



**AMERICAN**  **G** **GRASSFED**  **A** **ASSOCIATION**

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## Grassfed Ruminant Standards

January 2009



## 1 Introduction

These standards apply to all farms and ranches approved by the American Grassfed Association (AGA) for the production of AGA Grassfed Ruminant market animals and products destined for certification by AGA. Only farms and ranches certified as following these standards may use AGA's American Grassfed Association ® logo, Association trademark, service mark and/or design mark hereafter referred to as AGA Design Mark.

## 2 Certification

### 2.1 Statement of Purpose; Applicability

The American Grassfed Association (AGA) family of logos and design marks were developed by the American Grassfed Association and trademarked to identify food and agriculture products, which meet the standards as set forth in the AGA Grassfed Ruminant Standards and certified through a program approved by the AGA. The logos and design marks have been trademarked by the U.S. Trademark and Patent office and may only be used by those who have an approved signed license agreement with the American Grassfed Association. The American Grassfed Association logos and design marks were established to provide a marketing program that adds value to food and agricultural products that meet the requirements set by the AGA membership and the Board of Directors. The requirements of the AGA Grassfed Ruminant Standards are set by the American Grassfed Associations members and it's Board of Directors and may be amended from time to time.

### 2.2 Statement of Use

The American Grassfed Association the trademark, service mark and /or design mark may be used on product packaging and promotional materials, including brochures, sales literature, advertising, banners, Web sites, point of purchase material, etc. When used, the logos must comply with these guidelines. If a company wishes to use the logos in a manner other than described in these guidelines, it must request and receive permission in writing from American Grassfed Association.

- i. A licensee may display the AGA Design Mark , which is a registered certification mark, on the products licensed.
- ii. Licensee must have an approved signed license agreement with the American Grassfed Association to use the trademark, service mark and /or design mark on any products.
- iii. Licensee may use the trademark, service mark and /or design mark on company stationery, promotional literature and wed sites only if AGA certifies licensee's entire product range.

## 2.3 Product Requirements

Raw, processed and non-processed ruminant products produced using the production requirements set forth in the AGA Grassfed Ruminant Standards and certified by such agency as set by the AGA board of directors.

## 2.4 Use of the American Grassfed Association Design Mark

### 2.4.1

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Applicants must certify on the application that all applicable AGA Grassfed Ruminant Standards are met.

### 2.4.2

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Applicants must be current members of the American Grassfed Association with all dues and fees paid while using the AGA design mark.

### 2.4.3

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The AGA or its approved certifying agency(s) may make unannounced site visits to applicant's farms or ranches to verify that all AGA Grassfed Ruminant Standards are met.

### 2.4.4

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Except as otherwise provided in this section, all requirements for membership in the American Grassfed Association shall apply to entities and individuals certified under this section

## 2.5 American Grassfed Design Mark

### 2.5.1

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You must reproduce the AGA Design Mark from original artwork. Please contact AGA for a copy of the Design Mark.

## 2.5.2

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- complete and upright
- in one color
- clearly visible
- at least 1/2 inch in diameter, and
- clear and legible over the whole of a background.
- on the main face of the label or packaging

## 2.5.3

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Any use of these logo's which is deemed a misrepresentation of the intended use by the American Grassfed Association may result in the suspension and/or prosecution of the license agreement.

## 2.5 Fees

Applicants shall submit an annual fee as set by the American Grassfed Association board of directors. A per head fee will also be assessed by the board for every animal marketed using the AGA design mark.

## 3 Grassfed Ruminant Standard

### 3.1 Forage Protocol

#### 3.1.1

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All livestock production must be pasture/grass/forage based.

#### 3.1.2

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Grass and forage shall be the feed source consumed for the lifetime of the ruminant animal, with the exception of milk consumed prior to weaning. The diet shall be derived solely from forage consisting of grass (annual and perennial), forbs (e.g. Legumes, Brassica), browse, or

cereal grain crops in the vegetative (pre-grain) state. Animals cannot be fed grain or grain byproducts (starch and protein sources) and must have continuous access to pasture.

