

# COLEMAN NATURAL FOODS

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January 18, 2007  
USDA-AMS LS No. 283-06  
Naturally Raised Livestock Marketing Claim  
Listening Session / Seattle, Washington

Subject: Naturally Raised Standards and Claims

Presenter: Mel Coleman, Jr.  
Chairman  
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## **Introduction:**

Coleman Natural Foods, LLC is the leading producer and processor of natural and organic beef, pork, chicken, and lamb items for today's consumer. Raising, processing and marketing natural and organic meat and poultry products from livestock raised from birth without the use of added growth hormones, growth modulators, or antibiotics and fed only grasses and feed rations which never contain animal by-products is the focus of our business.

During this session I would like to specifically discuss the importance of a naturally raised label as it relates to export markets.

## **Background:**

The 1981 definition for natural pertained strictly to how livestock was raised. Despite the fact that in 1982, the natural definition was minimized, allowing **all** fresh meat and poultry to be labeled natural, the demand for naturally raised meats and poultry continued to grow both domestically and in the export markets.

It is Coleman's belief that the livestock and meat industry has been adversely affected by the "dumbing down" of the natural definition in many export markets. My opinion is the European ban of hormones in 1989 would not have had as great an impact on in the US beef industry had the 1981 natural definition remained clear, defining only a raising practice.

We also believe that the loss of export markets in Asia and other regions, as a result of the 2003 BSE case in Washington may have been minimized had the natural definition, specific to the naturally raised process with no animal by-products allowed in feed rations been in place.

Looking toward the future, a clear and concise naturally raised definition is needed. A USDA naturally raised definition and label would help open new export markets and opportunities and may indeed assist in the re-opening of markets that have been totally or partially closed to US meat exports.

The naturally raised label that excludes the use of antibiotics, added growth hormones and growth modulators, and animal by-products coupled with source verification and strong animal welfare standards will do four things: 1) provide producers a level playing field in natural programs; 2) bring clarity in labeling to consumers at the point of sale regardless of where it's sold 3) eliminate the temptation for unscrupulous smoke-and-mirror marketing programs to misuse the "natural" term on fresh meat products, and 4) Bring a degree of leadership and the respect due back to the US livestock and meat industry in international markets.