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EDWARD A. BOKS
General Manager

Report to the Board of Animal Services Commissioners

Edward A. Boks, General Manager

COMMISSION MEETING DATE: December 10, 2007 **PREPARED BY:** Linda Barth

REPORT DATE: December 5, 2007

TITLE: Assistant General
Manager

SUBJECT: Certified Humane Raised and Handled

BOARD ACTION RECOMMENDED:

That the Board endorse the work of the Humane Farm Animal Care organization in their on-going consumer certification program for food products.

SUMMARY:

The Certified Humane Raised & Handled Label is a consumer certification and labeling program that indicates to food purchasers that an egg, dairy, meat, or poultry product has been produced with the welfare of the farm animal in mind. Food products that carry the label are certified to have come from facilities that meet precise, objective standards for farm animal treatment. These Animal Care Standards have been developed by a team of veterinarians and animal scientists to ensure that producers and processors keep animals in conditions that have met high standards of animal care:

- Allowing animals to engage in their natural behaviors
- Raising animals with sufficient space, shelter and gentle handling to limit stress
- Making sure they have ample fresh water and a healthy diet without added antibiotics or hormones

Under the system, growth hormones are prohibited, and animals are raised on a regular diet of quality feed free of antibiotics. Producers also must comply with local, state and federal environmental standards. Processors must comply with the American Meat

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Institute Standards, a higher standard for slaughtering farm animals than the Federal Humane Slaughter Act.

Humane Farm Animal Care is the independent non-profit organization that conducts regular inspections and administers the “Certified Humane Raised & Handled” program. Participating businesses must pass an initial inspection as well as annual re-inspection to remain part of the Certified Humane Raised & Handled program. Applications, inspections, and certification require payment of modest fees. Producers who are certified may use the Certified Humane Raised & Handled logo on their packaging.

Inspectors have training and education in Animal Science, Veterinary Medicine, or other relevant backgrounds. To further assure fairness, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Marketing Services verifies the inspection process.

The Staff, Board of Directors and Scientific Committee of Humane Farm Animal Care bring extensive experience in the natural foods industry, animal science, veterinary care and animal welfare to their work on the Certified Humane Raised & Handled program. The current executive director, Adele Douglass, initiated the concept of humane certification for farm animal products in the U.S., beginning with her launch of the Free Farmed program for Farm Animal Services. As a result of her years showing businesses how humane farm animal care can meet bottom-line interests, she serves as an invited participant on numerous industry animal welfare committees including for the Food Marketing Institute, National Council of Chain Restaurants, and Burger King.

Endorsement by the Commission of the work of the Humane Farm Animal Care will encourage staff’s participation in efforts to increase public outreach efforts for humane farming, and permit listing of the Los Angeles Board of Animal Services Commissioners on the organization’s supporters list, which includes:

- The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)
- The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)
- The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA)

The industrialization and consolidation of animal agriculture in the United States and around the world has created farms with massive scale, unnatural animal husbandry practices and severe impacts including food safety problems, environmental degradation, loss of family farms and animal mistreatment. The quality of the meat, poultry, egg and dairy products depends, at least in part, on the quality of care farm animals receive. The Certified Humane Raised & Handled program lets consumers choose products from businesses that are providing humane conditions for the animals in their care.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Subject: Certified Humane Raised and Handled

Endorsing the initiative engenders no activity on the part of the Department and has no fiscal impact.

Approved:

Edward A. Boks, General Manager

BOARD ACTION:

_____ Passed

Disapproved _____

_____ Passed with noted modifications

Continued _____

_____ Tabled

New Date _____