

Chino Valley Ranchers
Comment to the National Organic Standards Board
La Crosse, Wisconsin
June 6, 2001

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Sharon Krumwiede. I am the General Manager for Chino Valley Ranchers, an egg production company with a diverse line of products based in Arcadia, California. Chino Valley Ranchers began its business as a family-run commercial egg ranch in 1953. We have been selling eggs produced by cage-free, vegetarian-fed chickens since 1978. In 1991 Chino Valley Ranchers began raising chickens in a "Free Range" facility. In 1997 in conjunction with free-range access we began feeding our chickens an organic diet and also became certified by the California Certified Organic Farmers (the only such producer to do so). Our chickens live in a healthy and stress-free environment; We believe, an environment that is on a par with the best available in the United States, or even the world.

Let me tell you briefly about my earliest experiences with "Natural Eggs". I spent the early part of my life living in a rural area of British Guyana, a small third world country in South America. The eggs that my family ate came from the chickens that we kept on our property. These chickens lived on whatever they foraged in the yard, such as plants and small insects. Perhaps it would be wonderful if everyone had backyard chickens like I had as a child, but for most people in our society that is not reality. For those individuals who would like everything natural and pure, the diet that we feed and the living conditions that we provide for our chickens are the closest to a natural environment that we have found possible. Quite frankly, in our industrialized society, the pollutants that we are all exposed to on a daily basis, even in the best of circumstances, far exceed the .0009% (less than 2/100 lb.) of Methionine that is included in one ton of chicken feed.

The use of Methionine is critical to the development and maintenance of a consistent egg production base. Reducing Methionine would negatively affect egg production, egg size and the health of the birds.

Research has shown that plant proteins (corn, sunflower, soybean, yeast, whey or peas) do not contain enough Methionine so currently the best natural alternative to Methionine is Anchovy fishmeal. Our research has indicated that about 140lbs of anchovy meal per ton of chicken feed would be required to accomplish the same results as 2/100 lb. of Methionine, and the eggs would have a fishy taste. It is questionable if there are enough Anchovies in the world's oceans to properly treat all of today's egg production. I strongly believe that organic foods should be pure of synthetics but currently in the United States the existing alternatives to Methionine are neither viable nor practical. Research must be conducted to locate other practical alternatives, before Methionine is banned from use.

Thank you,

Sharon Krumwiede