglect exempt customary farming practices. Unlike the U.S., other industrialized countries have enacted a variety of laws to restrict cruel factory farming practices.

Not until the early 1990s did the food animal production industry attempt to set guidelines for the handling of farm animals. Temple Grandin, professor at Colorado State University, developed best management practices for the American Meat Institute (AMI), the trade association for U.S. slaughterhouses. Grandin devised audit tools that included measurable criteria, such as the percentage of animals stunned properly and the percent being moved without the use of electrical prods. In 1996, at the request of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Grandin used her criteria to audit the handling of animals at two dozen federally inspected slaughterhouses. Two-thirds failed the audit.

In 1999, McDonald's Corporation, under pressure from animal advocacy groups for years, finally initiated cattle and pig slaughterhouse audits of its suppliers and eventually dropped or suspended those not able to meet the AMI criteria. The following year McDonald's extended its audits to poultry slaughterhouses and to chicken and egg farms. By 2001, Burger King Corporation and Wendy's International, also under pressure from

animal advocacy groups, joined McDonald's in setting animal care requirements and conducting audits of their suppliers.

The United Egg Producers (UEP) became the first industry trade association to develop a voluntary certification program for farm animals. Unfortunately, the original standards set for the "Animal Care Certified" program did nothing to improve the welfare of chickens raised in factory farms, only serving as a marketing tool to promote the sale of battery caged eggs in response to heightened consumer interest in welfare standards. In 2004, the Better Business Bureau filed a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) stating that the "Animal Care Certified" seal is misleading advertising and recommended that use of the seals be discontinued. In fact, only after complaints were filed with the FTC did the UEP announce that they would prohibit feed withdrawal for forced molting of hens – one of the more notoriously cruel practices in poultry rearing – effective January 2006.

In 2001, the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) and the National Council of Chain Restaurants (NCCR), the trade associations for grocery stores and chain restaurants, respectively, joined forces to develop a voluntary audit program that would allow its members to review the animal care practices of their suppliers. At the urging of FMI-NCCR, other animal agriculture trade associations created guidelines, or revised existing ones, that could be used in retail food industry audits. These trade associations include the National Chicken Council, Milk and Dairy Beef Quality Assurance Center, National Pork Board, National Turkey Federation, and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

While farm animal industry guidelines and third-party certification programs may have the potential to improve the way farm animals are treated in the U.S., to date, they allow various inhumane practices and have been used largely as a way to maintain the status quo. Voluntary industry quality assurance programs are commonly cited by agribusiness during legislative deliberations and used to argue that it is not necessary to pass legislation to prevent cruel farming practices.

About the Report

Sections 3 and 4 of this report discuss criteria for assessing animal welfare and product standards programs, respectively. Current farm animal labeling claims are described in Section 5; industry quality assurance guidelines are described in Section 6; and third-party certification standards are covered in Section 7. The next section (8) utilizes the criteria identified in Sections 3 and 4 to analyze the various farm animal programs. The final section of the report (9) summarizes the conclusions reached in the previous sections.

Background information about farm animal labeling claims, industry guidelines, and third-party standards was obtained from the publications and websites of the various sponsoring organizations and government agencies. Questions regarding the programs were submitted by mail, electronic mail and fax. In some cases interviews were conducted by telephone. An attempt was made to verify any information received from

press accounts. Contact information for the programs and organizations referenced in this report is provided in Appendix A.

For practical reasons common industry terms such as “livestock,” “poultry,” and “producer,” will be used. The generic term “pigs” will be used as opposed to “hogs” or “swine.” “Guidelines” will be used to describe voluntary recommendations, while use of the term “standards” will be limited to the description of mandatory requirements. “Audit” refers to the process of measuring compliance with a prescribed set of criteria or standards, which is usually pass/fail. On the other hand, “assessment” refers to a review of producer performance in meeting voluntary guidelines, and is usually a benchmarking process. The term “retail food industry” will be used to describe both grocery stores and restaurants. A list of acronyms used in the report is provided in Appendix B, and a glossary of technical terms related to animal agriculture is given in Appendix C.

3. Assessing Animal Welfare

Animal behavior scientist D.M. Broom defines animal welfare as the state of an individual animal as regards its attempts to cope with the environment. Broom, who is professor of animal welfare at the University of Cambridge and co-author with A.F. Fraser of *Farm Animal Behaviour and Welfare*, explains that this definition of welfare refers to how much an animal must do to cope with the environment and the success of these coping attempts. Broom also notes that welfare is a characteristic of an animal, not something that is given to it, and varies on a continuum from very good to very poor.

Difficulty in coping, or failure to cope, with the environment may result in an animal experiencing pain or other suffering. Broom points out that suffering, which refers to the animal's subjective feelings, is a valuable concept and the most important aspect of poor welfare, but that the two terms are not synonymous. "Suffering and poor welfare often occur together, but welfare is a somewhat wider term," notes Broom. Welfare is associated with impacts on an animal other than suffering. Effects in addition to suffering that result from poor welfare include the following: pain, fear, lack of control due to difficulty in movement, lack of control due to frustration, lack of control due to absence of input, lack of control due to insufficient stimulation, and lack of control due to over stimulation.

The science of animal behavior (or "ethology") now accepts that animal welfare can be assessed in a scientific way by use of a variety of indicators. For many years the animal agriculture industry has argued that production levels are the best indicators of welfare; high growth and reproduction rates in farm animal species like pigs are cited as verification that an animal's welfare is good or at least adequate. But, as observed by Broom, while an inability to grow or reproduce indicates that welfare is poor, the reverse is not necessarily true, since an animal who is growing and reproducing may be able to do so only by extensive use of behavioral and physiological coping mechanisms. In fact, high production can be associated with a variety of physical problems and, as a result, may have a negative effect on duration of productive life and life expectancy. For example, this is seen in dairy cows who are susceptible to increased incidence of lameness, mastitis, damaged udder ligaments and reproductive problems, all which result in earlier culling due to high milk production. "Reduced life expectancy indicates that an animal has been stressed and that its welfare, at some time or times during its life, has been poor," observes Broom.

Reduced welfare is indicated by a number of measures in addition to mortality and impaired growth and reproduction. These measures include body damage such as broken bones, wounds and ulcers; disease; poor functioning of the immune system; adrenal activity as reflected by abnormal levels of circulating steroids; behavior problems such as withdrawal, apathy, stereotypy and infanticide; and self narcotization, or the release of analgesic chemicals in the brain.

Multiple measures must be taken in order to adequately assess welfare since responses to an adverse environment differ between species, between individuals of a species, and

may even change in a single individual over time. A proper assessment of welfare therefore requires the evaluation of a range of indicators, preferably repeated over an extended period of time. Abnormal findings on any one measure may indicate poor welfare, and the absence of abnormal findings does not ensure that a welfare problem doesn't exist.

In addition to being able to recognize when an animal is able to cope with her environment by the lack of negative evidence, it is also desirable to be able to recognize good welfare by positive evidence. Techniques have been developed to assist in determining what animals like by testing the strength of their preferences. For example, pigs can be required to press a lever to modify environmental temperature or for access to earth for rooting, the number of presses indicating the value of the reward to the animal.

Understanding the behavior of farm animal species, including their preferences and both their physiological and behavioral reactions to adversity, can be used as the basis for setting standards for their care and treatment. Knowledge gained from the study of farm animal behavior may be applied to the development of housing systems, methods of handling and transportation, and procedures for slaughter. Because animals may employ such a wide range of physiological and behavioral coping mechanisms, a team of people with different expertise is usually needed to adequately evaluate the impact of a particular housing or management system.

The Freedom Food program, founded by the United Kingdom's RSPCA in 1994, was the first agricultural assurance scheme to set standards for animal welfare based on "science based" criteria. Since its inception, Freedom Food has grown to include a total of more than 3,000 farmer members, with 18.5 million animals being reared under the program. The program sets specific standards for eight species of farm animals and covers welfare on the farm, in transit, and at slaughter. It has served as the model for humane food certification programs in the U.S.

Freedom Food is based on the concept, articulated by the U.K.'s Farm Animal Welfare Council, that humans have a moral obligation to afford farm animals "Five Freedoms." These freedoms imply certain husbandry requirements for the provision of basic farm animal welfare and are viewed as necessary to avoid welfare-related problems.

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst – by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor.
2. Freedom from discomfort – by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease – by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
4. Freedom to express normal behavior – by providing sufficient space, proper facilities, and company of the animal's own kind.

5. Freedom from fear and distress – by ensuring conditions and treatment that avoid mental suffering.

These five propositions, which provide a framework for meeting an animal's basic needs, have been incorporated into the welfare codes for various farm animal species in the U.K. and elsewhere. Explicit welfare standards, based on the Five Freedoms, have been developed to address various aspects of animal production, including: the provision of food and water; housing, bedding, and environmental enrichment; space requirements and group size; the provision of exercise, direct sunlight, and fresh air; health management and elective surgeries; and handling, transport, and slaughter procedures. While in some countries like the United Kingdom these standards may reinforce existing legal requirements, in the U.S. where farm animal treatment is largely unregulated they take on added significance.

The development of practical and reliable measures of farm animal welfare remains a work in progress. Much still needs to be learned about how to apply scientific and empirical findings to the assessment of animal welfare on the farm, during transportation, and at slaughter. The challenge is complicated by the occurrence of seemingly contradictory and confusing research data. Although those setting welfare standards may attempt to use objective, quantitative measures as much as possible, it is difficult to completely exclude the influence of human values and perceptions about what an animal feels and wants. Consequently, honest differences of opinion may exist, even among animal protection advocates, about what standards should be set for animal care and handling. In addition, humane certification programs may experience difficulty in being able to develop standards that both provide for animal welfare and allow producers to remain competitive in the marketplace. In the U.S., a pervasive concern about economic profitability has interfered with efforts to produce meaningful humane standards.

For the purpose of this report, the Five Freedoms described in this section will be used to assess the meaningfulness of various industry guidelines and third-party standards set to measure the adequacy of farm animal welfare in the United States.

4. Assessing Standards Program

Types of Programs

Product marketing claims are often referred to as “first-party,” “second-party,” or “third-party.” These terms can be used to refer to product standards programs as well.

First-Party Claims

These are claims made by producers without independent review or verification. For the purpose of this report, first-party claims refer to producer food labeling or marketing claims such as “free range” or “no antibiotics used.” A third party –the USDA – sets the standards for these claims but compliance with the standards is not verified.

Second-Party Claims

These are claims made by industry or trade associations. The standards are developed by the industry and may be unverified, verified by the industry, or verified by an independent organization. For this report, second-party claims refer to animal agriculture quality assurance programs. Guidelines verified by the retail food industry, such as the Food Marketing Institute and the National Council of Chain Restaurants, are considered second party and not third party programs due to the business and financial connections between the animal agriculture and retail food industries.

Third-Party Claims

These are claims made by an independent third party. The certifying body, including administrators and members of the board of directors, must not have any direct financial ties to the industry. Although the purpose of third party certification is to allow for independent, unbiased verification of claims, since producers typically pay fees in order to participate in third party programs, the certifying organization still maintains a financial stake in the relationship. In this report, third-party claims refer to those made by the USDA’s National Organic Program, the Humane Farm Animal Care’s Certified-Humane program, and the American Humane Association’s Free Farmed program. Although not a formal certification program, an animal husbandry program operated by the Animal Welfare Institute will also be included in this discussion.

Criteria Used to Evaluate Programs

Following is a brief description of criteria that may be used to evaluate the meaningfulness of farm animal welfare claims. The criteria apply primarily to third-party certification programs, but may be used to a more limited degree to evaluate producer product labeling claims and industry quality assurance programs.

Criteria #1: Transparent

The complete guidelines or standards, as well as information about how the standards were developed, reviewed and verified, should be available to the public, ideally free of charge. In addition, the sponsoring organization should publicly declare its intentions for product certification and readily answer questions regarding the program.

Criteria #2: Public input

Multiple stakeholders including consumers and animal advocacy organizations should have the opportunity to comment on the development and revision of program standards. Industry representatives may also play an advisory role as long as they have no direct financial ties to the certifying organization.

Criteria #3: Objective and measurable

Standards must be written in a form that allows for objective verification of compliance. This means that quantitative measures are used whenever possible. What constitutes compliance – also referred to as “conformance” – with a particular standard should be clearly stated for the benefit of both the producer and the auditor.

Criteria #4: Independently verified

A certifying organization and individual auditors who are financially independent of the facility being audited must perform the verification process. Ideally, the certifying organization should also have little or no personal, professional or business ties to the industry. This reduces bias and eliminates the pressure to interpret data to meet the needs of the facility or of the industry being certified. In order for the public to make this determination, information about the certifying organization’s structure, funding and board of directors should be available. The identity and qualification of auditors, as well as the description of the auditing process, should also be available. Regularly scheduled formal audits of all relevant systems and procedures should be supplemented by random inspections of daily activity when feasible.

Criteria #5: Reliable and consistent

Certifying organizations should implement quality control measures to ensure consistency of the auditing process. This may be accomplished by periodically shadowing the auditors, interviewing clients regarding the audit process, and by tracking and comparing the performance of individual auditors. Certifying organizations should specify what actions are taken for noncompliance with standards.

Criteria #6: Relevant

Standards must be meaningful measures of the well-being of farm animals. Moreover, they should be comprehensive, covering all aspects of animal care and handling from

breeding to slaughter. For the purpose of this report, the Five Freedoms, described in the previous section, will be used as a measure of relevance to farm animal welfare.

The following sections of this report describe various farm animal product labeling claims (Section 5), industry quality assurance programs (Section 6), and third-party certification programs (Section 7). Section 8 offers an analysis of the programs based on the above criteria.

5. Product Labeling and Marketing Claims

The USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is the federal agency responsible for ensuring truthfulness and accuracy in the labeling of meat and poultry products. The agency also regulates the labeling of pasteurized liquid eggs and cooked eggs but not shelled raw eggs. Shelled eggs are regulated by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of the USDA and by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). AMS reviews and approves all labeling for shell eggs bearing the USDA grade shield and processed in plants operating under the federal voluntary egg-grading program. In addition to overseeing the grading of eggs, AMS regulates the National Organic Program and all other livestock, poultry and dairy marketing claims.

The Federal Trade Commission Act of 1914 prohibits deceptive or unfair marketing claims. Although manufacturers are not required to seek verification before using a claim, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is obligated to investigate complaints of deceptive claims and can take action against producers that misuse labels. The federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act of 1938 regulates food products and is enforced by the USDA in regards to products made from meat animals, poultry and processed eggs. In 1992, the FTC and the Environmental Protection Agency jointly issued *Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims* ("Green Guides"), but no equivalent publication has been released to assist consumers in understanding animal welfare marketing claims.

USDA-FSIS has developed working definitions of several meat and poultry labeling terms that are relevant to animal welfare, such as "free range" and "grass fed." However, these definitions have not been formalized in regulation. In December 2002, AMS proposed new regulations for livestock and meat industry marketing claims in order "to create a common language for buyers and sellers and facilitate the nationwide marketing of livestock and meat products." The proposal included standards for several marketing claims with relevance to animal welfare, such as antibiotic and hormone claims; free range, free roaming and pasture raised claims; and grass fed claims. No claims related to poultry or poultry products were included. Although the claims were proposed specifically for use in the USDA Certified and USDA Process Verified programs (described below), the standards would also be used by FSIS to approve labels making these claims. Unfortunately, several of the proposed standards represented a weakening of requirements for animal handling and, as a result, a number of comments were submitted in opposition to the proposal. In April 2003, AMS announced that it would seek additional input and eventually submit a revised proposal to a second comment period.

The FSIS and AMS divisions of USDA maintain websites containing information about labeling and marketing claims, and the agencies respond to questions submitted by phone, fax, conventional mail and electronic mail.

Food labeling claims associated with animal welfare are described below.

Labeling Claim: ANTIBIOTICS (“No Antibiotics Used”)

1. *What agency regulates claim?*

USDA-FSIS, FDA.

2. *How is the label claim defined?*

The FDA requires withdrawal of antibiotics from animals for a specified period prior to slaughter. “Antibiotic free” labeling claims are not allowed due to the fact that antibiotic-residue testing technology cannot verify that no antibiotics were ever administered. FSIS does allow “no antibiotics used” and “no detectable antibiotic residue” claims if the product is tested and the science-based test protocol is provided to the agency. In 2002, AMS proposed new standards for marketing claims related to antibiotic use. The agency has suggested three levels of antibiotic-related claims:

- “No antibiotics used” or “Raised without antibiotics” – Livestock have never received antibiotics from birth to slaughter.
- “No sub therapeutic antibiotics added” or “Not fed antibiotics” – Livestock are not fed sub therapeutic levels of antibiotics. They may receive treatment for illness provided the approved FDA withdrawal period is observed.
- “No detectable antibiotic residue (analyzed by ‘method x’)” – Additional information required on the label that clearly informs the consumer that the animal may have been treated with antibiotics.

AMS has accepted public comment on these definitions but no final decision has been made as to the meaning of the terms. When contacted regarding the status of the proposed marketing standards, Martin O’Connor, chief of the Standardization Branch of AMS Livestock and Seed Program, stated that marketing claims standards for the use of antibiotics “may be published after further consultation with interested parties.”

3. *How is the claim verified?*

FSIS and AMS do not test for the presence of antibiotic residue to verify labeling and other marketing claims. When antibiotic labeling claims are submitted for approval, they must be supported by food formulations, pharmaceutical invoices, or other appropriate documentation verifying that animals have not received antibiotics in feed or water and whether they have been treated for illness. Procedures for handling sick animals must be documented.

4. *How relevant is the claim to animal welfare?*

For the past few decades, antibiotic use has been one indicator of intensive animal confinement. However, the third proposed labeling statement (“No detectable antibiotic residue”) would allow a special labeling claim to be used on products from animals who received sub therapeutic antibiotics, as long as the antibiotics

were withdrawn the required length of time before slaughter. This claim would be misleading to consumers and offer no protection for animal welfare.

Labeling Claim: rBST FREE (“From cows not treated with rBST”)

1. *What agency regulates claim?*

FDA, some state agencies.

2. *How is the label claim defined?*

In 1994, the FDA issued the “Interim Guidance on the Voluntary Labeling of Milk and Milk Products from Cows That Have Not Been Treated With recombinant Bovine Somatotropin” (also referred to as recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone or rBGH). The agency maintains that it does not have the authority to require special labeling for milk from rBST-treated cows. However, the FDA has stated that food companies that do not use milk from cows supplemented with rBST may voluntarily inform customers of this fact in their product labels, provided any statements made are truthful and not misleading. According to the FDA, because of the presence of natural BST in milk, no milk is “BST free” and, therefore, a “BST free” label would be false. Moreover, the FDA is concerned an “rBST free” label may imply a compositional difference between milk from treated and untreated cows rather than a difference in the way the milk is produced. Instead, the FDA recommends use of the phrase, “From cows not treated with rBST,” accompanied by the statement: “No significant difference has been shown between milk derived from rBST-treated and non-rBST-treated cows.”

3. *How is the claim verified?*

There is currently no practical way to differentiate analytically between naturally occurring BST and recombinant BST in milk. To ensure that claims that milk comes from untreated cows are valid, the FDA recommends that States require firms that use such claims establish a plan and maintain records to substantiate the claims, and make those records available for inspection by state regulatory personnel. The FDA feels that in some situations (e.g., dairy cooperatives that only process milk from untreated cows), States may decide that affidavits from individual farmers and processors are adequate to document that milk or milk products received by the firm were from untreated cows. A few States have passed laws governing rBST-free labeling. For example, Minnesota requires manufacturers keep records of how they segregate rBST-free milk from other milk. Manufacturers must also obtain affidavits from farmers certifying their cows are not treated with the hormone, and those affidavits must be kept on file and available to state inspectors.

4. *How relevant is the claim to animal welfare?*

Cows injected with rBST are made to produce greater quantities of milk than normal, which causes numerous veterinary problems. Research has demonstrated

a 25% increase in the incidence of mastitis and as much as a 50% increase in lameness among cows receiving rBST.

Labeling Claim: CAGE FREE, FREE RANGE, FREE ROAMING, PASTURE RAISED (egg-laying hens)

1. *What agency regulates claim?*

USDA-FSIS pre-approves labeling claims for egg products such as pasteurized liquid eggs and cooked eggs. Shell egg claims are handled by USDA-AMS. According to David Bowden, chief of the Standardization Branch of the AMS Poultry Program, AMS personnel monitor shell egg claims for compliance with established criteria. The USDA shares responsibility for regulation of egg production with the FDA; however, the FDA focuses on public health issues and does not allocate resources for the monitoring of animal handling-related marketing claims. Neither AMS nor the FDA pre-approve labeling claims for shell eggs.

2. *How is labeling claim defined?*

For egg products, FSIS defines “cage free” as meaning the birds have never been confined to a cage. FSIS does not apply the terms “free range” and “free roaming” to egg products. For shell eggs, AMS defines “cage free” as confinement of laying hens in a building, room or open area with unlimited access to food and water, and with freedom to roam within these areas. For “free range” and “free roaming,” the cage free criteria apply and, in addition, the hens must be allowed access to the outside for a significant portion of their life or production cycle. The terms “access” and “significant” are not defined. There are no limits on the number and size of exits, size of the outdoor area, animal density or flock size.

3. *How is claim verified?*

USDA-AMS does not verify labeling claims for shell eggs. For the USDA-FSIS verification process of “cage free” label claims for egg products, see notes under #3 for FREE RANGE (poultry).

4. *How relevant is claim to animal welfare?*

Given that 98% of eggs in the U.S. come from hens confined to small cages, the term “cage free” has significant implications for animal welfare. While eggs labeled as “cage free” most likely come from hens not confined to a cage, the housing density may be so high that some of the problems associated with caging are experienced. Egg producers may use the term “free roaming” in a manner similar to “cage free,” meaning that the hens are not confined to a cage and allowed to roam freely, but only within the confines of a barn. These “free roaming” hens likely never receive the opportunity to venture outdoors and do not meet the federal standard for the term. Producers often use the term “free range” to market eggs from hens who are housed in open air barns with one or more exits to the outside that remain open for a limited period of time each day. However, these typical “free range” situations usually fail to provide an outdoor area with

features attractive to hens, such as adequate space, forage and protection from predators and environmental elements. As a result, “free range” hens tend to spend most or all of their time inside where feed is easily available. All of this suggests little practical difference between the claims “cage free,” “free roaming,” and “free range.” Only the labeling claim “pasture raised” likely represents genuine outdoor-raised hens. Pasture raised egg and poultry operations often provide portable, open-sided shelters that are placed in patches of pasture surrounded by portable fencing. At regular intervals the shelters are moved to new locations to protect the vegetation, distribute manure, and provide a new source of seeds for the birds.