### 3.1.3

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Forage is defined as any herbaceous plant material that can be grazed or harvested for feeding, with the exception of grain.

## **3.2 Grazing, Confinement and Supplementation**

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### 3.2.1

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All livestock produced under this standard must be on range, pasture, or in paddocks for their entire lives. This means that all animals must be maintained at all times on land with at least 75% forage cover or unbroken ground. The provisions of this section do not preclude commonly used grazing practices such as high-density/low-frequency or strip grazing, when large numbers of animals may graze growing forages in small paddocks for short periods of time.

### 3.2.2

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AGA grassfed ruminant animals must not be confined to a pen, feedlot or other area where forages or crops are not grown during the growing season.

### 3.2.3

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Livestock produced under this standard may be fed hay, haylage, baleage, silage, crop residue without grain, and other roughage sources while on pasture during periods of low forage quality or inclement weather.

### 3.2.4

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Consumption of seeds naturally attached to herbage, forage and browse is considered incidental and is acceptable.

### 3.2.5

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Exceptions to sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 are limited to emergencies that may threaten the safety and well being of the animals.

### 3.2.6

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AGA grassfed ruminant animals cannot be fed stock-piled forages in confinement for more than 30 days per calendar year.

### 3.2.7

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Approved mineral and vitamin supplements may be provided free choice to adjust the animal's nutrient intake and to correct deficiencies in its total diet.

### 3.2.8

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Incidental supplementation (i.e., less than one percent of the total energy consumed during the animal's lifetime) due to inadvertent exposure to non-forage feedstuffs or to ensure the animal's well being at all times during adverse environmental/physical conditions is permissible.

### 3.2.9

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Supplements must be approved in advance by AGA's nutritional supplements committee or be listed in the Approved Supplements List, see Appendix B. Supplements that have an adverse effect on the nutritional quality or have negative health benefits on the animals fed will not be allowed.

### 3.2.10

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A record of how much was given, when it was given and what was given must be kept for mineral blocks, salt licks or any other supplements provided.

### 3.2.11

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Receipts, ingredient lists and/or tear tags must be retained from any supplements provided.

### 3.2.12

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Feeding any of the banned feedstuffs listed in Appendix C to AGA Grassfed Ruminants is prohibited and will result in the loss of their AGA Grassfed status.

## **3.3 Animal Health and Welfare**

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### 3.3.1

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All livestock production methods used with AGA Grassfed Ruminant animals must support humane animal welfare, handling, transport and slaughter.

### 3.3.2

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The producer must develop and maintain a written record of all vaccines, medications or other substances used in their animal health care program

### 3.3.3

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AGA Grassfed Ruminant animals must not be fed or injected antibiotics

### 3.3.4

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Sick or injured animals must be treated to relieve their symptoms

### 3.3.5

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If prohibited medications are required for treatment the animal must be identified, tracked and records kept to demonstrate that it does not enter the AGA Grassfed Ruminant system. Provided the identification and tracking are adequate the animal may still be kept with other animals that do qualify for the AGA Grassfed Ruminant system.

### 3.3.6

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The producer must keep records of the purchase of any antibiotics purchased. Antibiotic receipts and injection records must be available on demand to the certifying agency

### 3.3.7

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No hormones of any type may be administered to AGA Grassfed Ruminant animals

### 3.3.8

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Livestock produced under these standards must not be fed any animal by-products at any time.

## **3.4 Animal Identification and Trace-Back**

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### 3.4.1

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AGA Certified Grassfed Ruminant animals must be traceable by written record throughout their entire life from birth to harvest to the farm or ranch from which they originated.

### 3.4.2

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Each producer must develop and maintain an Animal Identification system to uniquely identify each animal and allow 48-hour trace-back.

### 3.4.3

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Complete and up to date records must be maintained and specifically identify all animals raised and purchased that are sold or harvested as part of the AGA Grassfed Ruminant Program.

