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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Food Alliance Issues New, National Standard for Sustainable Sheep and Goat Production**  
*Standard Covers Animal Health, Humane Care, and Environmental Concerns*

**Portland, OR – October 1, 2008:** Food Alliance, a national non-profit organization offering the most comprehensive third-party certification for sustainable agriculture and food handling practices, today announced new standards for sustainable sheep and goat products. The new national standard creates an opportunity for sheep and goat producers across North America to assure customers of social and environmental responsibility while adding value to their products.

Food Alliance's new standard replaces one previously used by the organization to certify Northwest sheep growers, and now applies to goats and both meat and wool producers, and accommodates conditions throughout North America. "Consumers want to know the foods they buy are good for them, and good for the environment," said Scott Exo, Food Alliance executive director. "By verifying their marketing claims against independent standards for social and environmental responsibility, companies can increase consumers' trust and loyalty and, often, gain market rewards."

The new standard covers a wide variety of animal welfare issues, including: animal health and nutrition; handling practices and facilities; pasture management; nutrient management; pest and weed management; and hazard reduction and sanitation. The standards do not permit the use of hormone treatments, non-therapeutic antibiotics, genetic modification, embryo transfer or cloning. In addition, feeds may not contain animal by-products of any kind, with the exception of milk or milk products such as whey.

"Anyone can say they offer a 'natural' product, but that just doesn't mean much anymore," said Kathy Panner of Umpqua Valley Lamb, a company that sells Food Alliance Certified lamb and beef. "Third-party certification is definitely important to our marketing efforts. When someone asks about our management practices, I can just hand them the Food Alliance standards. It's a great tool for educating our customers."

The new sheep and goat standard is now available to ranchers nationwide and will be applied in conjunction with Food Alliance's existing "Whole Farm/Ranch" standard, which addresses safe and fair working conditions; reduction of pesticide use and toxicity; soil and water conservation, and; protection of wildlife habitat.

**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. There are over 300 Food Alliance certified farms and ranches in 23 U.S. states, Canada and Mexico. These producers manage over 5.6 million acres of range and farm land, raising beef, lamb, pork, dairy products, wheat, and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. An estimated \$350 million worth of Food Alliance certified products have been sold to date. Food Alliance has offices in Oregon, Minnesota and California. For more information visit: [www.foodalliance.org](http://www.foodalliance.org).

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