Labeling Claim: FREE RANGE, FREE ROAMING (poultry)

1. What agency regulates claim?

USDA-FSIS.

2. *How is labeling claim defined?*

Although there is no regulatory definition for these claims, as a matter of policy, FSIS permits the use of this claim on labels of poultry products under certain circumstances. In order to obtain approval for labels bearing the claim “free range” or “free roaming” poultry producers must provide a brief description of the birds’ housing conditions when the label is submitted to the FSIS Labeling and Consumer Protection Staff for approval. The written description of the housing conditions is reviewed to ensure the birds have “continuous free access to the outdoors for a significant portion of their lives.” During the winter months in a northern climate birds are not “free range” in that they stay in coops all winter. Producer testimonials that support the use of the claim must state how the birds are raised in a northern climate in winter in order to conform to the meaning of “free range” during the winter months. Producers must also verify how animals are cared for during normal and inclement weather conditions, hatching or other conditions that would merit special protection.

3. *How is claim verified?*

There is no independent verification of claims on meat and poultry labels. Pre-approval of labeling claims is based on producer testimonials only. Testimonials and affidavits must also be provided to officials at the federal slaughtering establishment at the time of slaughter. A carcass identification program is required at the slaughter plant to assure that only the labeling of products derived from qualified carcasses bear such claims. Label claims are approved for use at a particular slaughter establishment and producers must seek new label approvals if they switch facilities. Complaints about animal handling claims that appear on the label for a meat or poultry product may be directed to the FSIS Labeling and Consumer Protection office, unless the product is “Certified Organic,” in which case the complaint should be referred to the organic certifying agent listed on the product packaging. Penalties for making false meat and labeling claims are possible depending on the facts of the case.

4. *How relevant is claim to animal welfare?*

Due to the fact that poultry is slaughtered at an extremely young age (meat chickens live only approximately six weeks), many birds raised during the winter months never experience the outdoors. The number and size of exits, and the size of the outdoor area are not specified. Moreover, no limits are placed on animal density or flock size under the “free range” or “free roaming” label. Producers use a variety of concerns, such as weather and risk of disease and predation, to justify denying access to the outdoors. Even when access is provided, conditions may be far from ideal, resulting in the birds choosing to remain indoors where feed is readily available.

Labeling Claim: FREE RANGE, FREE ROAMING, PASTURE RAISED, PASTURE GROWN (livestock)

1. *What agency regulates claim?*

USDA-FSIS.

2. *How is labeling claim defined?*

Although there are no regulatory definitions for these claims, as a matter of policy, FSIS permits the use of these claims on labels of meat products under certain circumstances. In order to obtain approval for labels bearing the claims “free range,” “free roaming,” “pasture raised,” and “pasture grown,” producers must describe the animals’ housing conditions to show that they had continuous, free access to pasture for a significant portion of their lives. (The term “significant” is not defined.) Feedlot-raised livestock or any livestock who were confined and fed for any portion of their lives are not amenable to these terms. FSIS requires product labels from red meat species with these claims also include the following further qualifying statement: “Free range – never confined to feedlot.” Producers must also verify how animals are cared for during normal and inclement weather conditions, birthing or other conditions that would merit special protection.

In 2002, the USDA-AMS proposed defining “free range,” “free roaming,” and “pasture raised” as products from livestock who have had continuous and unconfined access to pasture throughout their life cycle, with the exception of pigs which would be required to have continuous access to pasture for at least 80% of their “production cycle”. AMS accepted public comment on the proposed definition but has not yet made a final decision on the meaning of the terms. When contacted regarding the status of the proposed marketing standards, Martin O’Connor, chief of the Standardization Branch of AMS Livestock and Seed Program, responded that marketing claims standards for the use of free range-type claims “may be published after further consultation with interested parties.”

3. *How is claim verified?*

See notes under #3 for FREE RANGE (poultry).

4. *How relevant is claim to animal welfare?*

The term “free range” is more meaningful as applied to red meat animals than poultry since cattle, sheep and pigs are typically slaughtered at an older age. However, it is not clear that the proposed definition would apply to the housing conditions of the breeding herd from which the market animals have come. If not, then it would be possible for pigs born of sows housed in gestation crates to be considered “free range” as long as the market animals spent 80% of their lives (about 6 months) outdoors. This would allow pigs to be confined to small pens for the remaining 20%. It is also possible under this proposed definition that pigs raised during winter months in deep-straw barns or hoop houses with access to harvested fields might not be considered “free range.” Another concern is that the term “feedlot” is not defined. In addition, the definition does not limit animal density, which may result in animals being unable to perform normal behaviors and vegetative cover not being maintained.

Labeling Claim: GRASS FED

1. *What agency regulates claim?*

USDA-FSIS.

2. *How is labeling claim defined?*

FSIS currently defines “grass fed” as the feeding regimen for livestock raised on grass, green or range pasture, or forage throughout their life cycle, with only limited supplemental grain feeding allowed during adverse environmental conditions. In 2002, the USDA-AMS proposed the following definition for grass fed: “Grass, green or range pasture, or forage shall be 80% or more of the primary energy source throughout the animal’s life cycle.” USDA accepted public comment on the definition but no final decision has been made as to the meaning of the term. When contacted for this report, Martin O’Connor, chief of the Standardization Branch of the AMS Livestock and Seed Program, indicated that the marketing claim standard for “grass fed” would be published in the *Federal Register* for a second comment period in the near future.

3. *How is claim verified?*

See notes under #3 for FREE RANGE (poultry).

4. *How relevant is claim to animal welfare?*

Although consumers are likely to associate the term “grass fed” with the concept of free roaming or pasture raised livestock, under the current definition, “grass fed” means considerably less in terms of animal welfare. This definition would allow cattle to be regularly confined in a feedlot or barn as long as they were fed grass or other forage. In addition, since grass or other forage is only required to comprise 80% of the animal’s energy source under the proposed definition,

producers would be allowed to raise cattle on pasture until the final few months of the animals' lives, at which point they could be moved to a feedlot and fattened on corn.

Labeling Claim: HORMONES (“No hormones administered”)

1. *What agency regulates claim?*

USDA-FSIS.

2. *How is labeling claim defined?*

Since all plants and animals produce hormones, a “hormone free” meat-labeling claim is not allowed. However, FSIS may approve the phrase “no hormones administered” for the labeling of beef products if sufficient documentation is provided to the agency showing no hormones have been used in raising the animals. Hormones are not allowed in raising poultry; therefore, FSIS does not allow the claims “no hormones administered” or “no hormones added” on the labels of poultry products unless it is followed by a statement that says, “Federal regulations prohibit the use of hormones.” In 2002, AMS proposed new standards for marketing claims related to hormone use in livestock. The agency has suggested two levels of hormone-related claims:

- “No supplemental hormones used,” “Raised without supplemental hormones,” or “No added hormones” – The livestock have never received supplemental hormones from birth to slaughter.
- “No hormones administered during finishing” – The livestock have not received supplemental hormones during the feeding/finishing period.

AMS has accepted public comment on these definitions but no final decision has been made as to the meaning of the terms. When contacted for this report, Martin O’Connor, chief of the Standardization Branch of AMS Livestock and Seed Program, indicated that marketing claims standards for the use of hormones “may be published after further consultation with interested parties.”

3. *How is claim verified?*

FSIS does not test for the presence of hormones to verify labeling claims. When hormone labeling claims are submitted for approval, they must be supported by the appropriate documentation verifying that animals have not received hormones in any form. (See also notes under #3 for FREE RANGE (poultry).)

4. *How relevant is claim to animal welfare?*

The administration of growth stimulants has been one indicator of intensive animal confinement during the past few decades. However, the second proposed labeling claim regarding hormones (“No hormones administered during finishing”) would allow a special labeling claim to be used on products from animals who received growth stimulants, as long as the hormones were

administered prior to the feeding/finishing period. This claim would be misleading to consumers and offer no protection for animal welfare.

Labeling Claim: HUMANELY RAISED

1. *What agency regulates claim?*

USDA-FSIS, USDA-AMS.

2. *How is labeling claim defined?*

“Humanely raised” is not a USDA-approved term. Any such claim on meat or poultry products must include an explanation of what is meant by the term. For example, Niman Ranch Pork Co., whose animal husbandry standards were developed by the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), labels its products, “humanely raised on pasture or in deeply bedded pens” (see discussion of the AWI program in Section 7 of this report). Documentation substantiating the claim must be submitted to the USDA-FSIS and AMS agencies. USDA does accept third-party claims regarding humanely raised products after documentation about the independent certification program has been submitted and reviewed by FSIS and AMS staff. The USDA has approved the “Certified Humane” and “Free Farmed” third-party certification programs in this manner (see Section 7 for a discussion of these programs). USDA has also approved the “Animal Care Certified” program of the United Egg Producers, which for the purpose of this report is considered an industry quality assurance scheme (see discussion of the program in Section 6).

3. *How is claim verified?*

Verification is by document review only. The USDA does not independently verify on-farm compliance with “humanely raised” claims. However, third-party certification programs making humane claims must demonstrate how compliance with their standards is verified. Concerns and complaints about third-party certification programs received by the USDA are referred to the certifying organization. Any recourse taken is at the discretion of the certifier. Questions or complaints about “humanely raised” claims not associated with a third-party certification program should be referred to the FSIS Labeling and Consumer Protection Staff.

4. *How relevant is claim to animal welfare?*

The third-party certification programs endorsed by animal advocacy organizations – “Certified Humane” and “Free Farmed” – are significantly more meaningful to animal welfare than industry quality assurance schemes (see discussion of these programs in Section 7). Unlike other labeling claims, these programs verify compliance with a number of animal care and handling practices. The possibility exists, however, that at some point in the future animal agriculture will make labeling and/or marketing use of the term “humane” while employing animal handling standards that are deemed less than acceptable by animal advocacy organizations. As noted under #2 above, the labeling term “Animal Care” has already been applied to an industry-sponsored shell egg certification program that

is not endorsed by humane advocates. In addition, Maple Leaf Farms is currently marketing some of its duck products with an “Animal Well-Being Assured” label, but the company refuses to provide any information regarding the third-party certification program behind the label. Labels typically do not provide consumers with information about the sponsoring entity. As a consequence, shoppers have no way of determining, by labeling alone, that “Certified Humane” is endorsed by animal advocacy organizations, while “Animal Care Certified” is opposed by those groups.

Labeling Claim: NATURAL

1. *What agency regulates claim?*
USDA-FSIS.
2. *How is labeling claim defined?*
The circumstances under which the term “natural” may be used on the labeling of meat and poultry products are described in the Labeling and Additives Policy Division, Labeling Review Branch Policy Memo 055, issued in November 1982. This policy provides that the term may be applied only to products that contain no artificial ingredients, coloring ingredients or chemical preservatives, and the product and its ingredients are not more than minimally processed. Minimally processed products that do not contain these types of ingredients, such as fresh meat and poultry, will automatically qualify for the use of the term “natural” on product labeling. Labeling claims regarding the non-use of antibiotics and hormones are handled independently of this policy (See entries for ANTIBIOTICS and HORMONES).
3. *How is claim verified?*
See notes under #3 for FREE RANGE (poultry).
4. *How relevant is claim to animal welfare?*
Use of the term “natural” as a meat and poultry-labeling claim refers to artificial ingredients added to the cut of meat, not to the manner in which the animal was raised or fed. Meat from animals fed antibiotics, hormones or animal by-products, for example, may be labeled as “natural” as long as no artificial ingredients such as coloring or preservatives were added to meat product. Although many consumers may perceive “natural” meat and poultry as being similar to Certified Organic meat and poultry, products with this labeling claim do not need to meet requirements for organic production, including those related to animal care and handling (see discussion of the National Organic Program in Section 7). This is arguably the most misunderstood labeling claim, and because the “natural” market strongly competes with both organic and humanely raised products, this claim has the potential to exert a significant negative impact on animal welfare.

Labeling Claim: USDA PROCESS VERIFIED

1. *What agency regulates claim?*

USDA-AMS.

2. *How is labeling claim defined?*

The AMS Process Verified Program provides farmers, producers, feeders, suppliers and processors the opportunity to assure customers that their products or services meet specific quality standards. USDA Process Verified producers are able to make marketing claims – such as breed, feeding practices, or other raising and processing claims – and market themselves as “USDA Process Verified.”

3. *How is claim verified?*

This is done by having the USDA conduct third-party audits to verify production, manufacturing or service delivery processes.

4. *How relevant is claim to animal welfare?*

Relevance to animal welfare depends on the content of the producer’s quality assurance program. A review of the USDA Process Verified Program, listed on the AMS website, revealed five producer programs described as including aspects of animal handling. These were for Murphy-Brown (a subsidiary of Smithfield Foods), Seaboard Foods and Premium Standard Farms, the three largest producers of pork products in the U.S., and Prairie Grove Farms, another pork producer. In addition, Smithfield Packing Company has received Process Verified certification for its Tar Heel, North Carolina, pig slaughter facility. Prairie Grove Farms utilizes the guidelines of the pork industry’s Swine Welfare Assurance Program (see discussion of SWAP in Section 6 of report). The remaining companies – Murphy-Brown, Seaboard Foods and Premium Standard Farms – all declined to release any details of their animal handling programs when contacted for this report. Since the content of these particular standards programs is not accessible to public scrutiny, their use of the Process Verified claim should be viewed as meaningless.

6. Industry Quality Assurance Guidelines

Quality assurance programs to assess farm animal care and handling have been created by animal agriculture producer trade associations, individual producers, retail food industry trade associations and individual food retailers. In addition, the Animal Agriculture Alliance, an organization representing producer trade associations, has identified Principles of Animal Care for the industry. These principles and the various producer and retail food quality assurance programs are described in this section.

Animal Agriculture Alliance Principles

In 2001 the Animal Agriculture Alliance (AAA) was created to replace the Animal Industry Foundation. Membership of the non-profit organization is composed of individuals, companies and animal industry organizations, and its mission is to help consumers understand the role of animal agriculture “in providing a safe, abundant food supply for a hungry world.” According to the group’s website, “By speaking with a common voice, the Alliance will ensure consistent, accurate messages based on sound science are communicated to the general public.”

Activities of the Alliance include the following: educating consumers, teachers and the media; serving as a resource for those seeking information about animal production; monitoring emerging issues; and promoting development of animal care guidelines and third-party verification programs consistent with the Alliance Animal Care Principles. The Alliance considers its Animal Care Principles to be the foundation of professional animal care, which are supported by owners and managers of animal agriculture operations. The Alliance states that the health and well-being of farm animals may be judged by various types of science-based criteria, including behavioral, physiological, biochemical and pathological, and that a combination of these criteria provides the best assessment of animal well-being.

The Alliance Principles of Animal Care:

- **Food and Water**
Provide access to good quality water and nutritionally balanced diets as appropriate for the species.
- **Health and Veterinary Care**
Implement science-based animal health programs, including prudent product use, and provide appropriate veterinary care when required.
- **Environment**
Provide living conditions sufficient to meet the well-being needs of the animal as appropriate to each species.
- **Husbandry Practices**
Implement science-based husbandry practices appropriate to the species.

- Handling
Ensure proper handling practices throughout the life of the animal as appropriate to each species.
- Transportation
Provide transportation that avoids undue stress as appropriate to each species.

Animal Agriculture Industry Quality Assurance Programs

U.S. animal agriculture trade associations include; the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (beef cattle), the Milk and Dairy Beef Quality Assurance Center (dairy cattle), the American Veal Association (veal calves), the American Sheep Industry Association (sheep), the National Pork Board (pigs), the National Chicken Council (meat chickens), the National Turkey Federation (turkeys), the United Egg Producers (laying hens), and the American Meat Institute (slaughter plants for cattle, pigs, sheep and goats). All of these organizations have developed, or are in the process of developing, quality assurance programs for assessing animal care and handling. Of the various programs, only one – the United Egg Producer’s Animal Care Certified (ACC) program – currently features third party, pass/fail audits. ACC is also currently the only trade association program that makes a label claim regarding animal care on products.

National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (Beef Cattle)

1. Are guidelines publicly available?

The NCBA declined to supply a copy of the guidelines, or to answer any questions regarding their development or use, for this report. In addition, the guidelines could not be found on the association’s website. However, the guidelines – titled “Guidelines for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle” – were located on the Internet site of several State member organizations, including the Kansas Livestock Association.

In 1997 the NCBA produced a set of guidelines entitled “Recommendations for the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle.” The NCBA’s Beef Quality Assurance Advisory Board and Cattle Health & Well-Being Committee adopted the guidelines. The NBCA was encouraged to revise and update those guidelines in 2001, when the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) and National Council of Chain Restaurants (NCCR) announced an effort to establish animal care guidelines for all animal agriculture systems in order to assist its members in evaluating animal welfare at the farm/ranch level. In 2002, the NCBA Cattle Well-Being Committee formed a Working Group to update the cattle care standards, and the Working Group’s proposed guidelines were submitted to the NCBA Board of Directors at the organization’s 2002 Conference. FMI-NCCR received the proposed guidelines in September 2002. Negotiations regarding modifications to the guidelines took place between FMI-NCCR and NCBA from that time until early 2005 when they were finalized and endorsed by both groups.

One possible explanation for the lengthy delay in completion of the guidelines is the fact that NCBA coordinates its work with thousands of individual members, State associations and industry organizations. For example, while only forty-some poultry companies account for 95% of the chicken flesh sold in the U.S., there are more than 200,000 cattle breeders, producers and feeders who belong to the NCBA. Another explanation is that NCBA has been among the most hostile of the agriculture trade associations to the concept of animal welfare guidelines.

2. *What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?*

The guidelines include sections for cattle care training and education; feed and water; disease prevention practices and health care; identification; shelter and housing; cattle handling, marketing cattle; sorting, loading and transporting; non-ambulatory (downer) cattle; euthanasia; emergency procedures; feedlot heat stress procedures; and cattle care and handling implementation and review programs.

The following NCBA Producer Code of Cattle Care lists general recommendations for care and handling of cattle:

- Provide necessary food, water and care to protect the health and well-being of animals.
- Provide disease prevention practices to protect herd health, including access to veterinary care.
- Provide facilities that allow safe, humane and efficient movement and/or restraint of cattle.
- Use approved methods to euthanize terminally sick or injured livestock and dispose of them properly.
- Provide personnel with training/experience to properly handle and care for cattle.
- Make timely observations of cattle to ensure basic needs are being met.
- Minimize stress when transporting cattle.
- Keep updated on advancements and changes in the industry to make decisions based on sound production practices and consideration to animal well-being.
- Persons who willfully mistreat animals will not be tolerated.

3. *What animal care areas are not covered by the guidelines?*

The guidelines do not include specific provisions for calves and bulls (other than disease prevention practices); maximum stocking densities and feeder space allowances; indoor housing environment (lighting, ventilation, thermal regulation); provision of outdoor windbreaks, sunshade and sprinklers; or fencing.

4. *How were guidelines developed?*

According to information on the NCBA website, the guidelines were written “by producers, for producers with scientific input from veterinarian scientists, agricultural engineers and animal well-being experts.” The Cattle Care Working

Group was composed of 12 producers appointed by State affiliates, two university-based veterinarians, and representatives of the Livestock Marketing Association, and the Livestock Marketing Council. Bob Smith, DVM, served as chairperson, and Drs. Janice Swanson of Kansas State University, and Temple Grandin of Colorado State University, assisted the working group in an advisory role.

5. *Is compliance with guidelines assessed?*

No. NCBA emphasizes that there is no one specific set of guidelines that can be used for all cattle operations and that its guidelines are “general ‘rules of thumb’”. In March 2004, Gary Weber, executive director of regulatory affairs for NCBA, told the *Des Moines Register*, “We don’t think there’s any evidence that auditing is necessary.” However, the guidelines note that both self-audits and outside audits should be periodically conducted “to ensure that animal welfare is not compromised.” A statement in the 2002 draft guidelines that NCBA believes the costs of outside auditing should be borne by the packer or retailer requesting the audit, and not the producer, was deleted from the final version.

Milk and Dairy Beef Quality Assurance Center (Dairy Cattle)

1. Are guidelines publicly available?

Yes. The DQA FIVE-STAR Dairy Quality Assurance (DQA) Program is described in its publication, *Caring for Dairy Animals: Technical Reference Guide and On-the-Dairy Self-Evaluation Guide*. The 48-page Guide may be ordered on the Center’s website for a cost of \$25. It includes illustrations, a list of references and an index.

2. *What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?*

The DQA program includes the following areas: producer and employee attitudes; evaluating animal health care; environment for dairy animals; facilities provided for animals; dairy nutritional care; evaluating milking procedures and equipment; transporting and handling animals; birth and management of calves; and sick, hospitalized, non-ambulatory and dead animals.

3. *What animal care areas are not covered by the guidelines?*

The care of calves raised for veal is not covered.

4. *How were guidelines developed?*

The Milk and Dairy Beef Quality Assurance Program was developed in 1990; however, guidelines related to animal care were not added until 1995. Those guidelines were developed with the assistance of the DQA Animal Well-Being Standards Committee whose members include producers, private veterinarians, and academics, as well as representatives of the AVMA, American Association of Bovine Practitioners, and the California Department of Food & Agriculture. A list of the members is available to the public. In 2002, DQA agreed to revise its guidelines to incorporate recommendations of FMI-NCCR, which eventually

endorsed the DQA guidelines for use in its Animal Welfare Audit Program (see discussion of FMI-NCCR later in this section).

5. *Is compliance with guidelines assessed?*

Yes. DQA has operated a registration and certification process for dairies since the establishment of its original quality assurance program in 1990.

6. *How are assessments performed?*

On-farm “walk-through” inspections are completed by DQA Certified Professional Consultants after the dairy has completed a self-audit using the DQA Self-Examination Guide and participated in local training and education. The inspection takes place at different locations at the dairy, and animals are observed to determine locomotion and body and hygiene scores. The number or percentage of animals to be assessed is not specified. Following successful completion of the on-site inspection the dairy may register for certification with the DQA Center for DQA FIVE-STAR Dairy Quality Assurance Recognition. Dairies may complete the program for one or more of the six components of the DQA program. (The six components are animal care, personnel management, environmental stewardship, milk safety and quality, pathogen management and dairy beef.) DQA recommends that self-audits be conducted every year and outside audits by Certified Professional Consultants be done every two years.