#### 3.4.4

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Complete and up to date records must be maintained to show the source of all purchased market animals brought onto farm or ranch. Records must document that the supplier of the purchased market animals raised them in accordance to AGA Grassfed Ruminant Standards. Only market animals one year of age or younger may be brought into the AGA Certified Grassfed program by affidavit.

Note: AGA Grassfed Supplier Affidavit, Appendix A, must be used for purchased animals after January 1, 2010. All market animals brought onto a farm or ranch for the AGA Certified Grassfed Program must come from audited suppliers beginning Jan. 1 2011.

#### 3.4.5

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Complete and up to date records must be maintained for all AGA market animals delivered for harvest. AGA Transfer of Livestock for Harvest documents are provided as a template.

#### 3.4.6

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All records are to be maintained for a minimum of 24 months after the animal is sold or harvested.

#### 3.4.7

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All required records must be in sufficient detail as to demonstrate compliance with AGA standards to the certifying agency.

### **3.5 Program Requirements**

#### 3.5.1

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The annual cost for AGA Certified Producer Member will be set by the Board of Directors at regularly scheduled Board meetings and will be set to cover the administrative cost to the Association. On Farm inspection cost will be borne by the individual member.

## **4 Standards Amendment Procedure**

### **4.1 Amendment Procedure**

#### 4.1.1

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The AGA recognizes that as new research becomes available on grassfed meat and milk products changes may be required to the AGA Grassfed Ruminant Program Standards and

Definitions. The following procedure will be followed for reviewing and amending AGA Grassfed Ruminant Program Standards and Definitions.

#### 4.1.2

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The review and amendment procedure shall be accomplished by a Standards Committee appointed by the President. Amendments will require a 2/3 majority vote of the entire Standards Committee.

#### 4.1.3.

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The Standards Committee will meet at least once per year to review and discuss new grassfed information and research. At this meeting the Committee will vote to send any recommended amendments to the full Board for approval. This meeting will be held in conjunction with the AGA annual conference.

#### 4.1.4

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The vote for amendment of the AGA Grassfed Ruminant Program Standards and Definitions shall require a majority vote of the entire Board of Directors.

#### 4.1.5

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The Board of Directors will set the amount of time members have to implement any adopted changes to the AGA Grassfed Ruminant Program Standards and Definitions.

## 5 Reference Documents

### 5.1 AGA Grassfed Supplier Affidavit

See Appendix A.

### 5.2 AGA Approved Supplements List

See Appendix B.

### 5.3 AGA Banned Feed Stuffs List

See Appendix C.

### 5.4 AGA Transfer of Livestock for Harvest

Currently under development.

## 6 AGA Grassfed Ruminant Standards Definitions

**Baleage or Round Bale Silage:** A practice that involves cutting the forage crop with conventional hay harvesting equipment, allowing the forage to wilt to between 30 and 60 percent dry matter, then baling it into tight bales and wrapping them immediately. Bales are wrapped mechanically using bale-wrapping equipment that tightly stretches several layers of plastic around the hay to exclude oxygen and allow proper ensiling. (5)

**Boot Stage:** The flag leaf is fully expanded, but the awns and grain head are not visible. The grain head can be felt in the flag leaf sheath. (4)

**Brassicas:** A Family of very productive annual forage vegetables used as transition crops between pasture renovations or as a supplemental feed source for extending the grazing season when other forages are less productive i.e., turnips, rape, and kale.

