

For Immediate Release

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TOP U.S. CLONING COMPANIES ANNOUNCE NEW SYSTEM TO TRACK CLONED LIVESTOCK

Program that Allows Accurate Marketing Claims Designed with Input from Entire Food Chain

The nation's leading livestock cloning companies announced today a tracking program using a supply chain management system that will allow food companies to identify cloned animals when they move into the food processing chain.

The program was developed through extensive cooperative discussions over the last year with all critical participants in the food chain. Representatives of the beef, dairy and pork industries, as well as producers, processors, grocers and food service providers helped design the system.

The program is designed to facilitate marketing claims. A rigorous assessment by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and two previous reports by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) found there are no safety concerns with the products of cloned animals.

“Because so few clones currently exist, putting this system into place immediately virtually ensures that processors will be able to identify food from a cloned animal if that's their goal,” said Mark Walton, president of cloning company ViaGen Inc.

The program works through use of a national registry, affidavits and incentives. Cloning companies will give each cloned animal a unique ID. This identification will be entered into a registry that can be queried and verified by the livestock auction market or packer/processor.

When the cloning company delivers the animal, the owner will sign an affidavit committing to proper marketing or disposal of the animal or, in the case of dairy cattle, proper marketing of its milk. The owner is returned an incentive deposit from the cloning company when they notify the company of death (verified by veterinarian), consumption by owner (verified by meat locker) or sale to a packer/processor that accepts clones (verified by signed statement from packer/processor).

Last December, the FDA released a draft risk assessment stating that food derived from clones and their offspring is indistinguishable from that of conventionally reproduced animals. This report was based on hundreds of domestic and international peer-reviewed studies conducted over decades. Several of these studies analyzed multiple generations of animals.

The risk assessment followed two previous reports by NAS that came to the same conclusion. Last spring, over 300 world-renowned scientists signed a petition circulated by the Federation of Animal Science Societies supporting the FDA's risk assessment.

“There is no argument about the safety of these products and the extremely limited number of clones makes it unlikely anyone will eat food from a cloned animal,” said Walton. “However, we wanted to accommodate those industry segments who may wish to market only traditional products.”

“Cloned animals have been extensively studied and found to be safe,” said David Faber, president of cloning company Trans Ova Genetics. “However, we are happy to assist the supply chain as it gains further confidence in the benefits that this exciting process can provide to farmers, processors and consumers.”

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