7. *Who performs the assessments?*

The requirements of a QA Certified Professional Consultant are as follows: at least a college degree and a career path that shows livestock training and interest; attend one half-day training session or successfully complete an on-line tutorial; audit two or more dairies per year; and complete re-certification exam annually. As of January 2004, approximately 120 assessors had been approved by DQA to perform on-farm reviews. A list of assessors is not available.

8. *Is assessment pass/fail or benchmarking only?*

Benchmarking. The *Caring for Dairy Animals – On-the-Dairy Self-Evaluation Guide* explains that the quality control points included in the evaluation are recommendations only. In fact, it states, “The list of BMPs (Best Management Practices) does not imply you should do all of them...” Dairies receive a “5 Star” rating for an audit score of 80% or above, and a “4 Star” rating for a score of 70-79%.

9. *How many producers are participating in the program?*

The DQA declined to release statistics regarding the number or percentage of dairies that have been certified. According to the DQA, 90% of the registered dairies have attained the “5 Star” level, while 8% have reached “4 Stars”, and 2% are at the “3 Star” level. The DQA will not release the names of participating dairies.

American Veal Association (Veal Calves)

1. *Are guidelines publicly available?*

Yes. Although the guidelines are not available on the association's website, they are provided on request. The Veal Quality Assurance Certification Program of the American Veal Association is a general quality assurance program, the original purpose of which was to reduce the incidence of chemical residues in calves. The primary focus of the program remains calf feeding and the administration of drugs and supplements; however, the program does include criteria specific to animal care and handling. The animal care guidelines are detailed in two publications: *A Guide for Care and Production of Veal Calves* and *Calf Care Protocol for the Dairy Producer*.

2. *What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?*

The program includes guidelines in the following areas: buildings; ventilation, humidity and temperature; housing; feed and water; personnel; handling of the calf at the dairy farm; calf health; transportation; loading and unloading; and handling at slaughter.

3. *What animal care areas are not covered by the guidelines?*

The guidelines do not address elective surgical procedures, which are typically not performed on veal calves.

4. *How were guidelines developed?*

The AVA *Guide for the Care and Production of Special-Fed Veal Calves* was first published in 1981. It has undergone five revisions since then, with the latest edited by Lowell Wilson, professor emeritus of the Department of Dairy and Animal Science at Pennsylvania State University. A 10-member review committee is composed of three academics associated with Penn State and several industry representatives. No animal welfare or consumer advocacy organizations are included. Carolyn Stull, PhD and Steven Berry, DVM, both of the University of California-Davis, authored the publication *Calf Care Protocol for the Dairy Producer*.

5. *Is compliance with guidelines assessed?*

No. The Veal Quality Assurance program was initiated in 1990 and revised in 1995 to include a certification option. The certification program, which is voluntary and entirely self-regulated, consists of two certification levels for producers as well as a certification process for service representatives and suppliers. Producer certification Level 1 is a temporary phase to allow the producer time to complete the requirements of Level 2. If Level 2 is not completed within six months, the producer loses certification. Level 2 consists of participation in an educational seminar, identification of a consulting veterinarian, and completion of a simple self-assessment form. Producers must be re-certified every two years.

6. *How many producers are participating in the program?*
According to Allison Wenter, director of veal quality assurance for the AVA, in 2001, 80% of veal producers (or approximately 800 of the 1,000 veal producers in the U.S.) had been certified. The AVA is not a participant in the FMI-NCCR Animal Welfare Audit Program for grocery stores and chain restaurants.

American Sheep Industry Association (Sheep)

1. *Are guidelines publicly available?*
Yes. The 16-page *Sheep Care Guide* can be located on the website of the American Sheep Industry Association. Scientific references and a list of individuals involved in development of the Guide are provided at the conclusion of the document.
2. *What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?*
The *Sheep Care Guide* includes the following sections: facilities and handling, transportation, reducing depredation, nutrition, flock health program, shearing, hoof trimming, husbandry practices, enhancing reproductive efficiency and animal well-being, lambing and care of the lamb and ewe, and exhibition practices.
3. *What animal care areas are not covered by the guidelines?*
The Guide does not cover indoor housing conditions (ventilation, temperature regulation), space allowances, fencing or slaughter practices.
4. *How were guidelines developed?*
William Shulaw of Ohio State University and Teri Erk of the American Sheep Industry Association authored the *Sheep Care Guide*. The document was reviewed by two dozen individuals, including representatives from academia, industry, the AVMA and USDA-ARS. No consumer or animal protection advocates were involved in development of the guidelines, and the sole participant with recognized expertise in the field of farm animal welfare was Temple Grandin of Colorado State University.
5. *Is compliance with guidelines assessed?*
For the most part, the sheep care guidelines are general and subjective. The Guide provides no forms or scoring tools for auditing compliance with the guidelines. Furthermore, the Guide does not recommend any form of internal or external auditing. It is merely offered as “a reference for the sheep producer using a variety of management and production systems.” The Guide also notes that it is not intended to be an exhaustive review of all aspects of animal care. The American Sheep Industry Association is not a participant in the FMI-NCCR Animal Welfare Audit Program for grocery stores and chain restaurants.

National Pork Board (Pigs)

1. *Are guidelines publicly available?*

Yes. The National Pork Board's Swine Welfare Assurance Program (SWAP) is available on the organization's website. Companion documents, including the NPB *Swine Care Handbook* and *On-Farm Euthanasia of Swine*, are also available. The 50-page SWAP manual includes assessment forms.

2. *What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?*

SWAP includes sections devoted to the following: herd health and nutrition, caretaker training, animal observation, body condition score, euthanasia, handling and movement, facilities and emergency support. Assessment criteria are individualized for two production phases – gilts, sows, boars and neonatal pigs; and nursery and finisher pigs.

3. *What animal care areas are not covered by the guidelines?*

Transport of animals is not addressed; however, the NPB has developed a separate Trucker Quality Assurance Program. Information regarding this program is available on the NPB website.

4. *How were guidelines developed?*

SWAP was developed to serve as an alternative to third party audits, although the program is a voluntary assessment, not an audit. The pork industry initiated SWAP to provide assurances to consumers and foodservice retailers that producers are following animal welfare guidelines, and to prevent having mandatory auditing programs forced upon the industry. SWAP is specific to animal care and differs from the pork industry's Pork Quality Assurance program. SWAP summarizes and adds to the NPB *Swine Care Handbook*. Work on the program began in 2000, under the auspices of the NPB Animal Welfare Committee, whose members include producers, veterinarians and animal production scientists. In November 2003, the National Pork Board adopted a resolution encouraging pig producers to participate in SWAP.

5. *Is compliance with guidelines assessed?*

Yes. NPB has developed a voluntary on-farm assessment program to assist with implementation of SWAP. Although no third party auditing of the program is offered at present, the NPB is considering developing an audit program to avoid auditing of producers by the retail industry (see discussion of FMI-NCCR program later in this section).

6. *How are assessments performed?*

To become SWAP certified, producers must undertake animal care training, either on their own or by participating in group or one-on-one instruction with a certified SWAP educator. Following producer training, SWAP educators visit farms to evaluate animal care according to the nine care principles of SWAP. The

program defines the number of individual pigs and the number of pens to be assessed per site.

7. *Who performs the assessments?*

Certified SWAP educators perform assessments. According to the National Pork Board 2004 annual report, more than 100 SWAP educators have completed training and been certified, all of whom are either university animal scientists or veterinarians. A database available on the NPB website lists the name, discipline, university affiliation and contact information of the individual educators. The producer may choose the educator, who in turn determines the cost of conducting the assessment. A feature on the NPB website allows producers to enter their zip code to locate the nearest SWAP educator.

8. *Is assessment pass/fail or benchmarking only?*

Benchmarking. The SWAP assessment form includes columns for “acceptable” and “needs improvement” items; however, there is no point system for scoring a facility’s overall performance. NPB recommends that on-farm assessment be repeated every four to six months to track animal care.

9. *How many producers are participating in the program?*

The NPB reports that during the first year of SWAP more than 100 assessments were performed at farms across the country. Its annual report for 2004 states that SWAP assessments have been performed “on hundreds of farms.” According to the National Agricultural Statistics Services, there were 73,600 hog farms in the U.S. in 2003. In addition to SWAP, the National Pork Board has established the Trucker Quality Assurance Program to certify swine transport. As of June 2004, 338 trainers had certified 8,700 drivers and producers under the program. According to USDA-FSIS, the number of pigs that die during transport has declined since the trucker quality assurance program began. The National Pork Board claims about 70,000 additional pigs arrive alive at slaughter plants each year due to the program.

National Chicken Council (Meat Chickens)

1. *Are guidelines publicly available?*

Yes. The National Chicken Council Animal Welfare Guidelines are posted on the Council’s website.

2. *What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?*

The guidelines include sections for education, training & planning; hatchery operations; proper nutrition & feeding; appropriate comfort & shelter; health care; ability to display most normal behavior; on-farm best practices; catching & transportation; processing; and special considerations for breeder pullets & cockerels.

3. *What animal care areas are not covered by the guidelines?*
The guidelines do not cover free-range systems or ritual slaughter methods.
4. *How were guidelines developed?*
A NCC Animal Welfare Task Force, whose 10 members are industry representatives with backgrounds in management, live production, slaughter, health care, and nutrition, developed the guidelines. The recommendations of the task force were reviewed and revised by an Animal Welfare Scientific Advisory Committee. The identity of advisory committee members is given in a 2004 article by the NCC in the *Journal of Applied Poultry Research* (Vol. 13, pp. 140-142). According to the article, input to the animal care guidelines process also came from chicken company customers, such as fast food restaurants. The guidelines were last revised in April 2005.
5. *Is compliance with guidelines assessed?*
Yes. In addition to quality assurance guidelines, NCC also developed an assessment checklist to assist companies in complying with the guidelines. Auditing is voluntary on the part of individual producers, but a request for an assessment may be made by a producer's customer(s).
6. *How are assessments performed?*
A document titled "Guidance for Conducting Audits Under National Chicken Council Animal Welfare Guidelines" is included with the guidelines. It states that a company may choose to have an audit conducted of all of its operations or only a subset, depending on the needs of its customers. If verifying compliance with an entire complex, the auditor is expected to visit a hatchery, a processing plant, and a sample of the farms associated with the plant. The auditor is also to inspect at least three "growout" houses on different farms from a list of at least 10 farms prepared by the company.
7. *Who performs assessments?*
The eight academic members of the advisory committee assist with internal and customer assessments. Customer auditing teams or consulting auditing firms may also conduct audits. One auditing company, Silliker, Inc., offers a Poultry Welfare Audit for poultry slaughter operations that it developed in conjunction with James Marion of Auburn University and the National Chicken Council. When contacted for this report, Silliker, Inc. declined to release any information about its audit program or its clients, citing a confidentiality policy.
8. *Is assessment pass/fail or benchmarking only?*
Benchmarking only. Although the assessment checklist includes a maximum score for each area and a total score for the audit as a whole, there is no indication of what constitutes an acceptable facility score.
9. *How many producers are participating in the program?*
Details not available.

National Turkey Federation (Turkeys)

1. *Are guidelines publicly available?*

Not as of July 2005. No information regarding animal welfare or animal welfare quality assurance guidelines is offered on the association's website. The NTF did not respond to requests for information about its efforts in setting welfare standards. However, according to the Food Marketing Institute, NTF is cooperating with the FMI-NCCR program to establish animal welfare guidelines for turkeys. A status report, dated May 2005, indicated that FMI-NCCR advisors were reviewing production and slaughter guidelines drafted by the industry.

2. *What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?*

Details not available.

3. *What animal care areas are not covered by the guidelines?*

Details not available.

4. *How were guidelines developed?*

NTF did not respond to requests for information about the development of its animal welfare guidelines.

5. *Is compliance with guidelines assessed?*

Details not available.

United Egg Producers (Laying Hens)

1. *Are guidelines publicly available?*

Yes. The Animal Husbandry Guidelines are available on the website for the Animal Care Certified (ACC) program, operated by UEP.

2. *What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?*

ACC includes sections devoted to the following: housing & space allowance (layers), beak trimming (pullets), molting (layers), and handling & transportation (pullets & layers).

3. *What animal care areas are not covered by the guidelines?*

ACC does not cover the housing of replacement pullets or requirements for free range situations. In addition, the slaughter of laying hens and the killing of male chicks are not addressed.

4. *How were guidelines developed?*

UEP commissioned an independent Scientific Advisory Committee for Animal Welfare in 1999. The committee was chaired by Jeff Armstrong, dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at Michigan State University, and included two USDA-ARS representatives (Margaret Shea-Moore and Larry

Stanker) and four university-based animal scientists (Joy Mench of the University of California, Patricia Hester of Purdue University, Ruth Newberry of Washington State University, and Janice Swanson of Kansas State University). The committee also included Adele Douglass, then a representative of the American Humane Association, and Bill Chase, a private veterinarian. After reviewing the scientific literature on specific topics related to the welfare of laying hens, the committee offered its recommendations for animal care guidelines to the UEP. The program was finalized in 2002.

In June 2003, an animal advocacy organization, Compassion Over Killing, filed complaints with the USDA, FDA, FTC, Better Business Bureau (BBB), and the California Attorney General, claiming the ACC program represented false and deceptive advertising. The group argued that the public was being misled by the label into believing that hens were being humanely treated, while cruel treatments such as debeaking, forced molting, and intensive confinement were condoned. In November 2003, the Better Business Bureau's National Advertising Division agreed and recommended that UEP discontinue labeling eggs as "Animal Care Certified." UEP appealed to the National Advertising Review Board of the BBB, which in May 2004 upheld the earlier ruling, recommending that UEP either discontinue use of the label or significantly alter the ACC program. Following the ruling UEP announced it would add the program's website to egg packaging and undertake a nationwide effort to educate consumers about ACC. In August 2004, BBB determined that UEP was not in compliance with the National Advertising Review Board ruling and referred the case to the FTC, which could force the egg industry to cease use of the label and levy fines. In May 2005, UEP announced it would prohibit the practice of feed withdrawal to induce molting, beginning January 2006. As of July 2005 the FTC had not taken any action on the Better Business Bureau complaint regarding the program.

5. *Is compliance with guidelines audited?*

Yes. Egg companies that wish to market their eggs as Animal Care Certified must file monthly compliance reports and be audited by an independent auditor designated and approved by UEP. Inspection procedures, forms, and a point scoring system have been developed for use in auditing compliance.

6. *How are audits performed?*

To become ACC certified, producers must commit to implementing the program's standards on all of their production facilities including all contract producers. Producers are responsible for contacting the auditing entity and making arrangement for payment. Audits are to be conducted on a yearly basis. Initial audits for a company must be conducted at each of the company's facilities, but subsequent audits may be reduced to 50% of the facilities. Auditors provide producers with a minimum of 48-hour notice prior to the on-site audit. The auditor randomly selects which facilities and which individual layer houses at each location are to be audited. Inside the layer house, the auditor uses a random number table to identify which cage columns are included in the audit. Auditing is

limited to the housing, handling, forced molting and transportation of layers and the beak trimming, handling and transportation of pullets. Auditors visit pullet houses only when they are a part of the layer facility. Program compliance for pullets not housed at the facility is verified through a document review only.

7. *Who performs the audits?*

Producers were originally given the choice between an auditor representing either the USDA- AMS Poultry Program or the American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists (ARPAS). ARPAS provides certification of professionals working in animal agriculture and is affiliated with five animal science societies including the Poultry Science Association. According to Gene Gregory, manager of the ACC program, in 2003, the first year of audits, 90% of ACC producers chose to use USDA auditors. However, both auditing entities employed the same standards and the same auditing process. In 2004, USDA had a total of 74 qualified auditors, while ARPAS had only 19 qualified auditors. In January 2005, the ARPAS governing council made the decision to eliminate the ACC program, effective immediately, leaving USDA-AMS as the primary auditor of the program.

USDA assigns the individual auditor. Auditors have been certified and have received training in the audit of UEP Animal Husbandry Guidelines. USDA auditors must receive the International Standards Organization (ISO) 9001 Legal Auditor Training. UEP also recognizes the results of audits performed for the FMI-NCCR Animal Welfare Audit Program (see discussion of AWAP under “Retail Food Industry Quality Assurance Programs”). However, the reverse is not true; AWAP does not accept audits conducted by UEP’s Animal Care Certified Program.

8. *Is audit pass/fail or benchmarking only?*

Pass/fail. Points are awarded for each of the animal husbandry categories as follows: housing & space allowance – 110 possible points; beak trimming – 30 possible points; molting – 30 possible points; and handling & transportation – 30 possible points. In 2003, producers had to receive a minimum of 140 out of 200 possible points to pass the audit; in 2004, the bar was raised to 170 points. Failure to meet the required points for the “housing and space allowance” section is automatic failure of the audit.

Upon completion of the audit, the auditor reviews results of the audit with the producer and provides the completed audit forms to USDA, which then supplies the information to UEP. Companies failing an initial audit may request at most one re-audit that must be completed within 60 days of the original audit. According to UEP, in 2003, 12 companies failed the first audit and then passed a re-audit. In 2003, UEP terminated one company for violations of the ACC guidelines and four companies for failure to have audits conducted.

9. *How many producers are participating in the program?*

According to the USDA, there are 4,000 farm sites that house 3,000 or more hens. These facilities hold 99% of U.S. egg-laying hens. In addition, approximately 65,000 U.S. farms house fewer than 3,000 hens. In the first year of the ACC program, the USDA conducted audits of 611 facilities, representing 147 egg producers. ARPAS auditors inspected an additional 60 facilities. UEP reports that, as of February 2004, 203 companies housing 230 million hens (85% of the industry) were implementing ACC guidelines with at least some of their flocks. An ACC news release dated May 3, 2005 stated, "Ninety percent of all shell eggs sold in the U.S. are produced under these guidelines." UEP declined to respond to a request for an estimate of the total number of hens affected by the program. Although a large majority of the major U.S. egg producers are being audited, only a small percent of individual layer houses are inspected for compliance with the ACC guidelines, even among those producers who implement the standards with 100% of their operations. Currently less than 10% of an egg company's individual layer houses are visually inspected each year.

American Meat Institute (Slaughter Plants)

1. *Are guidelines publicly available?*

Yes. The AMI's *Recommended Animal Handling Guidelines* are available on a website maintained by the author, Temple Grandin. The document includes an audit guide and references. The 2005 edition of the guidelines incorporates a previous supplement entitled *Good Management Practices for Animal Handling and Stunning*. The current integrated version is an improvement over the two separate documents, the content of which was poorly organized and repetitive.
2. *What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?*

The *Recommended Animal Handling Guidelines* cover livestock holding facilities and trucking, as well as basic livestock handling principles. It also includes sections on electric stunning, captive bolt stunning, gas stunning, bleed rail insensibility, scoring of slipping and falling, vocalization scoring of cattle, vocalization scoring of pigs, electric prod use, handling of non-ambulatory animals and ritual slaughter.
3. *What animal care areas are not covered by the guidelines?*

The slaughter of animals other than cattle, swine, sheep and goats is not addressed.
4. *How were guidelines developed?*

Temple Grandin, professor in the Department of Animal Sciences, Colorado State University, developed the AMI guidelines. Originally drafted in 1991, the guidelines were revised in 2001 and again in 2005.

5. *Is compliance with guidelines assessed?*
AMI does not sponsor an assessment or certification program. However, Temple Grandin has established recommended scoring procedures, forms, and training manuals that may be used in internal, customer or third party audits.
6. *How are assessments performed?*
Assessments are performed using the AMI scoring system. Grandin recommends that slaughter plants conduct internal assessments at least once per week and at both the beginning and end of a shift to determine the effect of employee fatigue. The AMI guidelines specify the number of animals to be scored on the different criteria, usually a minimum of 100 animals in large plants and 50 animals in smaller plants. Scoring of very small plants is also addressed.
7. *Who performs the assessments?*
Inspections are conducted by Grandin or other auditors on behalf of customers, such as grocery stores and restaurants, or by third-party certification programs, such as Certified Humane. Silliker, Inc. is an independent professional audit company that recently added an animal welfare audit program for cattle, pig and poultry slaughter operations. The audit can be completed in eight hours and includes an assessment of facilities, animal handling and stunning. According to the company, its auditors undergo extensive training in slaughter operations and standardized auditing, using guidelines from the industry and AMI. When contacted for this report, Silliker, Inc. declined to provide any details about the identity of its auditors or its clients, citing a policy of client confidentiality.
8. *Is assessment pass/fail or benchmarking only?*
Benchmarking. Facilities are rated as “Excellent,” “Acceptable,” “Not Acceptable,” or “Serious Problem” on a variety of criteria, such as stunning efficacy, slipping and falling of animals and animal vocalization. Results of assessments conducted by Grandin and audit teams representing certain fast food restaurants are available on Grandin’s website. The identity of audited facilities is not disclosed.
9. *How many slaughter operations are participating in audits/assessments?*
In 2002, audit teams representing McDonald’s, Burger King, Wendy’s and Temple Grandin herself inspected a total of 80 cattle and pig slaughter facilities. In 2003, McDonald’s and Wendy’s auditors visited 74 cattle and pig slaughterhouses. In 2004, auditors from McDonald’s, Wendy’s, and three other companies audited 59 U.S. and Canadian cattle plants, 40 U.S. pig plants, 5 U.S. veal calf plants, 3 U.S. plants slaughtering sheep, and 47 chicken slaughter facilities. There are approximately 900 cattle, pig and sheep federally inspected slaughterhouses in the U.S., with additional state-inspected facilities.

Individual Producer Quality Assurance Programs

Certain individual producers have developed and implemented their own animal care quality assurance schemes. Unique animal care programs have been established by Smithfield Food's subsidiary Murphy-Brown and by Seaboard Foods (formerly Seaboard Farms), the largest and third largest U.S. pig producers, respectively. Rancho Vitello, a California calf ranch, promotes an animal welfare program for veal calves, and Maple Leaf Farms markets an animal care program for ducks. In addition, a private auditing firm, Environmental Management Solutions, has developed an animal welfare audit program for dairy producers. Some individual producers make specific animal care claims on their product labels, and others have received "Process Verified" certification for their quality assurance program from the USDA (see description of "Process Verified" in Section 5).

Individual producer quality assurance programs are described below. (Niman Ranch, specialty pork cooperative, is discussed in Section 7 under the Animal Welfare Institute program, and organic producers and cooperatives are discussed under the National Organic Program, also in Section 7.)

