

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Waiter</b></p> <p>QUESTIONS TO ASK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is any of the meat you serve raised without antibiotics or added hormones?</li> <li>• Do you know if any of your meat is free range or pasture raised?</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Husbandry Institute</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Butcher/Retailer</b></p> <p>QUESTION TO ASK:</p> <p>What can you tell me about where your meat comes from?</p> <p>FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were the animals raised without antibiotics or added hormones?</li> <li>• Were they free range or on pasture from birth to market?</li> <li>• Do you know who raised them and where?</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">www.askforchange.org</p>
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## ASK FOR CHANGE

Sustainable meat choices for Health, Environment, and Animal Welfare

**MEAT MATTERS.** *If your health, your family's health, the environment, sustainable agriculture, or animal welfare is a priority for you, this information will help you ask questions to identify sustainably raised meat, dairy and eggs, and let restaurateurs and retailers know your care.*

**What you eat is personal:** Ask about where the meat comes from. Its easy and the response will clearly show whether or not the restaurant or grocer knows enough for you to learn more. If they bought their meat from a local farmer or family farm distributor, they will proudly tell you about the farmers, where they live, and how they raise their animals. If they bought from a large distributor, your food may have passed through four or five hands on their way to market. In this case, there is no ability to trace back to a specific farm or ranch. While the meat industry is today spending millions of dollars lobbying Congress to prevent a law requiring just to prevent country of origin labeling, it is essential that as consumers, the information we want is available.

**Smart choices start with the animals:** Animal welfare is often directly connected with the quality of the meat and the environmental impact of the way animals were raised. It is all too easy for someone to just say "yes" to the question, "Were they raised humanely?" It is important to ask questions that can provide specific information. Welfare and respect are the principles, but the way to get more specific is to find out if the animals and their parents were allowed to behave naturally and roam throughout their entire lives. This means:

- all animals free-range wherever possible, and
- no slatted floors, tight containment (cages or crates), including overcrowded factory feed lots.

**Health: Antibiotics & Hormones:** More than 70% of the pharmaceuticals used in the US are given to animals not, as you might imagine for the treatment of disease, but to increase animal weight gain. Animals raised for meat, milk and eggs on conventional factory farms in confinement are fed high grain diets laden with antibiotics (most commonly penicillin and tetracycline) and other drugs and hormones so they can offer more of a cheaper product at grocery stores and

**Omega-3:** Animals, raised free range on pasture have up to *three times higher concentrations of polyunsaturated fatty acids, particularly healthy fats like omega-3.* These fats are instrumental building blocks in human brain, mood, and fetus' retina and nervous tissue development. *The full extent of factory farming's threat to human health is still unknown.*

restaurants. The medical community and consumers are discovering the true price of consuming conventionally raised meats as the effectiveness of these drugs diminishes in ensuring human health. New strains of bacteria continue to develop resistance to these antibiotics, imposing serious individual and public health threats beyond the incalculable costs. The stressful, unhealthy environment means that nearly all conventional, factory-raised animals are routinely fed antibiotics in their feed and water.

### How to use Ask For Change!

1) Take the AFC! wallet card from this sheet and carry it with you in your wallet or purse.

2) Our goal is to find out enough to make a conscientious choice. At restaurants, grocery stores, and butcher shops, review the questions on the AFC! card and choose which side of the card to ask questions from.

3) **Ask your server or butcher questions.** Keep in mind that a surprisingly wide variety of restaurants offer sustainably raised meats, and *your server or butcher may not know and have to ask someone else.* Labels can be an important source of information, but use this information to recognize vague and misleading claims.

- **Start with a general question.** Restaurants and retailers that put a lot of care into selecting their meats are proud to tell you all about *their* choices!

- **The absence of information is often more important than what they tell you.** Listen carefully, if they don't know, another selection may be best. Answers like "*it was all raised naturally*", or "*it was all raised on a farm*," do not provide the information you are looking for.

4) The AFC! questions are an important way to get chefs and grocers thinking about the health and environmental benefits or consequences of the meats they provide. If no satisfying meat, dairy or egg options are offered, **this is a perfect opportunity to start this dialogue and let them know why sustainable meat options are important to you.** When providers see that pasture-raised, antibiotic free meat choices are in demand, they will want to offer more.

