

1 DECEMBER 2006

Listening Sessions on Naturally Raised Livestock

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) announced that it is considering the development of a voluntary standard to address production practices associated with the term "naturally raised" for livestock. Three listening sessions will be held to provide for public input on a voluntary marketing claim standard specifically for naturally raised livestock.

Working with industry representatives and other interested parties, AMS facilitates the marketing of agricultural commodities by developing and maintaining U.S. standards for nearly 240 agricultural products. Producers and consumers use the standards in the marketplace to specify the quality of commodities. Standards provide a common language for trade and a means of differentiating value in the marketing of agricultural products.

The dates and locations of the three listening sessions are as follows:

Dec. 11, 2006, Washington, D.C.;

Jan. 17, 2007, Denver, Colo.;

Jan. 18, 2007, Seattle, Wash.

All listening sessions will begin promptly at 1 p.m. local time. Interested parties are encouraged to attend and provide either verbal or written comments. Verbal comments will be limited to three minutes per person. For more information on the listening sessions, visit the AMS Web site at www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/.