Murphy-Brown (Pigs)

1. *Are guidelines publicly available?*

No. The guidelines for Murphy-Brown's Animal Welfare Management System (AWMS) are not publicly available, and Murphy-Brown refused to provide a copy of the guidelines or to answer any questions regarding AWMS for this report. An item on the website of Smithfield Foods, Murphy-Brown's parent company, stated that AWMS "is based on the PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT model for business management." When announcing its creation, Murphy-Brown described AWMS as more "comprehensive and well thought out" than any other organization's animal care program. In June 2005, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals submitted a shareholder proposal to Smithfield Foods' corporate office requesting the company release results of all farm and slaughter plant audits beginning in 2006.

2. *What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?*

Press accounts regarding AWMS indicate that the program covers the following areas: shelter, access to water and feed, humane handling, identification and treatment of animals in need of healthcare and humane euthanasia.

3. *What animal care areas are not covered by the guidelines?*

Unclear, but it appears that breeding and medical practices (including physical alterations) may not be addressed. Slaughter is covered under a separate Smithfield Food's program, and Smithfield requires that drivers who transport animals, at least to the Tar Heel, North Carolina, slaughter plant be certified by the NPB's Trucker Quality Assurance program (see discussion of the National Pork Board earlier in this section).

4. *How were guidelines developed?*

According to the company, AWMS was developed by a multidisciplinary team of professionals with expertise in a range of areas including veterinary medicine, reproductive physiology, production management, marketing, management systems, administration, legal, logistics and public affairs. In order to assure the credibility of AWMS, the animal welfare committee retained the services of Stan Curtis of the University of Illinois and Temple Grandin of Colorado State University, experts on animal behavior and handling.

5. *Is compliance with guidelines audited?*

Yes. Producer compliance with the program's requirements is audited by the USDA Process Verified program. The Smithfield Packing Company has also received USDA Process Verified certification for its Tar Heel slaughter plant.

Seaboard Foods (Pigs)

1. *Are guidelines publicly available?*

No. Seaboard claims to have an extensive internal animal handling and welfare education, auditing and training program; however, the company refused to provide a copy of its quality assurance guidelines or to answer any questions regarding their development and implementation.

2. *What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?*

Details not available.

3. *What animal care areas are not covered by the guidelines?*

Details not available.

4. *How were guidelines developed?*

Details not available.

5. *Is compliance with guidelines audited?*

Yes. In June 2003, Seaboard Foods entered into an agreement with an independent animal auditing service to conduct animal care audits of its operations, from farm to slaughter. It referred questions regards this program to the auditing company, Farm Animal Care Training and Auditing (FACTA), which did not respond to requests for information. FACTA describes itself as an independent, professional, science-based animal care training and auditing service. The FACTA website states, "Its ownership and operation strive to prevent conflicts of interest and perceived conflicts of interest." Yet, FACTA is owned and operated by John McGlone, director of the Pork Industry Institute at Texas Tech University and a recognized researcher on issues related to pig production. The FACTA Scientific Advisory Committee is comprised of six members – Temple Grandin, Colorado State University; Stan Curtis, University of Illinois; Roy Schultz, veterinarian; Don Levis, Ohio State University; Morgan

Morrow, North Carolina State University; and Paul Thompson, Michigan State University.

FACTA does not create new guidelines but rather uses guidelines and policies and procedures selected by the company being audited. Seaboard declined to state whether the guidelines being audited by FACTA were those of the Swine Welfare Assurance Program (see description of SWAP under “National Pork Board” above) or an internal Seaboard assessment program. Qualifications for FACTA auditors include a BS degree in animal or agricultural sciences, 2 years experience with the species to be audited, training on audit procedures, and calibration of audit measures against those of the FACTA CEO (John McGlone) and the FACTA advisory committee. FACTA audits are unannounced and include an assessment of documents, facilities and equipment, animals and animal handling. For some measures, 100% of animals are assessed; for other measures, a sample is assessed. Producers like Seaboard receive a short and long version of the final report, as well as a list of suggestions to improve welfare. FACTA will not release reports, which are under the control of the producer requesting the audit.

Seaboard Foods has also become certified by the USDA Process Verified program in several areas of management including animal handling. It is not clear whether FACTA is no longer involved in auditing animal care at Seaboard or both FACTA and USDA are conducting audits.

Rancho Vitello (Veal Calves)

1. *Are guidelines publicly available?*
Yes. Information regarding the standards are available on the company’s website.
2. *What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?*
According to the Rancho Vitello website, the standards cover calf procurement, identification, housing (individual and group), feeding, supplemental iron, worker training and the environment.
3. *What animal care areas are not covered by the guidelines?*
Areas not addressed include medical practices, handling, euthanasia, transport and slaughter.
4. *How were guidelines developed?*
Details not available.
5. *Is compliance with guidelines audited?*
Yes, in 2003, Rancho Vitello employed the services of FACTA to verify the ranch’s compliance with the program (see description of FACTA in “Seaboard Foods” above). The Rancho Vitello website includes a July 2003 Animal Welfare Audit Report, produced by FACTA, attesting to the fact that Rancho Vitello

practices “meet or exceed the standards for special fed veal calves in the United States and in the European Union.”

Maple Leaf Farms (Ducks)

1. *Are guidelines publicly available?*

No. Maple Leaf Farms markets some duck products under an “Animal Well-Being Assured” label; however, the company does not include specific information about the guidelines, or the guidelines themselves, on its Web site and will not provide the guidelines to individuals requesting them. A brochure for the product line describes the program as follows:

“Maple Leaf Farms’ goal is to assure you that our ducks have received humane treatment and have been raised according to the highest standards.

- Humanely raised in a stress-free environment – ducks roam free in climate-controlled houses with fresh air and access to clean water at all times.
- Fed an all natural, grain-based diet containing no animal proteins.
- Receive no antibiotics, hormones, steroids, nor any other kind of artificial growth stimulant.”

2. *What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?*

Details not available.

3. *What animal care areas are not covered by the guidelines?*

Details not available.

4. *How were guidelines developed?*

The Maple Leaf Farms brochure states that the company’s duck care guidelines were “submitted to and approved by animal welfare specialists at top universities to ensure they’re the highest standards in the industry.” The company declined to provide further details when contacted for this report.

5. *Is compliance with guidelines audited?*

Yes. According to Maple Leaf, “Farms are audited by independent third party industry experts.” A company representative refused to disclose the identity of the auditors but offered that the audits were unannounced. The Maple Leaf Farms “Animal Well-Being Assured” label has been approved by the USDA-FSIS (see discussion under “Humanely Raised” in Section 5 on labeling claims), indicating that the agency has reviewed and approved the certification program.

Environmental Management Solutions (Dairy Cattle)

1. *Are guidelines publicly available?*

No. However, a description of the Animal Welfare Assurance Review and Evaluation Program (AWARE) is available on the Environmental Management

Solutions' (EMS) website. EMS is a private consulting firm that assists its agribusiness clients with meeting environmental regulations, specifically those dealing with animal waste management.

2. *What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?*

Dairy practices are assessed in ten areas: general animal management, feed and water access & quality, herd health, facilities, housing, parlor behavior, special needs management, handling & transportation, replacement cattle and management.

3. *What animal care areas are not covered by the guidelines?*

Details not available.

4. *How were guidelines developed?*

According to the EMS website, the AWARE program was developed by a panel of dairy experts, including Dennis Armstrong of University of Arizona, Mike Gamroth of University of Oregon, Jim Reynolds of University of California, and John Smith of Kansas State University. The tool was tested for effectiveness on commercial dairy operations. The stated goals of the program are to 1) promote good animal welfare practices, 2) improve public perception of animal care in the livestock industry, and 3) encourage industry-led self-awareness.

5. *Is compliance with guidelines audited?*

Yes. The program includes an audit option if the producer wishes to achieve "Certified" status. The assessment process consists of four steps: 1) assessor reviews background information with producer, 2) assessor walks through the entire operation and records animal observations and employee interviews, 3) assessor reviews findings with producer, and 4) assessor files findings with EMS. Animal observations include: body condition score, locomotion score, tail docking, animal footing/movement, animal hygiene, swollen hocks/knees, stocking rates, and animal behavior during milking. All animals are observed.

The identity of auditors is not disclosed on the website. However, the site does include bios of EMS staff. The head of the company is a former vice president of the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC), and several staff members have been affiliated with NPPC or other industry groups. No bios mention education or training in animal welfare science or animal behavior science. According to press accounts, Fiscalini Farms of Modesto, California, was the first commercial dairy to be certified by EMS.

AWARE has received Process Verified certification from the USDA, indicating that the federal agency monitors the audit process (see discussion of "Process Verified" in Section 5).

Retail Food Industry Auditing Programs

The Food Marketing Institute (FMI) and the National Council of Chain Restaurants (NCCR) are the national trade associations for retail food stores and chain restaurants, respectively. FMI's membership is composed of 2,300 companies representing large multi-store grocery chains, regional grocery chains, and independent supermarkets. Its U.S. members operate approximately 26,000 retail food markets with combined revenues of \$340 billion – three-quarters of all retail food store sales in the U.S. NCCR's membership is composed of 40 of the nation's largest chain restaurant companies. These companies own more than 50,000 restaurant outlets, and through franchising an additional 70,000 restaurants are operated under their trademarks.

FMI and NCCR have cooperated to offer their combined memberships a quality assurance program for assessing the animal care delivered by their suppliers. This program, known as the Animal Welfare Audit Program (AWAP), is described below.

Food Marketing Institute – National Council of Chain Restaurants

1. Are guidelines publicly available?

In the past, the complete audit tools, as well as general information about the auditing process, were available on the website of SES, the entity selected by FMI and NCCR to administer AWAP. However, as of July 2005, the audit tools had been removed from the site. Some information regarding the development of AWAP is offered on NCCR's website. AWAP is the only animal welfare audit program endorsed by FMI and NCCR.

2. What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?

The FMI-NCCR program has finalized animal care guidelines for the following: beef cattle, milk and dairy beef cattle, pigs, meat chickens, egg-laying hens, chicken slaughter and non-poultry slaughter. FMI-NCCR has also approved recommendations for ritual slaughter for livestock (cattle, sheep, goats) and poultry and a policy statement on the use of gestation crates for sows. Guidelines for turkeys are being reviewed but have not been finalized as of July 2005.

3. What animal care areas are not covered by the guidelines?

Guidelines have not yet been developed to cover the following farm animal species: veal calves; sheep; goats; rabbits; deer; bison; and ducks, geese and other bird species. FMI-NCCR refers their members to the Certified Humane program for some of the areas not addressed by AWAP.

4. How were guidelines developed?

In June 2001, FMI and NCCR formed an alliance to address the care and handling of animals used for food. The purpose of the FMI-NCCR program is to assess the compliance of an individual facility with existing industry animal care best management practices. Since 2001 FMI-NCCR has worked with producer trade associations to develop and/or refine their quality assurance guidelines. To assist

in the effort, FMI-NCCR formed an advisory committee with the following members: Adele Douglass, Humane Farm Animal Care; David Fraser, University of British Columbia; Gail Golab, AVMA; Temple Grandin, Colorado State University; Joy Mench, University of California-Davis; Joe Regenstein, Cornell University; and Janice Swanson, Kansas State University.

The FMI-NCCR advisory committee has worked with producer trade associations to resolve inconsistencies between the advisory committee's recommendations and producer guidelines. In some instances, the FMI-NCCR committee has influenced producer groups to adopt stronger guidelines. In other instances where resolution was not possible, FMI-NCCR eventually accepted the industry guidelines, sometimes pending further information. As of July 2005, the only unresolved issue between FMI-NCCR and producer groups was ammonia levels for egg production facilities. Areas of past disagreement between FMI-NCCR and producer groups are listed below:

FMI-NCCR Preferences for Egg-laying Hens

1. Ammonia levels – Not resolved (FMI-NCCR prefers maximum 25 ppm, goal of 10 ppm; UEP recommendation is max of 50 ppm)
2. Lighting – Resolved (UEP agreed to require a minimum level of 0.5-1 ft candle at feeding)
3. Forced molting – Resolved (UEP agreed to prohibit feed withdrawal as of 1/06)

FMI-NCCR Preferences for Chickens

1. Stocking density – Resolved (NCC agreed to lower the maximum stocking density of 8.5 lbs per sq ft, but only for birds weighing less than 5.5 lbs.)
2. Lighting program – Resolved (NCC agreed to recommend minimum of 4hrs darkness per day)
3. Foot health – Resolved (FMI-NCCR agreed to accept standard of less than 30% of birds with foot cracks or ulcers pending further data)
4. Catching – Resolved (FMI-NCCR agreed not to require that birds be held by both legs when inverted)
5. Broken wings – Resolved (FMI-NCCR agreed to accept maximum of 5% broken wings before entering the picker; FMI-NCCR recommendation had been 1% broken wings)
6. Dislocated wings – Resolved (FMI-NCCR agreed to accept maximum of 5% dislocated wings before entering the picker; FMI-NCCR recommendation had been 3% dislocated wings)
7. DOA at slaughter plant – Resolved (NCC agreed to maximum of 0.6% of birds DOA per day)
8. Stunning – Resolved (FMI-NCCR agreed to minimum 98% stunning effectiveness pending further data; FMI-NCCR preference is 99% effectiveness)

FMI-NCCR Preferences for Pigs

1. Gestation crates – Resolved (FMI-NCCR issued a policy statement on housing for pregnant sows)

FMI/NCCR Preferences for Dairy Cattle

1. Space allocation – Resolved (DQA agreed to maximum “cow to free stall” ratio of 1.2)
2. Tail docking – Resolved (DQA agreed to position giving preference to switch trimming)
3. Castration & dehorning – Resolved (DQA agreed to approved methods and recommended ages for the procedures)

5. *Is compliance with guidelines audited?*

Yes. As mentioned previously, the purpose of AWAP is to audit the self-assessment guidelines created by the various animal agriculture industry associations. SES and the FMI-NCCR advisory committee have attempted to devise objective, quantifiable measures to assess producer compliance with industry guidelines. The audit forms include bold type for key points and italicized type for major conformances that must be visually verified by the auditor. Every item has guidance that explains its verification. AWAP audit forms are reviewed and revised annually with any changes recommended by its advisory committee. Public comment on the guidelines is welcome. Annual reviews were completed in July of 2004 and 2005.

6. *How are audits performed?*

Producers requesting an audit complete a request form found on the AWAP website. Audit request forms are then distributed to certified AWAP auditors who can bid on a particular audit. The audited facility chooses the auditor it wants to complete the audit. Audit results are released to the audited facility and maintained in a secure on-line database that can be accessed by a pass code. The producer may give the pass code to anyone it wishes to receive the results of the audit, such as a restaurant or grocery store chain. The frequency of audits is at the discretion of the producer or its customer (the restaurant or grocery requesting that the producer participate in the audit program). The producer pays auditor fees and SES administrative costs.

7. *Who performs audits?*

Audits are performed by SES-trained auditors. AWAP auditors must meet certain prerequisites before enrolling in an AWAP auditor-training course. After completion of the course auditors must pass a written test and undergo a background check. Auditors include professional agriculture consultants, animal scientists, meat scientists, retired USDA inspectors, veterinarians, producers, and members of professional audit firms. Auditor biographies were previously available on the AWAP website. To minimize potential conflicts of interest, auditors used to perform individual audits must be independent of the industry being audited as well as the FMI and NCCR member requesting the audit. SES

representatives audit approximately one in ten audits to ensure accuracy and consistency.

8. *Is audit pass/fail or benchmarking only?*

Benchmarking. It is the responsibility of FMI and NCCR members to determine what level of compliance with the guidelines they consider acceptable. FMI-NCCR members are free to interpret the data in whatever manner meets their needs.

9. *What percentage of suppliers is being audited?*

AWAP was designed to be a voluntary program. The SES website states that, since the summer of 2003, numerous FMI-NCCR members sent at least one letter to their suppliers requesting participation in the AWAP program. However, as of January 2005, the SES website listed only three retailers – McDonald’s, Burger King and Jack in the Box – as participants in AWAP. According to AWAP manager Eric Hess, other program participants didn’t wish to be identified. Hess recommends that consumers directly contact their grocer or favorite restaurant to determine the store’s involvement in the program. In the first year of the program, audits were conducted at six non-poultry slaughter plants. In the second year, two dairy, 16 chicken, five poultry slaughter, and one non-poultry slaughter audits were conducted.

Concern has been expressed regarding the future of the AWAP program due to lack of supplier participation. According to the AWAP website, “Many of the NCCR and FMI members have asked their suppliers to participate in the AWAP program. In many cases the suppliers are refusing to participate.” For example, in November 2004, the Winn-Dixie supermarket chain sent a letter to its suppliers requesting AWAP audits in slaughter plants and on farms each year. In response, the National Pork Board criticized AWAP and indicated it would encourage Winn-Dixie to accept Pork Board’s SWAP assessments as an alternative.

Individual Retailer Auditing Programs

Certain individual retailers, including restaurants and grocery stores, have developed their own animal care guidelines along with a process for auditing their suppliers’ compliance with those guidelines. One grocery, Whole Foods Market, has initiated a project to create animal care guidelines beyond those required by the FMI-NCCR Animal Welfare Audit Program. In December 2003, Whole Foods Market began collaborating with animal advocacy groups to develop guidelines to cover the care of all species whose products are sold by the company. The project is expected to be completed by 2008.

Fast food restaurants, including McDonald’s Corporation, Burger King Corporation, and Wendy’s International, were the first retailers to establish programs to monitor the treatment of animals by the animal agriculture industry. Their efforts in this area influenced the creation of the FMI-NCCR audit program, described above. The current

involvement of particular fast food restaurants in animal welfare auditing is described below.

McDonald's Corporation

1. *Are guidelines publicly available?*

Information regarding the McDonald's animal care guidelines, but not the specific guidelines themselves, is available on the company's website.

2. *What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?*

McDonald's Laying Hens Guidelines address minimum requirements for housing and feeder space per hen. The guidelines also cover forced molting and debeaking practices. McDonald's cattle and pig slaughter plant standards are based on the guidelines developed by Temple Grandin for the American Meat Institute (see discussion of the "American Meat Institute"). According to Bruce Feinberg, Senior Director – U.S. Quality Systems for McDonald's, the corporation has also developed standards for poultry slaughter and for on-farm handling of chickens.

3. *How were guidelines developed?*

In 1999, McDonald's Corporation announced that it would work with Temple Grandin to add animal handling and stunning criteria to its program of auditing supplier slaughter plants for food safety. In 2000, McDonald's extended its animal care standards to on-farm treatment of animals and began to explore the feasibility of buying pig products from suppliers who don't use crates to house pregnant sows. And in 2001, McDonald's issued Laying Hens Guidelines for its egg suppliers that required 50% more housing space per hen than the existing U.S. industry average. McDonald's has formed an on-going animal welfare advisory committee, whose members include Jeff Armstrong and Edmond Pajor of Purdue University, Joy Mench of the University of California, Janice Swanson of Kansas State University, Temple Grandin of Colorado State University, and Diane Halverson, farm animal advisor to the Animal Welfare Institute.

4. *Is compliance with guidelines audited?*

McDonald's has supported the efforts of NCCR to set animal care standards and is currently a participant in the FMI-NCCR Animal Welfare Audit Program. McDonald's is also continuing to operate its own parallel audit program, utilizing an independent professional auditing service. As noted above, McDonald's audits cover chicken, pig and cattle slaughter facilities, as well as chicken and egg-laying hen farm operations.

McDonald's 2004 *Worldwide Corporate Responsibility Report* notes that a total of 498 slaughter plant audits were conducted worldwide in 2003. That year McDonald's completed audits in 64 cattle, seven pig, and 13 chicken slaughter plants in North America. According to the McDonald's website, in 2004, 540 audits were completed, "reaching a majority of facilities that provide meat

products to McDonald's in all the major geographic sectors where we do business.”

Company executive Bruce Feinberg states that McDonald's works with suppliers to assist them in meeting the corporation's animal welfare standards and has encouraged some suppliers to install monitoring equipment, such as video cameras, to address animal handling problems. McDonald's *2004 Worldwide Corporate Responsibility Report* provides the following information about its audit process in 2003: “Most suppliers passed their audits. Even in these cases, corrective actions were still noted as opportunities for continuous improvement. In a few cases, suppliers did not pass their audits. According to our audit procedures, these suppliers are given 30 days to make changes and are re-audited. If they fail this second audit, they are subject to loss of McDonald's business.”

Burger King Corporation

1. *Are guidelines publicly available?*

Information regarding the Burger King Corporation's animal care program is available on the company's website.

2. *What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?*

In 2001, Burger King adopted animal care standards similar to those created by McDonald's. The fast food corporation began audits of slaughter plants in 2001 and also petitioned the USDA to improve enforcement of the federal Humane Methods of Slaughter Act. In addition to requiring third-party audits of its suppliers' cattle, pig and poultry slaughter plants, Burger King has begun on-site audits of livestock production facilities.

3. *How were guidelines developed?*

Burger King Corporation formed an Animal Well-being Council in 2001. Members of the council include Temple Grandin, Colorado State University; Janice Swanson, Kansas State University; David Fraser, University of British Columbia; Kellye Pfalzgraf, Tyson Foods; Adele Douglass, Humane Farm Animal Care; and two administrators with Burger King.

4. *Is compliance with guidelines audited?*

Burger King has participated in the FMI-NCCR Animal Welfare Audit Program since its inception in the summer of 2003. According to the company, during 2004, audits were completed with 100% of its suppliers in the U.S. and Canada. Burger King states that “a small number” of suppliers have failed to meet animal care standards, and the company worked with these suppliers to assist them in their efforts to reach full compliance. While Burger King reserves the right to perform unannounced audits, all audits being conducted at present are announced due to biosecurity concerns.

Wendy's International, Inc.

1. *Are guidelines publicly available?*
Yes. Information regarding Wendy's animal care requirements is available on the company's website.
2. *What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?*
Wendy's has adopted the animal handling guidelines of the American Meat Institute and developed requirements for cattle, pig and chicken producers.
3. *How were guidelines developed?*
Wendy's has established an animal welfare council to assist in the development and review of its animal care requirements. The company has also hired as a consultant, Temple Grandin to evaluate the effectiveness of Wendy's animal care program.
4. *Is compliance with guidelines audited?*
According to Wendy's, the company has operated an objective auditing program to monitor animal handling among its suppliers since 1998. Audits of Wendy's suppliers are both announced and unannounced and conducted a minimum of twice each year. Representatives of third-party auditing companies or trained Wendy's auditors perform audits. Wendy's does not participate in the FMI-NCCR Animal Welfare Audit Program. The company states that companies failing to meet their guidelines for animal care are terminated as approved suppliers.

