

PRESS RELEASE [3/17/2005]: GRASSFED STANDARDS UNVEILED AT AMERICAN GRASSFED ASSOCIATION'S SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**Grassfed Standards Unveiled at American Grassfed Association's Second Annual Conference**

KIOWA, COLO.—Standards governing the feeding and treatment of ruminant animals whose meat and milk will eventually be labeled grassfed were rolled out at the American Grassfed Association's (AGA) second annual conference, March 4-6, in Clay City, Ind. The standards, which had been in the works for over a year, were unanimously approved first by the AGA board, and then by the membership at the AGA's annual meeting.

"Agreeing on this set of detailed standards for ruminant animals is a huge step for legitimizing and marketing grassfed products nationwide," said AGA President Marlene Groves. "Every product wishing to bear the AGA trademarked label will have to conform to these standards."

Groves said that adoption of the standards is important to producers wishing to be able to marketing products with the AGA label and that it is also good for consumers, who will know exactly what they are buying. The standards still will go through a six-month comment period before being finalized. Those wishing to see the standards, are encouraged to see the next issue of the AGA's newsletter or visit the AGA website at [www.americangrassfed.org](http://www.americangrassfed.org). Once confirmed by AGA, the standards will be forwarded to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"It would be nice if they would adopt the AGA standards as presented, but regardless, the standards approved by AGA members will be those used in determining whether or not a product can have the AGA label," Groves said.

Allan Nation, editor of the Stockman Grass Farmer, keynoted the conference, urging producers to take grassfed to the "next step" by increasing the quality of their products. Nation urged the AGA members to conduct studies on tenderness and taste. He also suggested grassfed producers work together to supply larger markets.

"I really believe the next logical step for grassfed is to work collectively to market products to entire food chains. It's not something I can do as an individual producer, but it is something we need to work toward as an association," Groves said.

Also addressing conference participants was Dr. Tilak Dhiman, a Utah State University professor whose research on the nutritional attributes of grassfed products has supported industry claims. Dhiman has conducted a variety of research showing that meat and milk from grassfed animals have higher levels of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), which have been shown to lower cholesterol, as well as to reduce heart disease, cancer, and other diseases. According to Dhiman, the only way humans can get CLA is by eating meat and milk. He stresses that it is important for consumers to distinguish between "good" and "bad fats."

Elected to the AGA board were Marlene Groves, Colo., president; Robert Long, Mo., vice president; Pat Stevens, Tex., secretary; Dale Lasater, Colo., treasurer; Wayne Copp, Kan., bison director; Alan Yegerlehner, Ind., dairy director; Virginia Goeke, Wisc., sheep director; and Will Harris, Ga., at-large director. Those board members remaining seated included Nathan Melson, Tex., beef director; Julie Beck, Neb., goat director; and Megan Phillips, Colo., poultry director.

The conference was hosted by Alan Yegerlehner and his family, who produce grassfed milk and make farmstead cheeses. The 2006 conference is to be held in Colorado and hosted by grassfed beef producer Dale Lasater.

The AGA was established in September 2003. It is comprised of producers, food industry personnel, health care professionals and private consumers. For more information on the AGA, visit [www.americangrassfed.org](http://www.americangrassfed.org) or call 1-877-77GRASS.

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