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 FSIS DOCKET ROOM
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Re: Docket No. FSIS
 Product Labeling: Definition of the term "Natural"

Dear Sjr:

The suggestion outlined in the petition submitted by Hormel Inc., regarding the labeling of the meat products as "Natural" be expanded to encompass the treatment and living conditions of animals raised for food prior to their slaughter. I and so does farm animals oppose the use of the "Natural" label to apply to meat products obtained from animals raised in intensive confinement systems or who lives have been altered in unnatural ways.

We urge FSIS to expand the parameters under consideration to include the animals living conditions. Societal concern and opposition to housing frm animals in cruel, intensive confinement was apparent last November in Arizona when 64% approved Proposition 204 to prohibit the use of veal crates and gestation crates, 2 foot wide enclosures that confine calves.

As industrial animal farming system proliferated public concern mounts for the welfare of animals subjected to factory farming.

Certainly ~~ly~~ meat from animals that are raised completely indoors deprived of living space and stimulation appropriate to the species does not fit most consumers expectations of "Natural" product regardless of how the meat from the animal is processed after its slaughter..

~~ly~~ Chickens and turkeys sold as natural have been genetically altered to grow twice as fast and twice as large as normal which causes the birds to suffer health problems related to the inability of their hearts and lungs to support their extreme growth rates.

Pigs like poultry are crowded into unnatural indoor environments for the duration of their lives. They stand on slatted metal or concrete floors in warehouse like factory farms. Cattle raised for beef also spend much of their lives confined in overcrowded feedlots.

Calves raised for veal are purposely denied solid food, which prevents their digestive systems from developing normally and cattle raised for beef are routinely given hormones to expedite their grows. Ducks and geese raised for foie gras are force

feed with pipes that are shoved down their throats. which causes their livers to expand 10 times.

Animals subjected to crowded and unnatural living conditions are prevented from developing a natural social order.

In the interest of truth in labeling standards and in protecting consumer confidence in labeling, we ask that meat products derived from any animals raised under inconsistent with their natures to be excluded from the "natural label". This would include pigs, cattle, and birds who are raised in systems that prevent the expression of behaviors innate to the species, and who are forced to consume diets that are inconsistent with the animals' natural biological function.

Also the routine use of hormones and the raising of animals with antibiotics - is inconsistent with the general consumers understanding of natural.

In the absence of such guidelines which would require significant reforms in current animal rearing practices, we believe the natural label should be

DISCONTINUED Sincerely,
Jon Buick