**Browse:** 1) Leaf and twig growth of shrubs, woody vines, trees, cacti, and other non-herbaceous vegetation available for animal consumption. 2) To browse; the consumption of browse in situ by animals. (6)

**Caryopsis:** A small, one-seeded, dry fruit with a thin pericarp surrounding and adhering to the seed; the seed (grain) or fruit of grasses. (6)

**Concentrate:** All feed, low in fiber and high in total digestible nutrients, that supplies primary nutrients (protein, carbohydrate, and fat); for example, grains, cottonseed meal, wheat bran. (6)

**Crop Residue:** Portion of plants remaining after fruit and/or seed harvest, said mainly of grain crops such as corn stover or of small grain straw and stubble. (6)

**Diet:** The feed regularly offered to/or consumed by an animal. (6)

**Dough Stage:** The kernel is filled with starch and is well formed. There is no milky fluid, only a rubbery, dough-like substance. (4)

**Dormancy:** In a state of being dormant when no active growth is occurring. (7)

**Ensilage:** The same as silage. (2)

**Ensiled:** Having been subjected to anaerobic fermentation to form silage. (2)

**Feedstuff:** 1) n. any of the constituent nutrients of an animal ration. (7)

**Fermentation:** Chemical changes brought about by enzymes produced by various microorganisms. (2)

**Forb:** Any herbaceous broadleaf plant that is not a grass and is not grass-like. (6)

**Fruit:** 1) n. The usually edible reproductive body of a seed plant in particular, one having a sweet pulp associated with the seed. 2) n. A product of fertilization in a plant with its modified envelopes or appendages, in specific the ripened ovary of a seed plant and its contents. (7)

**Grain:** 1) n. A single small hard seed: a seed or fruit of a cereal grass: caryopsis. (2) n. the seeds or fruits of various food plants including the cereal grasses and in commercial and statutory usage other plants (as the soybean): plants producing grain. (7)

**Grain by-products:** Feedstuff products derived from grains. I.e.- corn gluten pellets, dried distillers grains, wheat shorts, etc. (1)

**Grass:** Member of the plant Family *Poaceae*. (6)

**Green chop:** Forage harvested and fed in the green, chopped form, generally without seed. (2)

**Growing Forage:** Forage plants that aren't in the dormant (non-growing) state and thus are actively developing stem, leaf, and/or reproductive tissues for growth. (1)

**Glucose:** A hexose monosaccharide obtained upon the hydrolysis of starch and certain other carbohydrates. Also called dextrose. (2)

**Hay:** The aerial parts of forage crops stored in the dry form for animal feeding. (2)

**Haylage:** Haylage is the feed produced by storing in an airtight silo a forage crop which has been dried to a moisture level of about 45-55%. (2)

**Herbage:** 1.) The biomass of herbaceous plants, other than separated grain, generally above ground but including edible roots and tubers. (6) 2.) n. Green plants especially when used or fit for grazing. (7)

**Hydrolysis:** The splitting of a substance into the smaller units by its chemical reaction with water. (2)

**Inflorescence:** 1) n. A floral axis with its appendages. 2) n. a flower cluster of which there are at least 9 recognized types. (7)

**Kernel:** A mature ovule of a grass plant that has the ovary wall fused to it. Same as caryopsis.(6)

**Legumes:** members of the *Fabaceae* plant family (formerly known as the *Leguminosae* family). Legumes are dicots (produce two seed leaves), produce seed in a pod, have netted leaf venation, and usually have a taproot type of root system. Most legumes have the ability to interact with bacteria of the genus *Rhizobium* to fix nitrogen in nodules on their roots. Legumes may have one of four different types of seedheads. These seedhead types are the raceme, the spike, the head or umbel. (5)

**Meadow:** Area covered with grasses and/or legumes, often native to the area, grown primarily for hay but with secondary grazing potential. (6)

**Milk Stage:** In grain (seed), the stage of development following pollination in which the endosperm appears as whitish liquid that is somewhat like milk. (6)

**Mineral:** 1) n. a solid homogeneous crystalline chemical element or compound that results from the inorganic processes of nature. 2) n. Any of the various naturally occurring homogeneous substances obtained usually from the ground. 3) n. a synthetic substance having the chemical composition and crystalline form and properties of a naturally occurring mineral. (7)

**Native Pasture:** Native vegetation (predominantly herbaceous) used for grazing in untilled areas. The term tame or introduced is used instead of native for pastures that include mainly nonnative species. (6)

**Paddock:** A grazing area that is a subdivision of a grazing management unit and is enclosed and separated from other areas by a fence or barrier. (6)

**Pasture:** 1) n. Forages which are harvested by grazing animals. 2) n. An area of land with 75% forage cover or unbroken land on which livestock may graze at will.