Yum! Brands

1. *Are guidelines publicly available?*
Yum! Brands did not respond to a request for a copy of its guidelines and did not provide answers to questions about the development of its animal care program. However, some information regarding Yum! animal care program is available on the company's website. (Yum! Brands is the parent company of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), A&W, Long John Silver, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell.)
2. *What animal care areas are covered by the guidelines?*
Yum! has developed animal care guidelines for its chicken suppliers. In addition, Taco Bell, Pizza Hut and A&W have adopted the slaughter guidelines of the American Meat Institute, and Yum! is developing an audit program for cattle slaughter facilities.
3. *How were guidelines developed?*
According to the website for KFC, the company adopted welfare performance standards for chicken slaughter establishments in 2000. To assist with the development of chicken welfare guidelines, KFC established an Animal Welfare

Advisory Council comprised of Temple Grandin, Colorado State University; Ian Duncan, University of Guelph; Bruce Webster, University of Georgia; Kellye Pfalzgraf, Tyson Foods; and Bill Potter, George's Inc. In May 2003, KFC committed to adopting guidelines for the raising and handling of chickens at the farm level, and those guidelines were completed in November 2004. KFC describes its guidelines as having been developed "by leading animal welfare experts at the direction of the National Council of Chain Restaurants and the Food Marketing Institute" (see discussion of NCCR-FMI above). In May, 2005, Temple Grandin and Ian Duncan resigned from the Animal Welfare Advisory Council over disagreements stemming from a confidentiality agreement that would have required them to refer all media inquiries to KFC's corporate headquarters.

4. *Is compliance with guidelines audited?*

The KFC website indicates that the company requires its suppliers to conduct self-audits of animal care guidelines. In addition, KFC conducts announced and unannounced audits of both production and slaughter facilities, and the company says, "corrective actions, if necessary, are discussed with suppliers and a timeline for completion of the necessary corrective actions is established." KFC also states "non-compliance could result in termination of the supplier's contract." KFC claims that a comparison of the KFC Farm Level Audit with the NCCR-FMI audit guidelines showed that KFC's farm audit was equal to or exceeded that of NCCR-FMI.

7. Third Party Certification Standards

Currently, three independent, third party food certification programs exist which include standards for the care and handling of animals. These programs are the National Organic Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture; the Certified Humane program, administered by Humane Farm Animal Care; and the Free Farmed program, administered by the American Humane Association. Although not a formal certification program, the Animal Welfare Institute has also developed animal husbandry criteria, which are voluntarily agreed to by farmers wishing to use the organization's name in conjunction with their products. These four programs are described briefly in this section.

National Organic Program

1. *Are standards publicly available?*

Yes. The regulations of the National Organic Program (NOP) are available on the website of the USDA-AMS, the government agency authorized by Congress to administer the program. The regulations can also be found in the Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR Part 205). The AMS website contains extensive information regarding the NOP.

2. *What animal care areas are covered by the standards?*
The NOP regulations relevant to animal care and handling include feed, health care practices and living conditions. The regulations are general and written to apply to all livestock species.
3. *What animal care areas are not covered by the standards?*
The NOP regulations do not address animal handling practices; space allowances; diet; environmental factors such as air quality, thermal regulation or lighting; management practices such as weaning and identification; transport; or euthanasia. Although slaughter is addressed, the provisions are not specific to animal treatment. The regulations require that animals be provided access to the outdoors but do not define how many animals can be grazed per acre or the frequency or duration of outdoor access. No stocking density or maximum flock/herd size is specified for meat birds or hens kept indoors, allowing certification of operations housing thousands of birds under one roof. (By comparison, the United Kingdom's Soil Association recommends a flock size of 500 birds and will only certify farms with at most 2,000 laying birds or 1,000 meat birds.)
4. *How were standards developed?*
Congress passed the Organic Food Production Act of 1990. The law authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to appoint a 15-member National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) to advise the USDA in the development of standards for organic production and in the implementation of certain aspects of the standards. The current NOSB is comprised of four farmers, two handlers/processors, one retailer, one scientist, three consumer advocates, three environmentalists and one certifying agent.

The NOSB submitted recommendations to the USDA regarding standards for organic production. In December 1997 the USDA proposed its NOP regulations in the *Federal Register*, choosing to ignore many of the recommendations made by the NOSB. Public response to the proposal was so uniformly negative that the Department was forced to rewrite the regulations and resubmit the revised proposal for public comment. The second proposed rule was published in the *Federal Register* in March 2000. More than 300,000 public comments were received on the two proposed organic rules. The NOP represents one of the USDA's most complex regulatory programs and one of the largest rulemaking efforts in USDA history. The final organic rule was published on December 21, 2000, and the regulations implementing the NOP became effective October 21, 2002.

5. *How are producers certified?*
An initial on-site inspection is performed prior to certification; thereafter, inspections are conducted annually and as needed to verify compliance with the regulations. Inspections may be announced or unannounced. Organic producers must permit on-site inspection with complete access to all operations, including

non-certified production areas. Organic certification remains good until surrendered by the producer or revoked for a violation of the NOP regulations.

6. *Who performs audits for certification?*

USDA-accredited certifying agents certify organic producers. The USDA-AMS website contains a list of domestic and international certifying agents with their contact information. As of July 2005, the list included 56 domestic certifying agents, 50 of which were described as certifying livestock producers. State agencies represented 16 of the 56 domestic organic certifiers. The NOP regulations include provisions to avoid potential conflicts of interest for certifying agents, though ties between certifying agents and some producers they certify undoubtedly exist. NOP staff conducts on-site review audits of certifying agents, a sort of audit of the auditors.

Since initiation of the NOP, several controversies have arisen over interpretation of the program regulations and over the authority of certifying agents. Two of those controversies involve very significant provisions from an animal welfare perspective – requiring access to the outdoors for all organically raised animals and access to pasture for organically raised ruminants.

Access to the outdoors – The NOP regulations require that organically raised animals be provided with “access to the outdoors, shade, shelter, exercise areas, fresh air and direct sunlight suitable to the species, its stage of production, the climate and the environment.” Immediately after the NOP regulations were finalized poultry and egg producers complained that they should be exempted from the requirements. In May 2002 the National Organic Standards Board accepted public comment on the issue and adopted a clarification of the requirement. The clarification stated “organic livestock facilities must give poultry the ability to choose to be in the housing or outside in the open air and direct sunlight” and, furthermore, that a producer’s organic system plan must “illustrate how the producer will maximize and encourage access to the outdoors.” However, the USDA’s official interpretation of the “access” provision, released in October 2002, simply said producers must provide livestock with an opportunity to exit any barn or other enclosure.

In the spring of 2002, a Massachusetts egg company, Country Hen, submitted an application for organic certification to Massachusetts Independent Certifiers, Inc. (MICI). The application was rejected by MICI on the grounds that Country Hen was not providing adequate access to the outdoors. The company intended to build fully enclosed balconies off the layer barns, which it would allow the hens to use for a few hours each day during summer months only. The balconies would have been able to accommodate only a small percentage of the barns’ 6,000 hens at any one time. After Country Hen complained about the rejection of their application, the USDA reversed MICI’s decision and granted organic certification. In June 2003, MICI filed an official complaint against the USDA for

granting certification without consulting the certifier. A USDA administrative judge later dismissed the appeal.

Another organic certifier – the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture – has decided that it will not require its producers to meet the standards. New Hampshire is not requiring that poultry have access to the outdoors in order to satisfy Pete & Gerry’s Eggs, a large egg producer that houses thousands of hens under one roof. Although the situation is arguably not compatible with the public perception of “organic” conditions, the NH Department of Agriculture claims that it is doing what is best for the birds by protecting them from severe weather, disease and predators.

Access to pasture – The NOP requirement that ruminants have access to pasture has also become controversial. Some large dairy corporations, namely Aurora and Horizon organic dairies, have regularly confined their cows to outdoor pens when they are producing milk and only allowed the animals access to pasture during the time between lactations. The confinement dairies have justified this practice based on the exception in the NOP regulations that allows temporary confinement for the “animal’s stage of production.” However, since approximately 85% of a dairy cow’s productive life is spent in lactation, if lactation is interpreted as a stage of production, the pasture requirement becomes virtually meaningless for dairy cows.

In early 2005, the Cornucopia Institute, a farm policy think tank, filed three complaints with the USDA alleging Horizon and Aurora Organic Dairy were violating the federal regulations by denying their dairy cattle access to pasture. In response, the USDA requested the NOSB produce a guidance document on the issue. The Livestock Committee of the NOSB has developed a proposed guidance that will be voted on by the full NOSB at its August 2005 meeting. The proposed guidance states, in part, “Ruminant livestock shall graze pasture during the months of the year when pasture can provide edible forage.” The NOSB has also recommended to the USDA that the NOP regulations be revised to clarify the “stage of production” exception. It is the NOSB’s recommendation that, for ruminants, temporary confinement due to “stage of production” be limited to a) birthing, b) dairy animals up to 6 months of age, and c) beef animals during the final finishing stage, not to exceed 120 days. The recommended rule change also states, “Lactation of dairy animals is not a stage of production under which animals may be denied pasture for grazing.”

7. *Is 100% compliance with standards required?*

No. Minor noncompliant items are allowed. The producer must submit an updated annual organic production plan describing how such items are being corrected. Any person may file a complaint if he or she believes a violation of the NOP regulations has occurred. Complaints may be filed with the NOP, the State Organic Program (if applicable), or the certifying agent. Civil penalties up to a \$10,000 fine may be assessed to any person who knowingly sells or labels as

organic a product that is not produced or handled according to the NOP regulations.

8. *How many producers are participating in program?*

There are more than 1,000 certified organic farmers raising livestock and/or poultry in the U.S. Organic Valley Family of Farms is the largest organic farmer-owned cooperative with nearly 700 farmer members in 18 states. More than two-thirds of Organic Valley members are dairy farmers. The “Eat Wild” directory at www.eatwild.com lists more than 700 suppliers of products from pastured-raised livestock and poultry, most of which are certified organic.

Between 2001 and 2004, sales of organic products in the U.S. increased more than 80%. Refrigerated dairy milk and fresh eggs are the second and third most popular organic products, according to ACNielsen’s *LabelTrends Organic Foods Report*. The fastest growing categories of organic foods include ice cream and fresh meats, which experienced a 219% increase in sales between 2003 and 2004.

Growth in the organic segment of animal agriculture can be illustrated by the dramatic increase in the number of animals being raised under organic systems. According to the USDA Economic Research Service, the following numbers of animals were being raised under organic systems in 2001 (the most recent year for which data are available), compared with 1997:

- 3,290,000 meat chickens, up from 38,285 in 1997
- 1,600,000 laying hens, up from 537,826 in 1997
- 98,653 turkeys, up from 750 in 1997
- 48,677 dairy cows, up from 12,897 in 1997
- 15,200 beef cattle, up from 4,429 in 1997
- 3,100 pigs, up from 482 in 1997
- 4,000 sheep and lambs, up from 705 in 1997

Although the growth in production and sales is striking, the organic segment still represented only 1.2% of all food and non-alcoholic beverage sales in 2004, up from slightly less than 1% in 2000. Currently, approximately 2% of egg-laying hens, 2% of dairy cows, and less than 1% of beef cattle, pigs, and meat birds are being raised under organic conditions. However, if the current rate of growth continues, within the next 10 years, the National Organic Program could affect 10% percent of all farm animals in the U.S.

Certified Humane Program

1. *Are standards publicly available?*

Yes. The species-specific standards are available on the program website. Additional information about the program including its policy manual is also posted on the site.

2. *What animal care areas are covered by the standards?*

Standards are available for the following species: beef cattle, dairy cattle, young dairy beef (veal), pigs, sheep, goats, meat chickens, turkeys and egg-laying hens. Animal care areas for each species include: food and water, environment, management and health. Transportation is covered for sheep and young dairy beef, and transport and slaughter standards are provided for meat chickens and turkeys. According to Adele Douglass, director of Humane Farm Animal Care (HFAC), which administers the Certified Humane program, standards for the slaughter of egg-laying hens and for the transport of animals not addressed by the current standards are being researched. Standards for the care of sheep were revised in 2005 to cover animals raised for dairy.
3. *What animal care areas are not covered by the standards?*

See #2 above. The care of chickens raised as breeders is not covered. In addition, standards have not been written to cover other species such as ducks, geese, rabbits, deer and farmed fish. It is the goal of HFAC to eventually address standards for at least some of these animals. While indoor stocking densities for birds are specified, maximum flock size is not, which allows certification of operations housing thousands of meat birds or laying hens in a single house.
4. *How were standards developed?*

The Certified Humane standards were developed by a team of animal scientists and veterinarians with expertise in farm animal care issues. In creating the standards, the team reviewed research findings and consulted previously established standards, including those of the Royal Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA). Certified Humane program standards are regularly reviewed and revised based on the results of scientific research. Recommendations for revisions are made by the scientific committee and accepted or rejected by the HFAC board of directors. The membership of the current scientific committee is posted on the program website and includes a number of national and international experts in farm animal welfare. Certified Humane is endorsed and funded by a consortium of individuals, foundations and animal welfare organizations, including the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Humane Society of the United States, and the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.
5. *How are producers certified?*

Farm operations interested in becoming certified contact HFAC to receive an application and related materials. Following completion of the appropriate documents, HFAC reviews the application and arranges for an on-site audit of the facility. During the audit, the assessor conducts interviews with management and employees, observes animal care handling practices, and reviews written documentation regarding procedures. Applicants meeting requirements are certified for a one-year period and allowed to use the Certified Humane Raised and Handled label on its products. Specifics of the certification process are addressed in the program's policy manual.

6. *Who performs audits for certification?*

On-site inspections are conducted by members of the Certified Humane scientific committee and other individuals with training and education in animal science or veterinary medicine. Inspectors must sign a declaration of interests to ensure no financial connections between inspectors and any operation being inspected. USDA-AMS has worked with the program and assessed its certification audit process; however, Certified Humane is currently not a participant in the USDA Process Verified program.

7. *Is 100% compliance with standards required?*

Yes. Certification is denied if all standards are not met. After a deficiency has been corrected the applicant must submit to the entire certification process again. Certification may be denied for failure to provide access to facilities and records or for presentation of false information. Certification may be revoked for a variety of reasons including failure to follow policies and procedures or implementing significant changes to animal care procedures without prior approval.

8. *How many producers are participating in program?*

As of July 2005, the Certified Humane website listed 31 producers and 11 restaurants as participating in the program.

Free Farmed Program

1. *Are standards publicly available?*

Yes. Although the standards are not currently posted on the Free Farm program website, they are available upon request from the program manager. Relatively little information is provided on the program's Web page, and the material that is posted has not been updated for at least one year prior to release of this report.

2. *What animal care areas are covered by the standards?*

Same as Certified Humane program, described above. Differences in the standards for individual farm animal species between the Certified Humane and Free Farmed programs are relatively minor (as illustrated in the comparison tables for farm animal welfare programs presented in Appendices D through I). Free Farmed standards address the care and handling of beef cattle, dairy cattle, sheep, pigs, turkeys, meat chickens and laying hens. The Free Farmed program has no plans to develop standards to cover additional species.

3. *What animal care areas are not covered by the standards?*

Similar to Certified Humane program, described above. In addition, the Free Farmed standards do not address turkey slaughter or the care and handling of turkeys raised for breeding or sheep raised for dairy.

4. *How were standards developed?*

Like the Certified Humane program, the Free Farmed standards are based, in part, on farm animal welfare criteria developed by the RSPCA. The program, which was launched in September 2000, was originally administered by Adele Douglass and Farm Animal Services. As of October 2003, the program has been administered in-house by its sponsoring organization, the American Humane Association. American Humane hired Elena Metro, a former executive director of the Colorado Pork Producers Council, to manage the program. Virtually no revisions to the certification standards have been made following the change in management. The Free Farmed program has formed a new advisory committee comprised of one large animal veterinarian, Hubert Karreman, and four academia-based members – Raymond Massey, University of Missouri; Frank Craddock, Texas A & M University; and Keith Belk and Temple Grandin, Colorado State University. Other than Temple Grandin, professor at Colorado State University, none of the members are recognized experts in the field of animal welfare. The program appears to have no formal process for the routine review/revision of standards.

5. *How are producers certified?*

Farm operations interested in becoming certified receive copies of the Free Farmed standards, program description, and templates to produce a farm manual and veterinary health records. Following completion of the appropriate documents, the Free Farmed program reviews the application and arranges for an on-site audit of the facility. During the audit, the assessor conducts interviews with management and employees, observes animal care handling practices, and reviews written documentation regarding procedures. Any non-compliant items found during inspection are classified as either a “continuous improvement point,” which does not prevent certification but must be corrected, or a “hold point” which must be corrected before approval. Applicants meeting requirements are issued a “certificate of approval” valid for one year.

6. *Who performs audits for certification?*

OneCert, an independent professional auditing company that is also a USDA-accredited certifier for the National Organic Program, performs the audits. USDA-AMS has worked with the program and assessed its certification audit process; however, Free Farmed is currently not a participant in the USDA Process Verified program.

7. *Is 100% compliance with standards required?*

Yes. But minor non-compliance items found during initial inspection do not necessarily result in the rejection of an application for certification. Producers are notified of the deficiencies and given the opportunity to correct them. After certification is granted, suspension may occur for continued non-conformance with the standards. If suspended, a producer must complete the entire certification process to be reinstated.

8. *How many producers are participating in program?*
As of September 2004, the Free Farmed program website listed five producers as participating in the program. Two additional producers were added in the fall of 2004, according to American Humane news releases. In January 2005, the Free Farmed website indicated that a list of participating producers would soon be posted. As of July 2005, no such list is available.

Animal Welfare Institute Program

1. *Are standards publicly available?*
Yes. AWI's humane husbandry criteria are posted on the organization's website. The website also offers a brief discussion of the rationale behind the criteria, which are based on the Five Freedoms (see Section 3). The website does not provide specific information regarding how the criteria were developed or how they are applied to agricultural operations; however, AWI staff responds to questions on these matters. The organization has invited public comment on its draft criteria for cattle and sheep.
2. *What animal care areas are covered by the standards?*
AWI has developed humane husbandry criteria for pigs, ducks, and rabbits. Criteria have also been drafted but not finalized for beef cattle and calves and sheep. According to Diane Halverson, AWI farm animal advisor, AWI is in the process of completing standards for dairy cattle and calves. The group also plans to develop standards for meat chickens and laying hens. Eventually, standards for turkeys and goats will be added. Unlike most certification program standards, the AWI criteria are not organized by a consistent format. The following areas are generally covered: breeding, feeding, housing/shelter, space requirements, bedding, procedures, handling and transport.
3. *What animal care areas are not covered by the standards?*
The original AWI criteria for pigs addressed on-farm care only; slaughter and on-farm euthanasia methods were not covered and transport was referenced only briefly. AWI has added criteria for euthanasia and is developing standards for transport. Indoor environmental conditions, such as temperature ranges and air quality measures, are not specified. AWI will continue to rely on industry standards for slaughter.
4. *How were standards developed?*
The AWI criteria are based on enhancements to the Five Freedoms articulated by Ruth Harrison and others. Halverson describes her program's criteria as follows: "The standards are written from a perspective that allows the animals to express natural behaviors. Rather than fit an animal to a system, we seek to fit a system to an animal. We identify practical husbandry techniques that allow animals to live healthy lives while expressing those behaviors unique to their species."

AWI first published husbandry criteria for pigs in 1989 and received the first USDA-approved label for pork products from farms where pigs were raised by independent family farmers on pasture or in deep-bedded pens, without the use of antibiotics or sulfa drugs. The pig standards were developed in consultation with Swedish ethologists Bo Algers, Per Jensen, and Ingvar Ekesto and U.S. veterinarians Carlos Pijoan and Tim Blackwell (at the time, both of the University of Minnesota). More recently, Anna Valros, an ethologist from Finland, has served as an advisor on pigs. AWI standards for ducks were developed with input from Sara Stai, Donald Broom, and Charlotte Berg. These scientists and others will be consulted in the development of criteria for additional species.

5. *How are producers certified?*

The AWI program consists of a voluntary agreement that the producer will abide by humane husbandry criteria in exchange for the right to make marketing use of the AWI name. Halverson notes, “At a minimum, we offer these protocols to farmers who want to raise animals under conditions that are supportive of their welfare.”

AWI requires that participating producers be family farms on which at least one individual or family member meet three criteria: 1) owns the animals, 2) depends upon the farm for their livelihood, and 3) participates in the daily physical labor to manage the farm. Unlike typical certification programs, which approve specific products, AWI’s approval applies to all products coming from a particular farming operation. The AWI program does not allow for farmers to produce any products other than by the methods described in the husbandry criteria, while certification programs, such as the Certified Humane, Free Farmed, and Certified Organic programs, generally allow for farmers to produce both certified and non-certified products. (These are commonly referred to as “split” or “dual” operations.)

At present, AWI is working exclusively with two types of pig farmers – those who raise pigs for the Niman Ranch Pork Co. of Thornton, Iowa and those who market their animals independently and seek approval from AWI. Niman Ranch farmers are required to sign affidavits stating that they agree to meet all requirements of AWI and Niman Ranch. The affidavits are submitted to the USDA to demonstrate compliance with Niman Ranch labeling and marketing claims.

6. *Who performs audits for certification?*

Audits of all farms belonging to the Niman Ranch cooperative are conducted annually by Niman Ranch staff. If requested by Niman Ranch, AWI staff also makes site visits to assess a farm’s compliance with a particular standard. Audits may be announced or unannounced. AWI is also present at gatherings of Niman Ranch farmers to discuss various aspects of the humane husbandry criteria. Audits of independent AWI-approved farms are conducted annually by AWI staff.

According to Halverson, AWI staff will eventually conduct inspections of farms raising species of animals other than pigs.

7. *Is 100% compliance with standards required?*

Yes. Actions taken for noncompliance include (from lightest to strongest):

- Issuance of a warning (if no improvement is shown within a specified time period, the farmer is removed from the program)
- Movement to the bottom of the list of suppliers to Niman Ranch
- Phase-out from the program
- Immediate removal from the program

8. *How many producers are participating in program?*

The Niman Ranch cooperative included 250 farms in 9 states, as of 2004. In addition, one independent pig farm has received AWI approval.

