

For Immediate Release

Hearst Ranch Receives Food Alliance Certification for Sustainable Agricultural Practices

San Francisco, CA, October 27, 2006 --

The 153,000 acre Hearst Ranch, one of the largest cattle ranching operations on the California coast, has been certified by the non-profit organization Food Alliance for using sustainable agricultural practices. Having passed an independent third-party inspection, Hearst Ranch can now make credible claims for social and environmental responsibility to support marketing of its all-natural, hormone and antibiotic free, grass-fed beef.

"We've always been proud of our land stewardship and dedicated to grass-fed beef," says ranch manager Brian Kenny. "We think Food Alliance certification proves to our customers that we really walk the walk. We've had an independent inspector on our properties to verify the claims we're making."

Hearst Ranch customers include the food service company Aramark, which serves Hearst Ranch beef at the Lake Powell Resort, and Let's Be Frank, which uses Hearst Ranch beef in its all-natural hot dogs.

Brian Kenny sees growing interest in certification in the food industry. "Consumers want to know where their food comes from and how it was produced. A lot of companies are seeing that a commitment to quality also includes a commitment to health and to the environment. At the same time the expectations for traceability and transparency are increasing."

Food Alliance director Scott Exo agrees, "A lot of claims are being made about 'natural' and 'green' products. Certification ensures that buyers can verify the origin of the product and the conditions under which it was produced. That transparency helps build consumer trust and loyalty."

Hearst Ranch selected Food Alliance as its certifier because of the breadth of Food Alliance's standards for sustainable agriculture. "It was really important to us and to our customers that the certification cover both animal welfare and land stewardship," says Brian Kenny. "We looked at organic and other certifications, and Food Alliance was the certification that covered all the bases."

Food Alliance now has offices in Portland, Oregon and St. Paul, Minnesota. Food Alliance will be opening an office in California in 2007 with support from the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Environmental Protection Agency.

"It's my great pleasure to announce that the Hearst Ranch has been inspected and certified by Food Alliance," says Scott Exo. "It's a great opportunity to introduce farmers, ranchers and food processors California to Food Alliance. Certification can be a powerful tool for differentiating products and developing new markets. We're really looking forward to expanding our program in California."

About Food Alliance --

Food Alliance is a non-profit organization that certifies farms, ranches and food processors for sustainable agricultural and production practices. Businesses that meet Food Alliance's standards, as determined by a third-party site inspection, use certification to make credible claims for social and environmental responsibility, differentiating their products and strengthening their brands. Food Alliance certification standards can be reviewed on the web and include:

- Safe and fair working conditions
- Healthy and humane care for livestock
- No hormones or non-therapeutic antibiotics
- No genetically modified crops or livestock
- Reduction of pesticide use and toxicity
- Conservation of soil and water resources
- Protection of wildlife habitat
- Planning for continuous improvement

Food Alliance launched its certification program in 1998 in Portland, Oregon with a single apple grower selling in three area grocery stores. Today, there are nearly 250 Food Alliance certified farms and ranches in 16 U.S. states and one Canadian province. These producers manage over 4 million acres of range and farm land, raising beef, lamb, pork, dairy products, mushrooms, dried beans and lentils, wheat, and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. An increasing number of Food Alliance certified processed products are also available, including bread, oil, and frozen and canned fruits and vegetables.

Contact: Scott Exo, Executive Director
Food Alliance
Tel: 503-493-1066
www.FoodAlliance.org

About Hearst Ranch –

The Hearst Ranch, started in 1865 by George Hearst, a successful California Gold Rush miner and later a US Senator, is one of the largest working cattle ranches on the California coast. In addition to the 80,000 acres surrounding the Hearst Castle in San Simeon, Hearst Ranch cattle are also grazed on the 73,000-acre Jack Ranch in Cholame, California.

The Hearst Ranch is a member of the American Grass-fed Association. Hearst cattle live a completely natural existence as foragers and grazers. Well-managed grazing is one of the primary reasons for the excellent condition of the coastal prairie and native grasslands along the inland terraces on the ranch. Grazing fertilizes the land naturally, promotes plant growth, and produces a remarkable meat whose flavor is the authentic taste of the American West.

The historic working landscape at Hearst Ranch will be preserved forever thanks to one of the largest land conservation easements in California history, a joint effort with the California Rangeland Trust, the American Land Conservancy and the State of California.

Contact: Brian Kenny, Manager
Hearst Ranch Beef
Tel: ??????????
www.HearstRanch.com

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