**Pastureland:** Land devoted to the production of indigenous or introduced forage for harvest primarily by grazing. Pastureland generally must be managed to arrest succession processes. (6)

**Pericarp:** The ripened and variously modified walls of a plant ovary, especially those contributing the outer layer in a cereal caryopsis. (6)

**Prairie:** Nearly level or rolling grassland that was originally treeless; usually characterized by fertile soil. (6)

**Range:** Land supporting indigenous vegetation that is grazed or that has the potential to be grazed and is managed as a natural ecosystem. Includes grazeable forestland and rangeland. (6)

**Rangeland:** land on which the indigenous vegetation (climax or natural potential) is predominantly grasses, grass-like plants, forbs, or shrubs suitable for grazing or browsing use and is managed as a natural ecosystem. If plants are introduced, they are managed as indigenous species. Rangelands include natural grasslands, savannas, shrublands, most deserts, tundra, alpine communities, coastal marshland, and wetland meadows. (6)

**Ration:** the total amount of feed (diet) allotted to one animal for a 24-hour period. (6)

**Residue:** that which remains of any particular substance. (2)

**Roughage:** Any feed high (over about 20%) in crude fiber and low (under about 60%) in total digestible nutrients, on an air-dry basis. Opposite of concentrate. (2)

**Seed:** 1) n. Ripened mature ovule consisting of an embryo, a seedcoat, and a supply of food that, in some species is stored in the endosperm. 2) v. To sow, as to broadcast or drill small-seeded grasses, legumes, or other crops. (6)

**Seedhead:** See inflorescence.

**Separated Grain:** Grain that is detached from cereal crop plants.

**Silage:** “The feed resulting from the storage and fermentation of green or wet crops under anaerobic conditions.’ ‘Normally contains only about 25-35% dry matter (DM). Practically any crop may be made into silage, provided it contains an appropriate level of moisture, adequate amounts of readily fermentable carbohydrates, and adequate levels of other nutrients, and provided it can be sufficiently packed.’ ‘The most commonly used silage crops are: corn, forage and grain sorghum, small grains and hay crop.’ ‘Most crops to be used for silage are permitted to mature or field dry to a moisture level of 65-75% (25-35% DM). For corn this is about the early dent stage of maturity and for grain sorghum the late dough stage at the earliest. This is when the moisture level is about right for good silage formation.” (2)

**Starch:** A polysaccharide having the formula  $(C_6H_{10}O_5)_n$ . Many plants store energy in the form of starch. Starch is a major component of most livestock rations (especially fattening rations) and is highly digestible. Yields glucose upon complete hydrolysis. (2)

**Stockpiled Forage:** Forage that has been allowed to accumulate on a pasture or paddock for grazing at a later period. Forage is often stockpiled for autumn and winter grazing after or during dormancy or semi-dormancy, but stockpiling may occur at any time during the year as a part of a forage management plan. Stockpiling can be described in terms of deferment and forage accumulation. (6)

**Stover:** The matured cured stalks of such crops as corn or sorghum from which the grain has been removed. A type of roughage. (6)

**Stubble:** The basal portion of the stems of herbaceous plants left standing after harvest. (6)

**Supplement:** A nutritional additive (salt, protein, phosphorus, etc.) intended to improve the nutritional balance and remedy deficiencies of the diet. (6)

**Supplemental Feeding:** The practice of supplying feedstuffs to correct nutritional deficiencies in an animal’s “natural” diet.