8. Assessment of Welfare Standards Programs

Standards programs must be both meaningful and adhered to by a significant segment of the industry in order to have a positive impact on animal welfare. Standards that are meaningful but applied to only a small number of animals, and, conversely, standards that are applied broadly but offer inadequate protection, are of limited value. Therefore, the various types of programs described in the previous sections will be analyzed below by considering both their meaningfulness and their adoption by the animal agriculture industry. The criteria used for assessing meaningfulness include the degree to which the standards or guidelines are 1) transparent, 2) developed with public input, 3) objective and measurable, 4) independently verified, 5) reliable and consistent, and 6) relevant to animal welfare. Adoption by the industry will be assessed by the number of producers participating in the program.

Product Labeling Claims

Criteria #1: Transparent

Animal-derived food product labeling and marketing claims are generally administered by the USDA-FSIS and USDA-AMS agencies. Definitions for livestock, poultry and egg product labeling claims are available on the USDA website. However, definitions for shell egg labeling claims are not posted. Individuals interested in the definition of egg labeling claims must contact the USDA directly. From a consumer perspective, current labeling claims are inadequate for making informed food choices. For example, by the label alone, shoppers can't know that the terms "free range" and "pasture raised" may have significantly different implications for animal welfare.

For food marketed under third-party certification programs, shoppers have no way of knowing what entity is behind the program. They can't know, for example, that the "Certified Humane" label is administered by an animal advocacy organization, while "Animal Care Certified" is an industry-backed label. Maple Leaf Farms currently markets some of its duck products with an "Animal Well-Being Assured" label; yet, the company refuses to supply any information regarding the third-party certification program behind the claim, such as the program's animal care standards, experts consulted in development of the standards, or the identity of the certifying entity. This should not be allowed.

Criteria #2: Public Input

The USDA-AMS has sought comment from the public in developing livestock marketing claims. Strong public opposition to proposed standards for such livestock and meat marketing claims as "free range" and "no antibiotics used," released in December 2002, prompted the USDA to delay implementation of the standards and seek additional input. Standards for poultry and egg marketing claims have not been submitted for public comment.

Criteria #3: Objective and Measurable

Standards for some product labeling claims are vague and, therefore, difficult to measure. This is particularly true of the claims “free range” and “free roaming” when applied to poultry and egg-laying hens. The standards for these terms do not include guidance as to the frequency or duration of outdoor access, density or pasture requirements, or the percentage of a flock that must be allowed out at any given time. As a result, a significant portion – likely a majority – of poultry and eggs marketed under these claims in the U.S. are produced in a manner inconsistent with the public’s expectations.

Criteria #4: Independently Verified

Product labeling and marketing claims are not verified, with the exception of those claims made by producers participating in the USDA-AMS Process Verified program or those made in association with a third-party certification program. Livestock, poultry and egg product labeling claims are pre-approved, but not verified, by USDA-FSIS staff. Shell egg labeling claims are neither pre-approved nor verified by USDA-AMS, the agency responsible for monitoring the use of such claims.

Criteria #5: Reliable and Consistent

Since compliance with product labeling and marketing claims (except those associated with a third-party certification program) is not audited, there is no way to assess whether the label definitions are being used in a consistent manner. In fact, it should be assumed that they are not.

Criteria #6: Relevant

With the exception of “humanely raised,” product labeling claims are specific to only one area of animal care and not designed to reflect general animal welfare. The relevance of the various commonly used labeling claims ranges from none to high, as noted in Section 5. Due to inconsistency in their application, the claims “free range” and “free roaming,” particularly when used with poultry and laying hens, are among the least relevant to animal welfare.

Criteria #7: Participation by Industry

The number of farmers utilizing animal-related food product labeling claims is not available; however, specialty products are known to be one of the fastest growing segments of the food industry. The percent of farm animals in the U.S. currently affected by product labeling and marketing claims, other than organic, is estimated in the area of 2%, with egg-laying hens and meat chickens representing the largest segments of the total.

Animal Agriculture Industry Quality Assurance Programs

Criteria #1: Transparent

At present, industry guidelines are available to the public for all species with the exception of turkeys, which will eventually become available when finalized. The accessibility of the industry guidelines is probably due in large part to the influence of the FMI-NCCR Animal Welfare Audit Program (AWAP). The availability of information regarding development of the guidelines, as well as the identity of scientific advisors and auditors, varies by industry. Generally, documentation of individual producer animal care programs is not available, and individual companies refuse or ignore requests for information, even though they often publicize the existence of their programs. As a result, these producer-operated programs must be viewed as lacking credibility.

In its report on farm animal assurance schemes, the Farm Animal Welfare Council of the United Kingdom noted that a producer's refusal to make standards publicly available is "illogical, unacceptable and tantamount to their assuring a 'quality' that they are unwilling to openly define."

Criteria #2: Public Input

Public input has not been actively sought in the development of any industry quality assurance program. The United Egg Producers included only one animal advocate on the advisory committee that created its animal care guidelines.

Criteria #3: Objective and Measurable

The various industry quality assurance guidelines have been written with the goal of being objective and measurable, following the example set by the American Meat Institute guidelines for slaughter developed by Temple Grandin. The objectivity of the guidelines can also be credited to the work of FMI-NCCR's AWAP program, which was created by food retailers as a tool to audit their suppliers' compliance with quality assurance programs. Of the different industry guidelines, those of the American Sheep Industry Association and the American Veal Association are the least restrictive and the least specific; both were developed without the involvement of FMI-NCCR.

Criteria #4: Independently Verified

Without verification there is no assurance of quality. Among animal agriculture trade associations, only the ACC program of the United Egg Producers uses third-party auditors to assess compliance with its voluntary certification program. Other trade associations, such as the National Pork Board and the Milk and Dairy Beef Quality Assurance Center, offer voluntary on-farm assessments, but in many cases these inspections are conducted by individuals with personal, professional and/or financial ties to the industry, and likely in some cases to the individual facility being audited.

A new animal auditor certification group has been formed by several professional organizations representing farm animal veterinarians and animal scientists – the Federation of Animal Science Societies, American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists, American Association of Bovine Practitioners, and the American Association of Swine Veterinarians. The purpose of the organization – named the Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization (PAACO) – is “to promote the humane treatment of animals through education and certification of animal auditors and to promote the profession of animal auditors.” PAACO will certify farm animal welfare auditors. Members of the founding organizations will be eligible to sign-up for training and then take qualifying examinations. Individuals passing the exams may conduct welfare audits independently or for auditing firms.

Criteria #5: Reliable and Consistent

The reliability and consistency of audit results depend on a number of factors, including the qualifications and training of auditors, the number of audits performed, and the existence of quality control measures such as client interviews and tracking the performance of individual auditors. Some programs, such as those of the National Pork Board and the Milk and Dairy Beef Quality Assurance Center, employ the services of more than 100 auditors, each of whom only audit a few facilities each year. The use of a large number of part-time auditors is likely to reduce the consistency of the audit process. A majority of industry quality assurance programs allow producers to select their auditor, another potential source of bias and inconsistent results.

Criteria #6: Relevant

Animal agriculture quality assurance guidelines have been developed, not as a means of providing for animal welfare, but as a way to avoid third-party independent audits, and to head-off attempts by federal and state agencies to regulate farm animal treatment and handling. To date, industry guidelines have had minimal impact on the lives of farm animals in the U.S.; in fact, it could be argued that the guidelines have only served to sanction intensive animal agriculture practices here.

It may seem surprising that guidelines developed with the input and guidance of a variety of academic professionals would so poorly reflect animal welfare. However, in many cases, the academic professionals involved in developing industry animal care guidelines have been experts in meat production science, not animal welfare science. The public is generally unaware of the role agriculture departments at state land-grant colleges and universities have played, and continue to play, in promoting industrial agribusiness. These institutions were instrumental in developing the technology and husbandry practices that have driven the consolidation of U.S. agriculture and the transition from family farm to factory farm. Scientists at these colleges routinely receive grants from corporations and the USDA for their support of agribusiness, and agriculture trade associations have used some of these scientists to lend credence to their animal care guidelines.

Use of the term “animal welfare” in conjunction with current industry guidelines is inappropriate. To date, industry guidelines have prohibited only one inhumane practice – feed withdrawal to induce molting in hens – and in many cases the guidelines fail to provide what an average American would consider basic animal care. Industry guidelines include a number of major violations of the Five Freedoms for farm animals, described in Section 3. The most significant of these violations, as related to the care of dairy cattle, pigs, chickens and laying hens, are listed below.

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst – by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor; violations include:

Pigs

- Feed restriction of sows and boars allowed without dietary supplementation
- No limit on feed withdrawal before slaughter

Chickens

- Feed/water restriction of breeders allowed

Laying Hens

- No limit on feed withdrawal before slaughter

2. Freedom from discomfort – by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area; violations include:

Dairy Cattle

- No standards for transport (duration; stocking density; provisions for food/water, rest, heating/cooling, ventilation)

Pigs

- Bedding not required
- Perforated and slatted flooring allowed
- No standards for transport (duration; stocking density; provisions for food/water, rest, heating/cooling, ventilation)

Chickens

- Wire and slatted flooring allowed
- No standards for transport (duration; provisions for heating/cooling, ventilation)

Laying Hens

- Wire and slatted flooring allowed
- No standards for transport (duration; provisions for heating/cooling, ventilation)

3. Freedom from pain, injury, and disease – by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment; violations include:

Dairy Cattle

- Tail docking allowed
- Dehorning/debudding allowed
- Use of higher-yielding strains not discouraged
- Use of growth hormones allowed

Pigs

- Tail docking allowed
- Teeth clipping allowed
- Ear notching
- Castration allowed

Chickens

- Beak trimming of breeders allowed
- Toe clipping of breeding cockerels allowed
- Comb dubbing of breeding cockerels allowed
- Use of faster-growing strains not discouraged

Laying Hens

- Beak trimming allowed

4. Freedom to express normal behavior – by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind; violations include:

Dairy Cattle

- Confinement to tie-stalls allowed
- Immediate separation of calves from cows allowed
- Confinement of calves to crates and tethering allowed
- Minimum space allowances for calves not specified

Pigs

- Confinement of sows to gestation crates allowed
- Confinement of sows to farrowing crates allowed
- Minimum space allowances for confined sows and boars not specified
- Inadequate space allowances for growing pigs
- Access to the outdoors not required
- Rooting materials not required
- Continuous low-level lighting allowed

Chickens

- Access to the outdoors not required
- Inadequate space allowance
- Near-continuous lighting allowed

Laying Hens

- Confinement to small cages allowed
- Access to the outdoors not required
- Litter and nest boxes not required
- Continuous low-level lighting allowed

5. Freedom from fear and distress – by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering; violations include:

Dairy Cattle

- Early weaning of calves allowed
- Use of electric prods allowed
- Slaughter without prior stunning allowed (ritual/religious slaughter)

Pigs

- Use of electric prods allowed
- Early weaning allowed
- Slaughter without prior stunning allowed (ritual/religious slaughter)

Chickens

- Inverting and shackling for slaughter while conscious allowed
- Slaughter without prior stunning allowed (ritual/religious slaughter)

Laying Hens

- Inverting and shackling for slaughter while conscious allowed
- Slaughter without prior stunning allowed (ritual/religious slaughter)
- Humane killing of male chicks not addressed

Industry guidelines have not yet been developed for several species, including goats, geese, rabbits, bison, deer and farmed fish. In general, industry guidelines do not cover transport and the care of animals used for breeding. The slaughter of egg-laying hens and killing of male chicks are also not addressed.

Criteria #7: Participation by Industry

Participation in various industry animal care quality assurance programs is highest for the United Egg Producers, with a reported 85% of egg producers involved with the UEP Animal Care Certified program. In addition, the American Veal Association claims 80% participation in its Veal Quality Assurance Program. Other quality assurance programs, such as those of the National Chicken Council and the National Pork Board have been in existence for only a relatively short time. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association recently finalized its animal care guidelines but, unlike the other trade organizations, has no specific quality assurance program.

Due to the limited information available, it is difficult to make an accurate assessment of producer participation in animal welfare assurance programs. At this point, however, it appears to be relatively low.

Retail Food Industry Auditing Programs

Criteria #1: Transparent

The most transparent retail industry program is the FMI-NCCR's Animal Welfare Audit Program (AWAP). Documentation regarding the program is available on the FMI and AWAP websites, and the staffs cooperate with requests for additional information. On the other hand, individual retailers release limited information regarding the content and process of their programs.

Criteria #2: Public Input

AWAP has initiated an annual review process and will consider proposals from outside parties for revisions to its current guidelines. FMI-NCCR included only one animal advocate on the advisory committee that created its animal care guidelines. In addition, the advisory committees for McDonald's and Burger King include one animal advocacy member.

Criteria #3: Objective and Measurable

Since the purpose of retail food industry programs is auditing, animal care criteria are objective and measurable.

Criteria #4: Independently Verified

Independent auditing firms often conduct retail food industry audits. As a result, auditor bias is of less concern with the FMI-NCCR's AWAP program, and with the auditing programs operated by individual food retailers such as McDonald's, than with individual industry quality assurance programs.

Criteria #5: Reliable and Consistent

The FMI-NCCR Animal Welfare Audit Program has taken steps to ensure the reliability of its audits by shadowing auditors, interviewing clients about the process, and comparing the performance of different auditors.

Criteria #6: Relevant

AWAP auditing criteria are based on industry quality assurance guidelines; therefore, the relevance of the criteria to animal welfare is the same as described above for animal agriculture guidelines. In several instances industry guidelines were strengthened through negotiations between FMI-NCCR and the individual trade association. Further

improvement in AWAP criteria, and in industry quality assurance guidelines themselves, is possible through the involvement of the AWAP scientific advisory committee and its annual review of the program audit criteria. It is expected that the animal husbandry criteria being developed by Whole Foods Market will be significantly stronger than those of AWAP. However, the company has not yet indicated whether compliance with the criteria will be audited.

Criteria #7: Participation by Industry

In the first two years of the program AWAP conducted audits of only 30 facilities. AWAP appears to be off to a slow start due to the refusal of producers to participate in this voluntary audit program. In order for AWAP to succeed large retailers must require involvement by their suppliers. This is not happening currently. For example, Wal-Mart, the nation's largest grocer, has indicated that it supports FMI-NCCR animal welfare guidelines but is not participating in AWAP. Wal-Mart's statement on animal welfare indicates it will incorporate "any reasonable best practice auditing procedures" from the FMI efforts, and in fact has already initiated an animal welfare auditing process in its audits of outside food suppliers. However, the company refuses to provide any details regarding its program.

Fast food restaurants continue to be the biggest auditor of animal care and handling on the farm and at slaughter facilities. In 2004, McDonald's Corporation alone performed more than 500 animal care audits worldwide.

Third Party Certification Programs – Organic

Criteria #1: Transparent

Extensive materials describing the National Organic Program are available on the USDA-AMS website. Posted materials include a list of accredited certifying agents and NOSB guidance documents and meeting minutes.

Criteria #2: Public Input

The USDA received a total of more than 300,000 comments to two proposed rules establishing the National Organic Program. The National Organic Standards Board, an advisory committee to the USDA, includes three consumer advocates and three environmentalists among its 15 members. NOSB has sought public input on its guidance documents addressing access to the outdoors and access to pasture for ruminants.

Criteria #3: Objective and Measurable

The regulations of the National Organic Program are general and not specific to individual animal species. In addition, the NOP regulations lack measurable criteria such as air quality, temperature and lighting requirements; space allowances; and duration and frequency of access to the outdoors and pasture grazing.

An investigator at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University, has received a grant from the USDA to research specific options for improving the animal health and welfare aspects of the NOP standards. A summary of the research project states, “major areas of the [NOP] animal standards remain highly contentious, such as just what is meant by requiring that animals have access to outdoors. Many other areas of animal health and welfare are reflected in the standards only incompletely, if at all.” The researcher intends to analyze the feasibility of incorporating specificity in relation to the needs of individual species into U.S. organic standards.

Criteria #4: Independently Verified

USDA-accredited certifying agents verify compliance with regulations of the National Organic Program. However, some agents may have personal, professional and/or financial ties to animal agriculture industries.

Criteria #5: Reliable and Consistent

Consistency and reliability of the enforcement of program standards is a major – perhaps the most significant – weakness of the National Organic Program. Unlike other third-party standards, many of the NOP animal care provisions are vague and difficult to measure. As a result, NOP certifying agents apply different criteria in assessing compliance with requirements such as access to pasture for dairy cattle or access to the outdoors for meat chickens and laying hens.

In preparation of this report, a survey of certifying agents was conducted on the issue of “access to the outdoors” for chickens and hens (described in Section 7). A brief questionnaire was sent by electronic mail to 24 of the 56 USDA-accredited domestic certifying agents listed on the NOP website. Responses were received from 14 certifiers. All responding certifiers indicated they require that livestock producers, including egg and chicken producers, provide access to the outdoors. However, a range of answers were given to questions about what constituted access to the outdoors and whether birds could be confined for months at a time due to environmental conditions. For example, 8 of the 14 certifiers defined access to the outdoors as an open-air barn featuring one or more open exits. One certifier noted barns must offer at least one exit for every 200 birds. Four certifiers stated exits must remain open during daylight hours, while one certifying agent indicated that exits need only be open 1-2 hours per day. One certifier stated that producers in their state were required to provide outdoor access only four months of the year, from May to September.

Criteria #6: Relevant

The National Organic Program was not created to address farm animal welfare, though some portions of the regulations deal directly with animal care and handling. Certified Organic prohibits the use of antibiotics and hormones and disallows intensive animal confinement. Although the provisions are not uniformly enforced, the program also

mandates access to the outdoors for all animals and access to pasture for ruminants, things that even two humane certification programs don't currently require.

Comparisons between animal-care requirements of the NOP and those of industry quality assurance and humane certification programs are provided in appendices to this report. Differences among programs are identified for the care of six farm animal species – beef cattle (Appendix D), dairy cattle (Appendix E), sheep (Appendix F), pigs (Appendix G), meat chickens (Appendix H), and laying hens (Appendix I).

Some individual organic farmers and farmer cooperatives have developed their own animal care standards. For example, Organic Valley Family of Farms, the largest U.S. organic farmer cooperative, expects its members to meet standards above and beyond those of the NOP. Their standards for pigs, chickens and laying hens include mandatory and recommended animal care practices. The standards – which in some cases are more restrictive than those of the humane certification programs – address such issues as stocking densities, physical alterations and weaning.

Producer groups or cooperatives, such as Organic Valley and Niman Ranch, allow small independent farmers to receive a higher price for providing specialty products while minimizing their marketing and distribution costs. The arrangement offers the small farmer who doesn't want to either sell out or “grow big” another way to make a living from animal agriculture. According to a representative of Organic Valley, the average herd size of dairy farms in its cooperative is only 50 cows. The farmer in a specialty cooperative can afford to raise fewer animals, giving the animals a chance to live outdoors in a more natural setting,

Criteria #7: Participation by Industry

As noted in Section 7, more than 1,000 farms in the U.S. currently raise animals under the NOP. The organic market is one of the hottest segments of the food industry, growing at about 20% a year. However, organic products still represent only about 1% of food and non-alcoholic beverage sales in the U.S. and; therefore, the number of animals affected by the NOP is miniscule relative to the billions killed here for food every year.

Third Party Certification Programs – Humane

Criteria #1: Transparent

Extensive materials describing the Certified Humane program are available on the program's website. Documentation includes the complete standards and information about their development and implementation. Little information is available about the Free Farmed certification program on the website of the American Humane Association, its sponsor. The program manager supplies the standards and other details upon request. Although limited information is publicly available about the animal husbandry program operated by the Animal Welfare Institute, staff responds to questions.

Criteria #2: Public Input

The scientific committee advising the Certified Humane program includes executive staff of two national animal advocacy organizations, the ASPCA and the HSUS. The current advisory committee of the Free Farmed program does not include any consumer or animal advocacy representation. Neither program has actively sought public input into its standards or certification process. The Animal Welfare Institute has invited public comment on its draft of humane criteria for beef cattle and calves and sheep.

Criteria #3: Objective and Measurable

The standards of the Certified Humane, Free Farmed, and AWI programs are species-specific, objective and measurable.

Criteria #4: Independently Verified

Free Farmed utilizes the services of a NOP certifier to audit participants in its program, while Certified Humane makes use of its scientific advisory committee and other qualified veterinarians and other scientists as auditors. These programs have policies to avoid conflicts of interest between auditors and the individual facility being audited. However, some auditors with these programs may have personal, professional, and/or financial ties to animal agriculture industries. For example, academic scientists serving as advisors or auditors may have their research funded by industry, publish their results in industry publications, and speak at industry conferences.

Staff from the Animal Welfare Institute makes site visits to determine farmer compliance with their standards or, in the case of pig suppliers to Niman Ranch, visits are conducted by representatives of the company. According to farm animal advisor Diane Halverson, AWI does not charge certification royalties or for verification site visits, as do other humane standards programs, because it feels “there is a potential conflict of interest if the certifier/verifier depends for its financial viability on payments from the entities being certified or verified.” “If the company providing the animals on which royalties are assessed is very large,” Halverson explains, “there is a potential that its contribution toward supporting the certification program may be substantial enough to influence the outcome of the audit.”

At present all humane standards programs are subsidized by animal advocacy organizations and none depends solely on certification fees for survival. Unfortunately, bias is a possibility in virtually all standards programs, including AWI’s, since those involved in assessing compliance almost always have a vested interest in the success of the program. Moreover, in order for humane food programs to be effective they must eventually expand to cover a large number of animals and, if this happens, fees will likely have to be assessed in order to administer the program(s). There appears to be no other

practical means of monitoring the treatment of millions of animals at hundreds or thousands of locations across the country.

Criteria #5: Reliable and Consistent

At present the Free Farmed program, with only one auditor, has no issues with consistency of its auditing process. There are also no apparent concerns about the Certified Humane program, which uses its scientific advisors to audit facilities raising animals in their individual field of expertise. Both of these programs have consulted with USDA-AMS to verify the reliability and consistency of their auditing process. AWI does not conduct formal audits.

Criteria #6: Relevant

Comparisons between animal-care requirements of industry quality assurance programs and those of third-party certification programs are provided in appendices to this report (see Appendices D through I).

Of the 53 violations of the Five Freedoms by industry quality assurance programs cited earlier in this section, 20 apply to the Certified Humane and Free Farmed certification programs. Animal advocacy groups and the certifying entities are working to address some of these deficiencies, which are identified below. (Because the object of this report is to evaluate the meaningfulness of standards in terms of animal welfare, without regard to economic viability, some practices may be included for which no commercially feasible alternative has been identified.)

