



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE COALITION

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Sustainable Agriculture Coalition Proposed Recommendations for Grass Fed Label Claim for Livestock

Original USDA Proposed Claim and Standard: This claim refers to the feeding regimen for livestock raised on grass, green or range pasture, or forage throughout their life cycle, with only limited supplemental grain feeding allowed. Since it is necessary to assure the animal's well being at all times, limited supplementation is allowed during adverse environmental conditions. Grass feeding usually results in products containing lower levels of external and internal fat (including marbling) than grain-fed livestock. Grass, green or range pasture, or forage shall be 80% or more of the primary energy source throughout the animal's life cycle. (12/30/02)

Consensus Recommendation to USDA from SAC and Collaborating Groups: Grass, green or range pasture, or forage shall be 100% of the primary energy source from birth to harvest.

- Forage shall consist of perennial and annual grasses, forbs, legumes, and brassicas.
- Animals have never been fed mammalian or poultry proteins.
- Antibiotics are used only for disease treatment.*
- Grass fed animals are not grain creep-fed as calves.
- Animals have never been confined to a feedlot where crops, vegetation, forage growth or post harvest residues are not sustained in the normal growing season over any portion of the lot or facility. (40 CFR 122.23 and Part 122, Appendix B)
- The number of animals grazed on an area of land will meet or exceed standards for sustainable management, maintenance and improvement of vegetation, soil quality and riparian protection, as determined by the relevant quality criteria and conservation practice standards in the Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office Technical Guides.

Revised USDA Proposed Claim and Standard: Grass (annual and perennial), forbs (legumes, brassicas), browse, forage, or stockpiled forages, and post-harvest crop residue without separated grain shall be at least 99 percent of the energy source for the lifetime of the ruminant specie, with the exception of milk consumed prior to weaning. Routine mineral and vitamin supplementation may also be included in the feeding regimen. (5/12/06)

* Most grass-fed producers that are part of this coalition, market their meat under more than one label claim, frequently using both "grass-fed" and a "no-antibiotics used" claims. Most will take the position that combining the two claims into one label makes sense because grass-based systems result in very little use of antibiotics and because consumers are looking for meat with both grass-fed and no-antibiotics used labels.