**“Humane” animal care:** Ethical treatment of all farmed animals and their offspring throughout their lifetimes is essential. More and more, Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) are trying to appeal to concerned consumers—not by changing their practices but by obscuring them. The treatment of BOTH offspring and parents is crucial. Including all the animals who are the most likely to have been abused, also indicates whether the meat came from a family farm or conventional factory farm.

Learn more about animal welfare. Visit <http://www.awionline.org/farm>

**Environmental cleanup:** Animal factories are among the worst polluters in the country. The sheer volume of manure from factory operations cannot be absorbed by the environment. Manure pits are poorly constructed. They breed antibiotic resistant bacteria. They seep. They often overflow and spill. Manure pits today are contaminating more than 129,000 river miles, 3.2 million lake acres and important ground water supplies as well. The concentration of thousands of animals in crowded conditions, pollutes the air many Americans breathe. Consider that animals consume up to 5 lbs. of feed to produce 1 lb. of meat. Trucking grains to produce that pound of meat consumes more fuel and puts even more CO<sub>2</sub> into our air. To reduce transportation pollution, animals should be eating feed grown nearby. This supports communities of working people across America who bring us our food. Farmers Markets are often a great place to find meat from a local farmer whose animals behave naturally and who works his/her own land, manages it sustainably, and uses no antibiotics or hormones. Not all local is sustainable; so ask questions.

**Family farming and local economies:** Family farms, their American work values, efficiency and clean environmental practices are disappearing at a dramatic rate, giving way to huge capital intensive factory farms. What seem like low food prices are just the opposite. Annually, consumers pay three times their food expenditures through taxes, environmental cleanup, mounting health costs, and massive farm, energy and transportation subsidies. The multiplied value of your money supporting local family farmers is invested in communities and families, not offices and executives. The flow from you to the farmer, to a local retailer, to a repair person, and so on, shows how family farms support communities, create jobs and foster stronger local economies.

If you can't find food raised nearby, support another community's local economy. Much of the meat we consume today has been raised in the Midwest. There are still farmers there who share and understand your values on health, the environment, and treatment of animals. They manage the land for *their* children and for *their* future. These farmers do good work and strive to earn your support. Easier and wider access depends on restaurants and retailers perceiving markets for the food they buy. That's where you come in: seeking the products from family farmers who are rooted in ethical and sustainable animal husbandry.

Above all, we seek **ethical and sustainable agriculture**. Family farmers who care for their animals and treat them with respect apply the same principles to the health and environment of our communities – after all, it's their home too.

MEAT MATTERS. Lets spend our money wisely for ourselves and our future.

### **What about labels, claims & Organic?**

▶ **Certified Organic:** Only food producers that adhere to US Department of Agriculture (USDA) standards for the organic label, and are certified, may use the term. Organic livestock are not given antibiotics or growth hormones; are fed only organically produced feed grown without pesticides, herbicides or genetically modified organisms (GMO); and must have access to pasture. Organic meat cannot be irradiated.

▶ **No Hormones:** Hormones are not allowed for hogs or poultry. Beef producers may be USDA approved to use this claim.

▶ **No Antibiotics:** The USDA regulates claims of "no antibiotics added" or "raised without antibiotics."

▶ **Natural:** According to the USDA, a meat product containing no artificial ingredients or added color and that is only minimally processed, i.e., "does not fundamentally alter the raw product." There is no regulation or verification.

▶ **Free Roaming/Free Range & Cage Free:** Defined for poultry as animals having access to the outside. The USDA regulates use of "free range" claims for poultry, but not for eggs or beef. No specific amount of time outside is required.

▶ **Kosher:** Refers only to meat and poultry products prepared under rabbinical supervision and has no environmental, health, or welfare standards (including antibiotic and hormone use).

▶ **Humane:** There is no legal definition of humane, so a variety of groups have used this claim differently.

▶ **Grass Fed:** Cattle are raised in open pastures and fed on grass. Although currently unregulated, USDA expects to define "grass fed" by 2006. These producers will specify and verify their practices.

### **A conscientious choice in meat means:**

- Respect for animal welfare
- Strong family farmers and local economies
- A cleaner environment
- Healthier people

**Thank you for carrying this card in your wallet, and for asking questions!**

**ASK FOR CHANGE**

For more information and to request more cards visit AFC! on the web or contact us:

[www.askforchange.org](http://www.askforchange.org)

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