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst – by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor; violations include:

Chickens

- Feed/water restriction of breeding animals allowed

2. Freedom from discomfort – by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area; violations include:

Dairy Cattle

- No standards for transport (duration; stocking density; provisions for food/water, rest, heating/cooling, ventilation)

Pigs

- No standards for transport (duration; stocking density; provisions for food/water, rest, heating/cooling, ventilation)

Laying Hens

- No standards for transport (duration; provisions for heating/cooling, ventilation)

3. Freedom from pain, injury, and disease – by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment; violations include:

Dairy Cattle

- Use of higher-yielding strains not discouraged
- Dehorning/debudding allowed

Pigs

- Tail docking allowed but prevention strongly encouraged
- Teeth clipping allowed
- Ear notching allowed
- Castration allowed

Chickens

- Use of faster-growing strains not discouraged

Laying Hens

- Beak trimming allowed but must be phased-out

4. Freedom to express normal behavior – by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal’s own kind; violations include:

Dairy Cattle

- Immediate separation of calves from cows allowed
- Isolation of calves in hutches allowed

Pigs

- Access to the outdoors not required

Chickens

- Access to the outdoors not required

Laying Hens

- Access to the outdoors not required

5. Freedom from fear and distress – by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering; violations include:

Chickens

- Inverting and shackling for slaughter while conscious allowed

Laying Hens

- Inverting and shackling for slaughter while conscious allowed
- Humane killing of male chicks not addressed

Differences among the content of the Certified Humane and Free Farmed programs are relatively minor. The standards of both are based on farm animal criteria developed by the RSPCA. Over the past year and a half, however, Certified Humane has made a number of revisions to its standards and has indicated that it will continue to do so as new research offers recommendations regarding what conditions and practices are most conducive to animal well-being. Certified Humane has also developed standards for two additional species, goats and young dairy beef. The Free Farmed program, on the other hand, has indicated it has no plans to alter, or even regularly review, its standards. Given that the Free Farmed program manager and its scientific committee, with one exception, have limited backgrounds in the science or application of animal welfare, it can be expected that the two programs will continue to move further apart.

Significant differences exist between the standards of the two humane food certification programs and the humane husbandry criteria developed by the Animal Welfare Institute (see Appendices D, F, and G for comparisons between the criteria for beef cattle, sheep, and pigs, respectively). AWI's criteria are stronger than those of Certified Humane and Free Farmed, particularly in the areas of physical alterations, weaning and access to the outdoors and pasture.

In 2004, the Animal Welfare Institute revised its humane husbandry criteria for pigs, setting group sizes for sows and requiring access to the outdoors for new and expanded/remodeled operations. When asked about not requiring access to the outdoor, Adele Douglass of the Certified Humane program responded that outdoor access does not necessarily improve the welfare of the animals. She cites, as an example, that in order to provide gestating pigs the chance to be outside, the animals may be required to have nose rings to prevent environmental damage. But nose rings cause pain and prevent pigs from expressing their normal desire to root. Douglass argues that in some cases animal welfare will be higher with animals housed indoors, such as birds kept inside with natural light, good ventilation, substrate for dust bathing, perches and nest boxes, and space to move around and behave naturally. Animal welfare expert D.M. Broom has observed that people often assume extensive conditions are good and intensive conditions bad for animal welfare. "Extensive conditions, and indeed the conditions in the wild, can lead to major welfare problems, for example those resulting from predation, extreme physical conditions, or disease," according to Broom.

The issue of access to the outdoors illustrates that although animal protection organizations generally agree on what farm animals need, they may differ on how to best meet those needs. So in the case of pigs, AWI requires access to the outdoors but allows the use of nose rings, while the Certified Humane and Free Farmed programs don't require outdoor access but prohibit nose rings. This example also reflects the challenge involved in developing standards that provide for animal welfare while allowing producers to raise enough animals to make a living under current economic models.

Another key difference among the three humane standards programs is their position on dual operations. Certified Humane and Free Farmed certify specific products, and do not disqualify farmers who wish to produce both certified and non-certified products. AWI

believes that the only way to reform animal agriculture is by supporting the family farm and, therefore, it approves producers instead of products, and does not allow dual operations. AWI says it does not wish to provide large producers with the opportunity to profit from the “humane” market while continuing to operate animal factories. AWI’s Halverson notes, “If animal factories can have their cake and eat it too, they will.”

On the other hand, Certified Humane director Adele Douglass views the goal of her program as trying to persuade agribusiness to adopt more humane practices. She believes Certified Humane can have the most impact on farm animals by encouraging large dual producers to eventually convert all of their operations away from factory methods, something few producers are likely to do without being able to make financial comparisons between different product lines.

While this report has outlined differences, on paper, between industry quality assurance guidelines and third party humane certification standards, it is not possible to determine if humane standards have a more positive effect on animals, or whether either result in good animal welfare. Independent evaluations of both types of programs are required. One such review has been conducted on the impact of the RSPCA Freedom Food scheme on the welfare of dairy cattle in England. In the winter of 2000/01, a dairy cattle welfare expert assessed the health and behavior of cattle on 53 British dairies, of which 28 were participants in the Freedom Food program and 25 were non-participants. Of 30 animal welfare indicators assessed, cows on Freedom Food farms rated higher on 12, lower on 8, and the same on 8. The researchers, whose study was published in the August 23, 2003 issue of *Veterinary Record* (Vol. 153, pp. 227-231), also noted that different farms had different problems, irrespective of their affiliation with Freedom Food. None of the farms was consistently good or bad at all aspects of animal welfare. They stated that the results suggest, “[I]t would be very difficult for any welfare-based assurance scheme to guarantee consistently high standards for all (or nearly all) species indices of welfare.”

Criteria #7: Participation by Industry

The Certified Humane and Free Farmed programs have signed up about 40 producers. But, while participation in humane food programs is still low, the potential for growth is great. Surveys have shown that the American public is concerned about the treatment of farm animals. For example, in the 2004 Ohio Survey of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Issues, 92% of Ohioans agreed or strongly agreed that it is important that farm animals are well cared for, and 85% agreed or strongly agreed that even though farm animals are killed, the quality of their lives is important.

Another recent study conducted by researchers at the University of California, Santa Cruz, documented consumer interest in the treatment of animals raised for food. According to the study, people want information about how animals are raised when making their food purchasing decisions, and they want the information on the product label. When asked to consider the importance of five different potential “eco-labels,” respondents to the University of California survey ranked “humane treatment” higher than “locally grown,” “living wage of workers,” “U.S. grown,” or “small-scale farms.”

One issue with the potential to limit growth of the humane food market is price. A 2004 survey by the United Egg Producers found that 54% of consumers would be willing to spend 5-10% more for certified animal care products, and an additional 10% would be open to spending up to 20% more (total of 25-30% more). In the 2004 Ohio Survey of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Issues, 59% of respondents said they would be willing to pay more for meat, poultry, or dairy labeled as coming from humanely treated animals. Of those, 43% were willing to pay 10% more, and 12% were willing to pay 25% more. In addition, a 1999 survey by the Animal Industry Foundation found that 44% of respondents would pay 5% more for meat and poultry products labeled as “humanely raised.”

9. Findings

Setting standards for the care and handling of farm animals is a relatively new concept in the United States. Logistical and economic constraints ensure that major improvements will not happen overnight. Trade associations representing animal agriculture industries have developed quality assurance guidelines for their members. Humane organizations have launched third-party certification programs based on animal welfare standards. In addition, the government is attempting to clarify some aspects of the care of animals raised under the National Organic marketing program.

Although the setting of welfare standards for farm animals is still in its infancy in the U.S., the area is evolving rapidly. For example, between July 2004 and July 2005 the following major developments occurred:

1. The National Chicken Council, the Milk and Dairy Beef Quality Assurance Center, and the American Meat Institute revised their industry guidelines for the care of chickens, the care of dairy cattle, and for the handling of animals at slaughter, respectively.
2. The animal care and handling guidelines of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association were finalized and endorsed by FMI-NCCR.
3. Four companies received USDA Process Verified certification in the area of animal care and handling.
4. A complaint was filed with the FTC regarding the UEP's Animal Care Certified program. UEP announced it would prohibit feed withdrawal for forced molting of hens, effective January 2006. (This is the only instance of an accepted industry practice being banned through the standards-setting process.)
5. Complaints were filed with the USDA regarding the compliance of individual dairies with the access to pasture for ruminants requirement of the National Organic Program. The National Organic Standards Board produced a draft guidance and recommended rulemaking to clarify the pasture requirement.
6. The Certified Humane program revised its standards for sheep to include dairy animals and developed new standards for goats and young dairy beef. The number of producers participating in the food certification program doubled.
7. The Animal Welfare Institute finalized its standards for pigs and developed draft standards for beef cattle and calves and sheep.

Despite this activity, it is likely that only a small proportion of the billions of animals raised for food in the U.S. have been affected to a significant degree by the establishment of welfare standards. Thus far, very few – well less than 10% – of all U.S. farm animal production and slaughter operations have undergone any kind of outside animal care audit. The reasons for this are presented in this section.

Product Labeling Claims

Findings:

- USDA utilizes informal working definitions for animal care labeling claims such as “free range” and “grass fed.” These terms currently have no regulatory definition. Moreover, the meaning of shell-egg labeling terms is not readily available to consumers. It is likely consumers grossly over-estimate the animal welfare significance of these claims.
- USDA does not verify producer compliance with animal-derived food labeling claims. USDA pre-approves claims used for meat and poultry products based on producer testimonials only. The agency neither pre-approves nor verifies label claims for shell eggs.
- Although labeling claims generally apply to only limited areas of animal care (such as housing or the administration of antibiotics and hormones), they are still relevant to the well-being of farm animals. The degree of relevance varies with the particular marketing claim.
- “Humanely raised” is not a USDA-approved term. USDA approves use of this claim when the meaning is included on the label or when the claim is backed by a third-party certification program. It is probable that in the future the terms “humane,” “animal care,” “animal welfare” and “animal well-being,” will be applied to products coming from animals who received care viewed by humane advocates as less than adequate.
- From a consumer standpoint, labeling claims for certification programs lack transparency in that they do not identify the entity behind the program.
- Product labeling claims affect a small (less than 2%) but growing number of the animals raised for food in the U.S.

Animal Agriculture Quality Assurance Programs

Findings:

- Potential for bias exists in the development and implementation of animal care guidelines due to ties between advisors/auditors and the industry being assessed.
- Current industry guidelines are inadequate; they allow numerous inhumane practices and fail to provide animals with freedom from hunger, discomfort, pain, fear and distress, and to allow the expression of normal behavior. The areas of transportation, use of genetic selection, slaughter of laying hens, and the care of breeding animals are, for the most part, not addressed.
- A review of industry guidelines for dairy cattle, pigs, meat chickens and laying hens found a total of more than 50 major violations of animal welfare principles. To date, only one inhumane practice has been eliminated through creation of industry guidelines.
- Industry animal care guidelines have not been developed for several farm animal species including goats, geese, rabbits, deer, bison and farm-raised fish.

- Individual producer guidelines, such as those developed for the three largest U.S. pork producers, are frequently not made available to the public and, as a result, must be viewed as lacking credibility.
- The primary purpose of industry animal care guidelines is to avoid third-party auditing and government regulation. It is unlikely animal agriculture trade associations will strengthen their guidelines without pressure from consumers or the retail food industry.
- Thus far, producer participation with compliance assessments of quality assurance programs is low, with the exception of Animal Care Certified, a third-party certification program in which more than three-fourths of U.S. egg producers are participating. Even when producer involvement is high, as with the egg producers, the percent of individual animals actually observed during audits is extremely small.

Retail Food Industry Auditing Programs

Findings:

- FMI-NCCR has influenced the development of objective and measurable animal care criteria by animal agriculture trade associations. In some cases, FMI-NCCR succeeded in negotiating stronger guidelines than those proposed by industry.
- The audit criteria employed by the FMI-NCCR Animal Welfare Audit Program (AWAP) are based on industry guidelines and, therefore, are unacceptable from an animal welfare perspective. However, the annual review process provides an opportunity for strengthening AWAP criteria, as well as the industry guidelines they measure.
- The AWAP process is transparent, objective, and likely less vulnerable to bias than animal agriculture assessment programs. It offers an independent assessment of producer compliance with minimal husbandry guidelines for the 98% of farm animals not covered by the organic and humane certification programs.
- Producer participation in AWAP has gotten off to a slow start, and threatens to affect the viability of the program if it remains at a low level.

Third Party Certification Programs – Organic

Findings:

- Organic regulations are general (not species-specific) and vague in regard to animal care and handling requirements. The regulations do not set minimum space allowances per animal, and they allow physical alterations such as debeaking of chickens and tail docking of cattle and pigs.
- Certifying agents do not enforce organic regulations consistently. Due to loopholes, compliance with individual organic requirements, like access to the

- outdoors for chickens or access to pasture for dairy cattle, may be the exception rather than the rule.
- Some organic cooperatives and producer groups have established animal care standards that go beyond those of the NOP. Co-ops provide an alternative to corporate agriculture by allowing independent farms to raise animals under more humane, sustainable conditions while remaining economically viable.
 - Organic certification, administered by the USDA, affects a small (less than 2%) but rapidly growing number of the animals raised for food in the U.S.

Third Party Certification Programs – Humane

Findings:

- Food certification programs sponsored by animal advocacy organizations are transparent, objective and reliable. These programs appear less vulnerable to the influence of bias; however, conflicts of interest remain a possibility.
- Humane certification standards are superior to industry quality assurance guidelines. However, current humane standards are incompatible with farm animal welfare, as defined by the Five Freedoms, in several areas.
- Of the three programs, AWI approves farm producers, while the Certified Humane and Free Farmed programs certify products. Both approaches appear to offer some benefits.
- As with industry quality assurance programs, the areas of transportation, use of genetic selection, slaughter of laying hens and the care of breeding animals are, for the most part, not adequately addressed.
- These programs affect only a miniscule percentage of farm animals today. However, consumer support for the concept of humane food suggests that the scope could expand to eventually cover a significant number of the animals raised for food. Until that time comes, the success of humane certification programs can be measured by their ability to pressure industry to adopt stronger animal care guidelines. Thus far, agribusiness has favored promoting its own industry quality assurance programs.
- While humane certification programs appear superior to industry quality assurance programs, the extent of actual differences in terms of on-farm animal health and welfare is unknown.

10. Appendices

Appendix A: Contact Information

Agricultural Marketing Service (National Organic Program)

USDA, AMS, TMP, NOP
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 4008 – South Building
Washington, DC 20250-0020
Ph: 202-720-3252
Fax: 202-205-7808
Website: www.ams.usda.gov/nop

Agricultural Marketing Service (livestock and meat marketing claims)

USDA, AMS, LSP
Livestock & Meat Standardization Branch
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 0249
Washington, DC 20250-0249
Ph: 202-720-4486
Email: Martin.Oconnor@usda.gov
Website: www.ams.usda.gov/lsg

Agricultural Marketing Service (poultry and egg marketing claims)

USDA, AMS, Poultry Program
Standardization Branch
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 0256
Washington, DC 20250-0256
Ph: 202-720-3506
Email: David.Bowden@usda.gov
Website: www.ams.usda.gov/poultry

Agricultural Marketing Service (Process Verified Program)

USDA, AMS, LSP
Audit, Review, and Compliance Branch
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 0248
Washington, DC 20250-0248
Ph: 202-720-1124
Fax: 202-690-3428
Email: James.Riva@usda.gov
Website: processverified.usda.gov

American Humane Association (Free Farmed Program)

63 Inverness Drive East
Englewood, CO 80112-5117
Ph: 303-792-9900
Email: Freefarmedmgr@aol.com
Website: www.americanhumane.org

American Meat Institute (AMI)

1700 N. Moore Street
Suite 1600
Arlington, VA 22209
Ph: 703-841-2400
Fax: 703-527-0938
Email: send from website
Website: www.meatami.com

American Sheep Industry Association

6911 South Yosemite Street
Centennial, CO 80112
Ph: 303-771-3500
Fax: 303-771-8200
Email: info@sheepusa.org
Website: www.sheepusa.org

American Veal Association (AVA)

1500 Fulling Mill Road
Middletown, PA 17057
Ph: 717-985-9125
Fax: 717-985-9127
Email: info@vealfarm.com
Website: www.vealfarm.com

Animal Agriculture Alliance (AAA)

PO Box 9522
Arlington, VA 22209
Ph: 703-562-5160
Email: info@animalalliance.org
Website: www.animalalliance.org

Animal Welfare Institute (AWI)

PO Box 3650
Washington, DC 20002
Ph: 703-836-4300
Fax: 703-836-0400
Email: awi@awionline.org
Website: www.awionline.org

Environmental Management Solutions (Animal Welfare Assurance Review & Evaluation Program)

PO Box 14586
Des Moines, IA 50306
Ph: 515-278-8002
Fax: 515-278-8011
Website: www.emsllc.org

Farm Animal Care Training and Auditing (FACTA)

PO Box 53042
Lubbock, TX 79453
Ph: 806-745-4125
Fax: 913-262-3602
Email: jmcglone@factallc.com
Website: www.factallc.com

Food Marketing Institute (Animal Welfare Audit Program)

655 15th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
Ph: 202-452-8444
Fax: 202-429-4519
Email: fmi@fmi.org
Website: www.fmi.org

Food Safety and Inspection Service (meat, poultry and egg product labeling claims)

USDA, FSIS, OPPD
Labeling and Consumer Protection Staff
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 602 – Annex Building
Washington, DC 20250-3700
Ph: 202-205-0279
Fax: 202-205-3625
Email: FSIS.Labeling@fsis.usda.gov
Website: www.fsis.usda.gov

Humane Farm Animal Care (Certified Humane Program)

PO Box 727
Herndon, VA 20172
Ph: 703-435-3883
Email: info@certifiedhumane.org
Website: www.certifiedhumane.org

Milk & Dairy Beef Quality Assurance Center (Dairy Quality Assurance Program)

801 Shakespeare Avenue
PO Box 497
Stratford, IA 50249
Ph: 800-553-2479
Fax: 515-838-2788
Email: info@dqacenter.org
Website: www.dqacenter.org

National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA)

9110 E. Nichols Avenue
Suite 300
Centennial, CO 80112
Ph: 303-694-0305
Email: send from website
Website: www.beef.org

National Chicken Council (NCC)

1015 15th Street, NW
Suite 930
Washington, DC 20005
Ph: 202-296-2622
Fax: 202-293-4005
Email: ncc@chickenusa.org
Website: www.nationalchickencouncil.com

National Council of Chain Restaurants (Animal Welfare Audit Program)

325 7th Street, NW
Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20004
Ph: 202-626-8183
Fax: 202-626-8185
Email: purviss@nrf.com
Website: www.nccr.net

National Pork Board (Swine Welfare Assurance Program)

PO Box 9114
Des Moines, IA 50306
Ph: 515-223-2600
Email: porkboard@porkboard.org
Website: www.porkboard.org

National Turkey Federation (NTF)

1225 New York Avenue, NW

Suite 400

Washington, DC 20005

Ph: 202-898-0100

Fax: 202-898-0203

Email: info@turkeyfed.org

Website: www.turkeyfed.org

SES, Inc. (Animal Welfare Audit Program)

8208 Melrose Drive

Suite 105

Lenexa, KS 66215

Ph: 800-897-1163

Email: ehess@ses-corp.com

Website: www.ses-corp.com

United Egg Producers (Animal Care Certified Program)

1720 Windward Concourse

Suite 230

Alpharetta, GA 30005

Email: wecare@animalcarecertified.com

Website: www.animalcarecertified.com

Appendix B: Acronyms

| | |
|-------|--|
| AAA | Animal Agriculture Alliance |
| ACC | Animal Care Certified (UEP) |
| AHA | American Humane Association |
| AMI | American Meat Institute |
| AMS | Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA) |
| ARPAS | American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists |
| ARS | Agriculture Research Service (USDA) |
| ASIA | American Sheep Industry Association |
| ASPCA | American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals |
| AVA | American Veal Association |
| AVMA | American Veterinary Medical Association |
| AWAP | Animal Welfare Audit Program (FMI-NCCR) |
| AWARE | Animal Welfare Assurance Review & Evaluation Program (EMS) |
| AWI | Animal Welfare Institute |
| DQA | Milk & Dairy Beef Quality Assurance Center |
| EMS | Environmental Management Solutions |
| FACTA | Farm Animal Care Training and Auditing |
| FMI | Food Marketing Institute |
| FSIS | Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA) |
| FTC | Federal Trade Commission |
| HFAC | Humane Farm Animal Care |
| HSUS | Humane Society of the United States |
| LCPS | Labeling and Consumer Protection Staff (USDA-AMS) |
| NCBA | National Cattlemen's Beef Association |
| NCC | National Chicken Council |
| NCCR | National Council of Chain Restaurants |
| NOP | National Organic Program (USDA-AMS) |
| NOSB | National Organic Standards Board |
| NPB | National Pork Board |
| PAACO | Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization |
| NTF | National Turkey Federation |
| RSPCA | Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals |
| SWAP | Swine Welfare Assurance Program (NPB) |
| UEP | United Egg Producers |
| USDA | United States Department of Agriculture |

Appendix C: Glossary of Terms

Bleed Rail Sensibility: The ability of animals to perceive pain or other sensations after having been stunned, shackled and hoisted onto the conveyor line, or “rail,” where the animal is slaughtered by bleeding.

Boar: An uncastrated mature, male pig used for breeding.

Boar Bashing: Wounding the snout of boars to discourage fighting.

Bob Veal: Calves less than 3 weeks of age and 150 pounds.

Body Condition Score: One method of assessing the fitness of farm animals. On a 5-point scale, where 1 is very thin and 5 is obese, healthy animals usually receive a score of 3. On a 9-point scale, healthy animals score 4 to 6.

Bovine Somatotropin (rBST): Milk and dairy products produced in the United States - unless otherwise labeled - may come from cows routinely injected with a genetically engineered hormone called recombinant bovine somatotropin (or rbST), also known as bovine growth hormone (BGH). rBST is a synthetic hormone, produced by gene-splicing techniques, that is injected into dairy cows to artificially manipulate lactation.

Brooding: The handling and rearing of chicks after hatching. “Brooders” are heaters for chicks that are manufactured in a variety of sizes and styles. They are available in stationary or portable styles, and may be electric, oil, hot water, or hot air heated.

Cannibalism: The propensity of intensively raised farm animals to attack, bite, or otherwise injure other animals due to stress caused by crowded housing conditions and the lack of opportunity to perform normal behaviors.

Caponizing: Surgical castration of roosters.

Captive Bolt Stunning: A method of rendering animals, usually cattle and horses, insensible to pain by a concussive blow to the head. A penetrating captive bolt stunner includes a retractable bolt that enters the skull and damages the brain. The non-penetrating version of the stunner concusses the brain only, which results in potentially reversible unconsciousness.

