

Denver AMS Natural Listening Session
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Maverick Ranch has been in the Natural Meat production business since 1985. We are a pioneer in the industry and we are a family owned business. We appreciate the opportunity that AMS is giving to the industry to present it's views on the Natural Definition for meat. Our position is as follows.

1. Any new definition for natural meat should be match and be jointly universal in definition across all government agencies including FDA and AMS and FSIS of the USDA. This should include ingredients on the meat processing side.
2. There should be two definitions evolve now. First is "Naturally Raised" for the raising and animal handling of the livestock (this should include poultry). The second should be "Naturally Processed" which addresses the issue of product processing and ingredients after animal harvest. Any ingredient should be allowed like salt, vinegar or any product from a natural food source. No synthetic ingredients should be allowed during the processing of the product.
3. Naturally Raised should be determined by being "Never Ever" for the lifetime use of antibiotics, growth promotants, steroids and no residues of pesticides. All old Residue Avoidance Programs should be made obsolete. Any natural meat definition of "not used in the last 180 days" should be made obsolete. Naturally Raised should be verified by chemical testing of animal tissues by an independent third party laboratory as is with EU approved animals and the USDA Certified Organic program and laws. Residue testing for pesticides should be done through laboratory testing. Naturally Raised meat should be only 100% Vegetarian Fed.
4. Any producer of Naturally Raised meat should participate in a mandatory USDA approved PVP program under AMS to track and prove all animal raising and handling claims in order to use "Naturally Raised" on meat products. A simple affidavit program should not be allowed for label approvals. It is important to have all naturally raised claims be the same so that all animal producers and meat processors are on the same level playing field like the USDA's Certified Organic program is.
5. Naturally Raised poultry should not be allowed to be injected or marinated with any solution what so ever. Marinated Natural Poultry is an oxy moron. Natural chicken should only be Air-Chilled so there is not an opportunity to absorb water during a water bath chilling process. All Naturally Raised poultry should be raised Cage Free.
6. Antibiotic Free or ABF should be an acceptable term under the Naturally Raised term as some species of livestock are prohibited from using growth promotants.

Again we thank AMS for the opportunity to present our views today on the development a new "Natural" definition which should be defined with one production, raising and animal handling claim.