

WORD FROM WASHINGTON



Congressional Briefing Supports Humane Farming

(NAPS)—America has been blessed with a bountiful supply of safe, abundant and affordable food. To make sure that food is also humanely raised, a diverse delegation convened a congressional briefing on Capitol Hill called “The Humane Table.”

Led by American Humane, the country's first national humane organization, farmers, and leading food producers who have committed to humane practices, the briefing outlined advances in humane agriculture, called on the American public to support humane farming practices for more of the 9 billion animals raised in U.S. agriculture each year, and spotlighted the farmers and ranchers who work to feed the world and raise their animals right. Right now, only about 1 billion of those animals are living under independently verified, science-based welfare standards, most of those through the American Humane Certified™ program, which helps ensure everything from adequate space to air quality, proper heating, cooling, lighting and shade, humane treatment, and the ability of animals to express natural behaviors.

“More people than ever before are concerned about how their food is raised and want to make choices that are in line with their values,” said Dr. Robin Ganzert, president and CEO of American Humane. “We urge all Americans to set a humane table every day and support American farmers and ranchers who not only put food on our tables but do so humanely.”

American Humane research shows overwhelming popular support for the humane treatment of farm animals and humanely raised foods. Its last poll of 5,900 Americans revealed that more than nine in 10 (94.9 percent) said they were “very concerned” about farm animal welfare. Three-quarters (75.7 percent) stated that they were very willing to pay more for humanely raised eggs, meat, and dairy products. And in a ranking of the importance of food labels, “humanely raised” scored highest



American Humane and responsible farmers and food companies urge the public to support humane farming.

among labels including “antibiotic-free,” “organic” and “natural.”

Speakers at the briefing stressed the importance of verifiably humane agriculture.

“Animal care and well-being are central to who Butterball is as a company, and we are committed to maintaining the health and well-being of our turkeys,” said Dr. Alice Johnson, Senior Vice President for Animal Well-Being at Butterball, the iconic turkey brand that has been an American Humane Certified producer since 2013. “Partnering with our family farmers, we commit daily to achieving industry-leading results in animal care and well-being.”

Others spoke of building on a past history of good stewardship. “Coleman Natural Foods has been around since 1875—one year before Colorado was a state,” says Bart Vittori, the company's vice president and general manager. “It is important that we carry on the family heritage of high animal welfare practices from the 1800s. Coleman Natural has earned American Humane Certification to provide further assurance of third-party audits and greater transparency of pork production, and Coleman is the first national retail pork producer to fully implement a crate-free hog environment—both gestation and farrow crate-free, verified by third party and with USDA approval.”

“In less than three generations, the United States has gone from a predominantly agrarian society to one where

the family farm is the exception rather than the rule,” said Byron Shaffer, Food Safety and Quality Manager for Kreider Farms, which produces American Humane Certified eggs. “Today, there are many with differing opinions on what farming and, particularly, what animal agriculture should look like. We are happy to be associated with a group that not only recognizes the need for the farmers of today but provides invaluable resources in making the practices transparent and based on what is best for all. Like American Humane, Kreider Farms, and America's family farmers, know that animal welfare is truly in everyone's best interest.”

“I have a lifetime of expertise caring for animals and I take the responsibility of providing a comfortable environment for my pigs every day very seriously,” said Pat Bane, an Illinois pig farmer who was recently named America's Pig Farmer of the Year. “I work closely with my employees to guarantee the best care for our pigs.”

American Humane was founded around the issue of farm animal welfare in 1877 and has been at the forefront of protections for animals for 141 years. In 2000, it created the American Humane Certified program, the nation's first third-party farm animal welfare certification with some 200 science-based standards built upon the internationally accepted values of the Five Freedoms, created by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, as well as input from animal science experts, veterinarians and animal husbandry specialists. These standards are reviewed regularly by a Scientific Advisory Committee including many of the world's leading animal experts and advocates. Today, the American Humane Certified program is the nation's largest third-party farm animal welfare program.

To help set your own humane table, support humane farming, and find a list of American Humane Certified producers, visit www.AmericanHumane.org.