

PRESS RELEASE [3/25/04]: AGA HIRES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**American Grassfed Association Hires Executive Director**

KIOWA, COLO.—The American Grassfed Association (AGA) is announcing the hiring of Carrie Balkcom, Denver, Colo., as the organization's Executive Director. The position is new for the newly-formed AGA.

Balkcom grew up on a Florida cattle ranch and has stayed connected to the agriculture and livestock industry. She is a professionally trained chef, a member of the American Culinary Federation, Women Chefs and Restaurateurs, and on the National Board of Overseers of the Chefs Collaborative. She has extensive experience organizing culinary conferences, including the Culinary Institute of America conferences as well as Slow Food events.

This February Balkcom participated at the USDA's "grassded standards" meeting; and in 1997 she was a presenter at the U.S. Food Policy Conference, Washington, D.C. She has spoken, presented or coordinated numerous regional and national conferences; and is well known in agricultural, culinary and sustainable agricultural circles.

"Carrie topped the field of excellent candidates who applied to be Executive Director of the AGA," said Marlene Groves, president. "She brings to our organization very broad-based experience, along with dedication and drive needed to make the AGA grow in numbers and influence. We are very, very pleased to have someone of this caliber as our executive director."

Balkcom's immediate priorities will be to establish an efficient office where members and non-members can get information. She will coordinate and support programs of the various AGA committees, including membership, marketing, newsletter, research and others. Other immediate duties include establishing funding sources, writing grants, networking with related organizations, and coordinating a grassroots membership drive.

In addition, she will work with the AGA board on establishment of national grassfed standards, research of non-grain energy supplements, establishment of relationships and joint membership opportunities with other agricultural and professional groups, and finalization of the AGA consumer focused grassfed facts pamphlet.

"Naming Balkcom to the post of Executive Director enables the AGA to facilitate many of the activities necessary to establish and grow our organization into a nationally-acknowledged grassroots association that promotes grassfed products so that grassfed producers can improve their bottom lines," Groves said.

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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