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**FACT Supports Strict Grass Fed Label Claim**

*New USDA Label Will Benefit Consumers and Sustainable Farmers*

CHICAGO, Oct. 17, 2007 -- Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT) today praised the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for publishing a voluntary standard for grass (forage) fed marketing claims that will not only benefit animal welfare but will also allow consumers to make informed purchasing decisions about the meat they buy (see USDA's final Grass Fed labeling standard at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/stand/grassclaim.htm>).

The standard states that grass and/or forage shall be the sole feed source consumed for the lifetime of any meat producing ruminant animal (cattle, goats and sheep) with the exception of milk consumed prior to weaning. Animals cannot be fed grain or grain by-products and must have continuous access to pasture during the growing season. The claim, effective November 15, 2007, will also be verified through an audit of the production process to ensure that producers using the label abide by the standards.

FACT believes that cattle should be raised eating grass because their digestive systems are naturally designed for this type of diet. Cows that graze on well-managed pastures, where they receive most of their nutrition from grasses and forages, are healthier than cattle housed in crowded, industrial size feedlots where they are fed grain-based diets. Here they often suffer from diet and stress-related diseases. As a result, feedlots often turn to daily antibiotic use to combat the unnatural diet and filthy environment. This practice increases the likelihood that drug-resistant bacteria will develop and spread, thereby accelerating the loss of effective drugs in both human and animal medicine.

Meat from grass fed animals is also healthier for consumers. Studies have shown that grass fed beef is higher in conjugated linoleic acid (a healthy fatty acid), and lower in saturated fat, cholesterol and calories than beef from cows fed corn and grains.

"We are tired of meaningless marketing claims that are intended to promote products rather than inform consumers. We are delighted that we now have a label that will mean something, after years of work by FACT and numerous other groups," said FACT's Executive Director, Richard Wood. "Ranchers and farmers who abide by this standard deserve the extra value that this tightly defined label will bring to the products they

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market. Hopefully their success will encourage others to improve the way they raise and feed their cattle.”

FACT worked with the USDA, sustainable agriculture groups, and farmers for nearly five years in support of a strict standard for grass fed meat. In 2003, the USDA proposed the initial grass fed standard, which required that only 80 percent of the animals' diet come from grass and forages. FACT strongly objected to this proposed standard, arguing that such a weak standard would allow most feedlot animals to be marketed as grass fed.

Founded by Robert A. Brown in 1982, FACT is a Chicago based non-profit dedicated to making farms healthier and more humane places to raise food animals through research, advocacy and education. FACT was the first U.S. organization devoted exclusively to farm animal problems. FACT's on-farm research gives the organization extensive farming experience and firsthand knowledge. FACT makes science-based recommendations to agricultural, public health, and environmental groups, and to federal regulatory agencies. For more information contact Richard Wood at (773) 525-4952 or visit [www.foodanimalconcerns.org](http://www.foodanimalconcerns.org).

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