**Vegetative:** Non-reproductive plant parts, (leaf and stem) in contrast to reproductive plant parts (flower and seed) in developmental stages of plant growth. The non-reproductive stage in plant development. (6)

**Vegetative State:** Stage prior to the appearance of fruiting structures. (6)

**Vitamin:** 1) n. Any of various organic substances that are essential in minute quantities to the nutrition of most animals and some plants that act especially as coenzymes and precursors of coenzymes in the regulation of metabolic processes

## 6.1 REFERENCES

- (1). AGA Certified Ruminant Standards Livestock Program, 2006
- (2). Feeds and Feeding; Arthur E. Cullison, 1979
- (3). Cow-Calf Management Guide, Cattle Producer's Library; Ag Communications Center, University of Idaho,  
  
The Fermentation Process and Silage Troubleshooting, Small Grain Silage for Beef Cattle, Haylage, Corn Silage
- (4). A Guide to Cereal Forage for Profitable Dairy Management; RSI, Resource Seeds, Inc. 1998
- (5). Ball, D.M., C.S. Hoveland, and G.D. Lacefield. 2002. P. 1-321. Southern Forages, Modern Concepts for Forage Crop Management 3rd. ed. Potash & Phosphate Institute (PPI) Norcross, GA
- (6). Barnes, R.F., D.A. Miller, and C.J. Nelson. 1995. Glossary. P.487-501. In R. F. Barnes, D.A. Miller, and C. J. Nelson (ed.) Forages, Vol. I, An Introduction to Grassland Agriculture, 5th. ed. Iowa State University Press, Ames, IA.
- (7). Meriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. Tenth Edition is an excellent source for important words, including but not limited to: Browse, cereal, crop, dicot, forage, forb, grain, grass, graze, grassland, herb, herbage, herbaceous, monocot, pasture, range, rangeland, seed, silage, etc.

**Appendix A**

**American Grassfed Association**

AGA Grassfed Supplier Affidavit

To be filled out by each supplier of animals to farms/ranches that are applying for AGA Certified Grassfed

Supplier Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm / Ranch name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_; State: \_\_\_\_\_; Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_; Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_; Website: \_\_\_\_\_

AGA Producer Name: \_\_\_\_\_; AGA Membership # \_\_\_\_\_

Farm / Ranch name: \_\_\_\_\_

As a supplier of animals to an AGA producer, this letter serves as documentation that all animals provided to the above AGA producer have been raised in accordance to the AGA Grassfed Ruminant Program Standards. I acknowledge that I have read and understand the AGA Grassfed Ruminant Standards and that these animals listed below comply with said standards.

Animal Delivery or Transfer Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Animal Ear Tag # Or Brand	Livestock species	Sex	Breed	Color Description

Number of Animals Delivered or Transferred: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that all statements made herein are true to the best of my knowledge.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_; Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### American Grassfed Association

#### AGA Approved Supplements List

The following list of approved supplements is not an exclusive list but lists supplements that have been approved by the AGA to date. The AGA Certification Committee may review and amend this list periodically. **Supplements not listed below must be approved in advance by AGA's nutritional supplements. Supplements that have an adverse effect on the nutritional quality or have negative health benefits on the animals fed will not be allowed.**

Any roughage product defined as:

**Roughage:** Any feed high (over 20%) in crude fiber and low (under 60%) in total digestible nutrients, on an air-dry basis.

Cottonseed Hulls or Cottonseed Hull Pellets  
Peanut Hulls or Peanut Hull Pellets  
Rice Hulls Rice Hull Pellets  
Alfalfa Cubes or Pellets (17% Protein)  
Corn Cobs  
Oat Hulls or Oat Hull Pellets  
Oat Silage (dough stage)  
Corn silage (no grain)

## Appendix C

### American Grassfed Association

#### AGA Banned Feedstuffs List

The following list of banned feedstuffs is not an exclusive list. The AGA Certification Committee may review and amend this list periodically.

Corn

Cereal Grains

Grain By-Products (starch and protein sources)

Urea and other non-protein nitrogen sources

Milk replacer containing antibiotics, growth promoters and/or any animal by-products aside from milk protein

Animal by-products

Antibiotics

Hormones