

The Active Consumer

Making The Humane Choice When You Shop

(NAPSA)—Some 10 billion animals are raised on our nation's farms and ranches, yet the vast majority—almost 90 percent—are not provided animal-centric welfare standards beyond the industry standards offered by trade association guidelines and retailer-imposed audits. And very few producers are audited by independent third-party certifying organizations to verify that humane standards are met.

With prompting from the American people and nonprofit organizations focused on animal welfare, this is changing. A recent survey of 6,000 people revealed that more than nine in 10 of those polled (94.9 percent) said they were very concerned about the welfare of animals in U.S. agriculture. Consumers' increasing awareness of and demand for humanely raised food are also matched by their willingness to back their ideals with action: More than three-quarters (75.7 percent) of the survey respondents said they would agree to pay more at the cash register for humanely raised meat, dairy and eggs. It appears that when it comes to improving the treatment of America's farm animals, consumers are literally putting their money where their mouth is.

To provide for the welfare of animals and meet the demands of today's enlightened consumers, a number of certification programs have arisen to set basic humane standards and oversee that they are followed. In 2000, American Humane Association, which was founded in 1877 around the issue of farm animal protection before expanding its mission to include children and all animals, created the first third-party farm animal welfare certification program. Based on the internationally accepted "Five Freedoms," the "American Humane Certified™" program convened leading animal science experts, veterinarians and practitioners, and developed more than 200 scientifically based, species-specific standards covering everything from food to living conditions, humane space requirements and the expression of natural behaviors. Some 1 billion animals are now covered by this



Most Americans would pay more for humanely raised food.

program alone, as well as 90 percent of the cage-free eggs sold in the United States. Still, this accounts for only a small fraction of the animals in the nation's agricultural system, and animal advocates continue to push for more protections and better standards for all those involved in America's food production.

"Ensuring the humane treatment of farm animals truly is one of the remaining frontiers in animal welfare," says Dr. Robin Ganzert, president and CEO of American Humane Association. "Fortunately, more and more people are looking for humane food choices that are in line with their values, and we encourage the more than 95 percent of Americans who do choose to eat eggs, meat, poultry and dairy to seek out humanely raised products and set a humane table for their families."

"Ultimately, Americans will exercise their right to eat what they want," says Michelle Ganci, national director of the Humane Heartland™ farm animal welfare program. "But no one has the right to treat animals inhumanely. We believe that *all* animals—those in our homes, those in service to our country, and those raised on our farms and ranches—are entitled to humane treatment, and we're encouraged to see that more and more Americans agree with us and are looking for humane food choices that make a difference to them, their families, and the 10 billion animals relying on us to do the right thing."

To find humane choices online, visit www.HumaneHeartland.org.