Cardiac Arrest Stunning: A method of rendering animals, usually pigs, insensible to pain by applying an electrical current to both the brain and the heart. Since animals are killed by this method, they cannot revive during hoisting, bleeding, or slaughtering procedures. (See also “Head Only Stunning.”)

Castration: Removal of the testes, accomplished by 3 primary methods – 1) knife; 2) the Burdizzo, or “emasculator,” which is a pincer or pliers-like device that crushes or severs the spermatic cord and blood vessels supplying the testicles; and 3) the

“elastrator,” which stretches a rubber ring over the testes, shutting off blood supply and creating necrosis, which eventually results in the sloughing off of the testicles.

Cervical Dislocation: A method of killing poultry by crushing or stretching the neck. If properly performed, death results from cerebral ischemia (stretching) or asphyxia (crushing). Not the same as decapitation. Commonly referred to as “neck wringing.”

Cockerel: A young male chicken.

Colostrum: The special milk produced by cows during the first 3 days after calving. Contains high levels of vitamins, minerals, and antibodies important to protecting calves against infection and disease.

Comb Dubbing: The removal of the comb of future male breeding chickens, performed by running a pair of scissors from the front to the back of the comb close to the head of day-old chicks. Combs function to help handle excess heat and are very vascular, making hemorrhaging a possible consequence of dubbing.

Debeaking: Removal of a portion of a bird’s beak to prevent feather picking and other forms of cannibalism among intensively raised poultry. Usually performed by cutting off the end of a young chick’s beak with a hot blade. Also referred to as “beak trimming” or “partial beak amputation.”

Dehorning/Debudding: Generally, debudding refers to destruction of the horn bud in cattle less than 3 months, while dehorning refers to amputation of the horn in older cattle. A variety of methods are used. Most often performed by applying a hot iron to burn, or cauterize, the horn bud or “button” in young calves. Calves may also have a strong chemical paste placed around the horn bud to destroy the bud. The horn is also sometimes cut out with a spoon or a scoop. Another method consists of sawing off horns of older animals.

Downer: An animal unable to walk under its own power due to disease, chronic disability, or acute injury. Also referred to as a “downed animal.”

Dry Cow: Cows not being milked. Milking is usually stopped 50 to 60 days before the expected calving date to allow the mammary system to recover from the stress of lactation before starting another milking cycle.

Dust Bathing: A normal behavior performed by chickens to clean themselves, distribute oil through feathers, remove dead skin and skin irritants, and to maintain and improve feather structure. Chickens form a dust bowl, roll on their sides, and stretch out their legs and feathers. Attempted by chickens in virtually all situations even those confined to cages with no “dust” (sand or litter).

Ear Notching: An invasive, surely painful means of animal identification. Other methods of identification include branding, tattooing, the use of colored and numbered ear tags and neck chains, and implanting of microchips under the skin.

Farrowing Crate: Confinement housing (also referred to as “stalls”) for lactating sows. The crates, which are similar in size to gestation crates, are designed to allow piglets to suckle while restricting movement of the sow. Sows are moved into the crates at the end of the pregnancy and are kept there for the initial 2-3 weeks after birth of the piglets. (See also “Gestation Crate.”)

Feather Picking: A pecking disorder where intensively raised chickens pull the feathers of other birds. Caused by stress due to crowded housing and the inability to perform natural behaviors. (See also “Cannibalism.”)

Finisher Pig: Pigs are classified according to the purpose and age for which the animals are fed. “Finishing” refers to the process of putting weight on pigs for slaughter. Finisher pigs are sent to slaughter at 120 to 240 lbs. Also referred to as “grower-finisher pigs.”

Forage, Foraging: Normal behavior of animals when they move around in a manner that allows them to encounter and acquire food for themselves or their offspring.

Forced Molting: Artificially stimulating a new egg-laying cycle by subjecting hens to stressful conditions. These stressful conditions include withholding food and water and limiting artificial or natural light. Conventional forced molting protocol calls for removing food for up to 12 days and restricting water for up to 3 days.

Free Stall: A method of housing dairy cattle in which animals are allowed to move freely in and out of stalls and usually also out-of-doors into concrete or earth yards where they receive food and water.

Gestation Crate: A method of confining pregnant sows. The crates (stalls) are approximately 2 ft wide and 7 ft long and prevent the sows from turning around and moving about freely. Sows are kept in the crates while they are pregnant, which represents the vast majority of their lives. (See also “Farrowing Crate.”)

Gilt: A young female pig who has not yet been bred.

Head Only Stunning: A method of rendering animals, usually pigs, insensible to pain by applying an electrical current to the head. Head only stunning does not result in death, and animals may regain sensibility if too long an interval passes before bleeding. (See also “Cardiac Arrest Stunning.”)

Heifer: A young female cow who has not yet had a calf.

Kestin Score: An objective method of assessing the walking ability of poultry. A 6-point scale where 0 = a normal gait, 1 = a slight defect in gait, 2 = a definite and

identifiable defect in gait, 3 = an obvious defect affecting gait, 4 = a serious gait defect causing difficulty in walking, and 5 = a gait defect so severe that walking is not possible.

Lunge Space: The area of a stall required in order for a dairy cow to comfortably thrust her head forward in the process of rising from a lying position.

Mastitis: Inflammation of the udder, often caused by infection. Causes the udder to become hot and very hard, and to produce lumpy milk sometimes streaked with blood. Caused by bacteria spread through poor sanitation or injury.

Needle Teeth Clipping: Incisor, or “needle,” teeth of newborn pigs may be cut to prevent injury to sow udders and other piglets during nursing.

Neonatal Piglet: Unweaned newborn pigs, usually less than 2 weeks of age. Housed with their littermates and sow in individual farrowing crates. Moved at approximately 2 weeks to a “nursery.” (See also “Farrowing Crate” and “Nursery Piglet.”)

Nursery Piglet: Early-weaned pigs, relocated from farrowing crates to a nursery where they are kept until approximately 6 weeks of age. At this time the animals are moved in groups of 15 to 20 into “grower-finisher pens.” (See also “Farrowing Crate” and “Finishing Pig.”)

Parasiticide: A pharmaceutical agent used to destroy parasites in farm animals.

Pipped Egg: Egg with a shell that has been broken open by the chick in the process of hatching.

Polled Cattle: Cattle possessing a gene that causes them to not grow horns.

Poult: A young turkey.

Pullet: A young hen less than 20 weeks of age.

“Red Bird” Carcass: A chicken carcass that is bright red instead of the normal bleached skin color. Research has shown that red birds (also known as “red skins”) occur as a physiological response to heat and are produced when birds are placed directly in the scald tank without proper bleeding.

Ritual Slaughter: Bleeding animals, according to religious or cultural custom, without first rendering them insensible to pain by stunning.

Rumination: The act of processing food by chewing again what has been swallowed. A characteristic of hoofed animals possessing a complex 3- or 4-chambered stomach.

Shackling: Fastening a metal chain, clamp, or grip around one or both legs to facilitate hoisting animals upside down for slaughter.

Sow: An adult female pig used for breeding.

Special-Fed Veal: Calves fed a milk-based liquid diet throughout their lifespan of 16 to 20 weeks (until a weight of 350 to 400 or more pounds is reached). Also referred to as “formula-fed” or “milk-fed” veal.

Stanchion: A manual or self-locking device that restrains a cow for management practices (artificial insemination, administration of drugs, veterinary exams) or for feeding purposes.

Supernumerary Teats: Nipples seen as excessive or more numerous than required.

Switch Trimming: Trimming the tuft of long hairs at the end of a cow’s tail.

Tail Docking: Removal of the tail of pigs, sheep or cattle. Often accomplished by an “elastrator,” a device that stretches a rubber ring over the tail, shutting off blood supply and creating necrosis that eventually leads to the sloughing off of the tail, or by cutting off the tail with a clipper.

Tethering: Restraining animals by tying them around the neck or abdomen.

Tie Stall: A method of housing dairy cattle in which the animals are tied in one place for long periods of time, unable to exercise and engage in normal behavior such as grooming.

Water Bath Stunning: A method of immobilizing poultry before slaughter by shackling and hoisting them upside down by their legs and then running their heads and upper bodies through an electrified water trough. The current in the water bath is often not sufficiently high or uniformly distributed throughout the trough to properly render the birds insensible to pain.

Appendix D: Comparison of Animal Welfare Standards by Program – Beef Cattle

| Animal Welfare Standard | Industry Guidelines (NCBA) | National Organic Program (USDA) | Certified Humane Program (HFAC) | Free Farmed Program (AHA) | Animal Welfare Institute -draft- |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--|--|---|
| Antibiotics | Not prohibited | Prohibited | Permitted for treatment of disease only | Permitted for treatment of disease only | Permitted for treatment of disease only |
| Growth Hormones | Not prohibited | Prohibited | Prohibited | Prohibited | Prohibited |
| Access to Pasture | Not required; confinement to feedlots allowed | Required; temporary confinement allowed in some situations; feedlots prohibited | Not required; cattle may be maintained in feedlots | Not required; cattle may be maintained in feedlots | Access to pasture required throughout lifetime when climate permits |
| Identification | Hot branding and ear notching allowed; jaw brands are not to be used | Not addressed | Hot iron branding & ear cutting prohibited; ear tagging permitted | Hot iron branding & ear cutting prohibited; ear tagging permitted | Hot iron branding & ear cutting prohibited; ear tagging permitted |
| Castration | Recommended be done before 4 mos.; no recommendation regarding anesthesia | Physical alterations must be performed as needed to promote animal welfare & in a manner that minimizes pain & stress | Recommend be done at earliest age possible; anesthesia required for surgical removal after 2 mos. of age | Recommend be done at earliest age possible; anesthesia required for surgical removal after 2 mos. of age | Recommend be done before 2 mos. of age; use of anesthesia required |
| Debudding/Dehorning | Recommended be done before 4 mos.; no recommendation about anesthesia | Physical alterations must be performed as needed to promote animal welfare & in a manner that minimizes pain & stress | Debudding in first 4 mos. using hot iron ok with or without anesthesia | Debudding in first 4 mos. using hot iron ok with or without anesthesia | Debudding preferred; anesthesia required for debudding & dehorning |
| Spaying of Heifers | Not prohibited | Not addressed | Prohibited | Prohibited | Prohibited |
| Min. Weaning Age | No limit; usually 7-8 mos. of age | Not addressed | Not addressed | Not addressed | 6-9 mos. of age |
| Electric Prod Use | Permitted but voltage must be less than 50 volts | Not addressed | Permitted in emergencies only | Permitted in emergencies only | Prohibited |

Appendix E: Comparison of Animal Welfare Standards by Program – Dairy Cattle

| Animal Welfare Standard | Industry Guidelines (DQA) | National Organic Program (USDA) | Certified Humane Program (HFAC) | Free Farmed Program (AHA) |
|---------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Antibiotics | Not prohibited | Prohibited | Permitted for treatment of disease only | Permitted for treatment of disease only |
| Growth Hormones | Not prohibited | Prohibited | Prohibited | Prohibited |
| Ammonia Levels | Recommended be kept below allowable levels | Shelter designed for ventilation & air circulation | Not to exceed 25 ppm | Not to exceed 25 ppm |
| Housing | Tie-stall housing permitted but animals should be turned out daily for exercise; no minimum duration specified | Opportunity to exercise and access to outdoors must be provided; temporary confinement allowed | Confinement for more than 4 hours prohibited; animals must be turned out for 4 hours of exercise daily | Confinement for more than 4 hours prohibited; animals must be turned out for 4 hours of exercise daily |
| Bedding | Dry, clean bedding recommended; no quantity specified | Clean, dry bed required; no depth specified | Adequate, clean bedding required 3 inches in depth | Adequate, clean bedding required 3 inches in depth |
| Calf Hutches/Tethering | No limit on confinement of calves; tethering not prohibited | Not addressed but exercise and freedom of movement required | Hutches permitted but calves must be able to stand, turn around, lie, rest, groom; tethering prohibited | Hutches permitted but calves must be able to stand, turn around, lie, rest, groom; tethering prohibited |
| Colostrum for Calves | 4 quarts from 1 cow within 30-60 minutes of birth recommended | Not addressed | 2-4 quarts within first 8 hours; 1.6 gallons over next 48 hours | 2-4 quarts within first 8 hrs; 1.6 gallons over next 48 hrs |
| Min. Weaning Age | No limit | Not addressed | 5 weeks | 5 weeks |
| Dietary Fiber for Calves | Some dry grain before 4 weeks recommended | Not addressed | Required for calves over 30 days of age | Required for calves over 14 days of age |
| Tail Docking | Switch trimming preferred; docking allowed after pregnancy confirmed | Physical alterations must be performed as needed to ensure animal welfare | Prohibited; switch trimming permitted | Prohibited; switch trimming permitted |
| Dehorning/Debudding | Hot iron cautery method recommended; anesthesia recommended for older calves | Physical alterations must be performed as needed to ensure animal welfare & in a manner that minimizes pain | Cautery method approved; paste & scoop methods prohibited; anesthesia required for older calves | Cautery method approved; scoop method may be used if necessary; anesthesia required for older calves |

Appendix F: Comparison of Animal Welfare Standards by Program - Sheep

| Animal Welfare Standard | Industry Guidelines (ASIA) | National Organic Program (USDA) | Certified Humane Program (HFAC) | Free Farmed Program (AHA) | Animal Welfare Institute -draft- |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|---|---|
| Antibiotics | Not prohibited | Prohibited | Permitted for treatment of disease only | Permitted for treatment of disease only | Permitted for treatment of disease only |
| Growth Hormones | Not prohibited | Prohibited | Prohibited | Prohibited | Prohibited |
| Access to Pasture | Not required | Required; temporary confinement allowed in some situations | Required during grass-growing season when conditions allow | Required during grass-growing season when conditions allow | Required continuously from 2 wks of age unless conditions prevent |
| Access to Shelter | Natural or artificial shade, shelter, windbreaks recommended | Shade and shelter required | Natural or artificial shade, shelter, windbreaks required | Natural or artificial shade, shelter, windbreaks required | Natural or artificial shade, shelter, windbreaks required |
| Bedding | Not required | Clean, dry bedding required | Clean, dry bedding required | Clean, dry bedding required | Clean, dry bedding required |
| Perforated, Slatted Floors | Not addressed | Not addressed | Prohibited | Prohibited | Prohibited |
| Indoor Lighting | Not addressed | Access to direct sunlight required | Artificial light at a level comparable to natural light allowed | Artificial light at a level comparable to natural light allowed | Windows or openings that allow natural daylight required |
| Min. Weaning Age | Early weaning allowed | Not addressed | 5 weeks | 5 weeks | 5 months |
| Castration | Encouraged; local anesthetic may be needed if performed after 8 weeks of age | Physical alterations must be performed as needed to promote animal welfare | May be performed between 1 & 7 days of age; local anesthetic recommended | May be performed between 1 & 7 days of age; local anesthetic recommended | Prohibited |
| Tail Docking | Encouraged; local anesthetic may be needed if performed after 8 weeks of age | Physical alterations must be performed as needed to promote animal welfare | May be performed between 1 & 14 days using rubber ring or hot iron; anesthetic not required | May be performed between 1 & 14 days using rubber ring or hot iron; anesthetic not required | Prohibited |

Appendix G: Comparison of Animal Welfare Standards by Program - Pigs

| Animal Welfare Standard | Industry Guidelines (SWAP) | National Organic Program (USDA) | Certified Humane Program (HFAC) | Free Farmed Program (AHA) | Animal Welfare Institute Program |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|
| Antibiotics | Not prohibited | Prohibited | Permitted only for disease treatment | Permitted only for disease treatment | Prohibited for routine use |
| Ammonia Levels | Should not exceed 50 ppm | Shelter designed for ventilation & air circulation | Not to exceed 25 ppm | Not to exceed 25 ppm | Low enough for animals to breathe freely & safely |
| Access to Outdoors | Not required | Required; temporary confinement allowed | Not required | Not required | Required for farms entering program as of 1/05 |
| Tethers/ Gestation Crates/ Farrowing Crates | Permitted | Not addressed but prohibited due to exercise and freedom of movement requirement | Prohibited, except turn-around type farrowing pens allowed (must be at least 5x7) | Prohibited, except turn-around type farrowing pens allowed (must be at least 5x7) | All prohibited including turn-around farrowing crates |
| Min. Farrowing Space Per Sow | No limit | Not addressed | 35 sq ft required; 100 sq ft preferred | 35 sq ft required; 100 sq ft preferred | 48-70 sq ft (depending on system) |
| Bedding | Not required | Clean, dry bedding required | Required for housing indoors & outdoors | Required for housing indoors & outdoors | Required for housing indoors & outdoors |
| Slatted, Wire Floors | Permitted | Not addressed | Prohibited | Prohibited | Prohibited |
| Indoor Lighting | Subdued artificial light allowed | Access to direct sunlight required | Artificial light allowed (at level of at least 50 lux) | Artificial light allowed (at level of at least 50 lux) | New buildings must let in sunlight |
| Feed Restriction for Sows/Boars | Daily feed recommended but controlling the amount encouraged | Not addressed; animals must be provided “a total feed ration” | Permitted but dietary or environmental supplements must be provided | Permitted but dietary or environmental supplements must be provided | Permitted but dietary or environmental supplements must be provided |
| Min. Weaning Age | No limit | Not addressed | 3 weeks | 3 weeks | 6 weeks |
| Tail Docking | Permitted | Alterations must be performed as needed to promote welfare | Permitted until info on prevention of tail biting is available | Permitted until info on prevention of tail biting is available | Prohibited |

Appendix H: Comparison of Animal Welfare Standards by Program - Chickens

| Animal Welfare Standard | Industry Guidelines (NCC) | National Organic Program (USDA) | Certified Humane Program (HFAC) | Free Farmed Program (AHA) |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| Antibiotics | Not prohibited | Prohibited | Permitted for disease treatment only | Permitted for disease treatment only |
| Ammonia Levels | Should not exceed 25 ppm; goal 10 ppm | Shelter designed for ventilation and air circulation | Not to exceed 25 ppm; should be less than 10 | Not to exceed 25 ppm; should be less than 10 |
| Access to Outdoors | Not required | Required; temporary confinement allowed | Not required | Not required |
| Max. Stocking Density | 6.5 lbs per sq ft (for birds below 4.5 lbs) to 8.5 lbs per sq ft (for birds more than 5.5 pounds) | Not addressed but opportunity to exercise & freedom of movement required | 6.0 lbs per sq ft | 56 lbs per sq yd |
| Slatted, Wire Floor | Permitted | Not addressed | Prohibited | Not addressed |
| Litter for Dust Bath | Not required | Not addressed | Required | Required |
| Indoor Lighting | Near-continuous lighting allowed; 4 hrs darkness per day recommended (need not be continuous) | Access to direct sunlight required | Min. 8 hrs light (avg. 20 lux), 6 continuous hrs of darkness required per day | Min. 8 hrs light (avg. 20 lux), 6 continuous hrs of darkness required per day |
| Toe Clipping/Comb Dubbing of Breeding Cockerels | Permitted | Alterations to be performed as needed to ensure welfare | Prohibited | Prohibited |
| Beak Trimming | Prohibited in meat birds; permitted in breeding birds | Alterations to be performed as needed to ensure welfare | Prohibited in meat birds; not specified for breeders | Prohibited in meat birds; not specified for breeders |
| Feed Withdrawal Before Slaughter | No more than 24 hours | Not addressed | No more than 16 hours | No more than 16 hours |
| Max. Transport Time | No limit | Not addressed | 12 hrs from start of loading to unloading at plant | 12 hrs from start of loading to unloading at plant |
| Slaughter Plant Holding Time | Should not exceed 6 hrs | Not addressed | Not to exceed 10 hrs | Not to exceed 10 hrs |
| Acceptable Methods of Stunning for Slaughter | Not specified | Not addressed | Electrical stunning bath, dry stunner, hand-held stunner, gas stunning | Electrical stunning bath, dry stunner, hand-held stunner |

Appendix I: Comparison of Animal Welfare Standards by Program – Egg-Laying Hens

| Animal Welfare Standard | Industry Guidelines (ACC) | National Organic Program (USDA) | Certified Humane Program (HFAC) | Free Farmed Program (AHA) |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| Antibiotics | Not prohibited | Prohibited | Permitted for treatment of disease only | Permitted for treatment of disease only |
| Ammonia Levels | Recommended not to exceed 50 ppm | Shelter designed for ventilation & air circulation | Not to exceed 25 ppm, should be less than 10 ppm | Not to exceed 25 ppm, should be less than 10 ppm |
| Access to Outdoors | Not required | Required; temporary confinement allowed | Not required | Not required |
| Min. Space Per Hen | White hens: 56 sq in, increasing to 67 sq in by 4/1/08; Brown hens: 63 sq in, increasing to 76 sq in by 4/1/08 | Not specifically addressed but must provide opportunity to exercise & freedom of movement | 1.5 sq ft; 1.0-1.2 sq ft for houses with overhead perches | 1.5 sq ft; 1.0-1.2 sq ft for houses with overhead perches |
| Continuous Confinement to Wire Cages | Permitted | Not addressed but prohibited due to exercise requirement | Prohibited | Prohibited |
| Litter for Dust Bath/ Nest Boxes | Not required | Not specifically addressed but clean, dry bedding required | Litter for dust bathing required; nest boxes no less than 1 per 5 hens required | Litter for dust bathing required; nest boxes no less than 1 per 5 hens required |
| Indoor Lighting | Continuous subdued lighting permitted (0.5-1ft candle) | Access to direct sunlight required | Min. 8 hrs light (avg. 10 lux), 6 hrs darkness required per day | Min. 8 hrs light (avg. 10 lux), 6 hrs darkness required per day |
| Forced Molting | Water & 8 hrs of light recommended; feed withdrawal to induce molt to be prohibited as of 1/06 | Not addressed but producers must provide “a total feed ration” and access to direct sunlight required | Feed withdrawal to induce molt prohibited | Feed withdrawal to induce molt prohibited |
| Beak Trimming | Permitted but initial trimming must be before 11 days, 2nd trimming before 8 wks; analgesia not required | Physical alterations must be performed as needed to promote animal welfare and in a manner that minimizes pain and stress | Permitted before 11 days of age but must be phased out when causes & preventative measures identified; analgesia not required | Permitted before 11 days of age but must be phased out when causes & preventative measures identified; analgesia not required |
| Killing of Male Chicks | Not addressed | Not addressed | Not addressed | Not addressed |