



farm sanctuary
rescue • education • advocacy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts:

Tricia Barry, Farm Sanctuary, 607-583-2225 ext. 233, tricia@farmsanctuary.org

Tracie Letterman, AAVS, 215-887-0816 ext. 333, tletterman@aavs.org

Animal Protection Groups Condemn FDA's Endorsement of Animal Cloning

Animal Groups Say Greenlighting Production of Cloned Animals for Food is Irresponsible and Unethical; Research Finds Cloning Detrimental to Animals' Well-being

Washington, DC – January 15, 2008 – Farm Sanctuary, the nation's leading farm animal protection organization, in association with the American Anti-Vivisection Society (AAVS), the oldest organization in the nation dedicated to ending experiments on animals, denounce the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) decision today to endorse the sale of cloned animals and their offspring for food. The agency moved forward with the announcement despite massive opposition from many corners, including Congress, the dairy industry, and animal protection and consumer advocacy groups. The FDA also called on producers to respect the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) request for a voluntary moratorium on the sale of cloned animals, though this moratorium would not apply to the progeny of cloned animals. Farm Sanctuary and AAVS are calling for a mandatory moratorium on cloned animals and their offspring to be established immediately.

The FDA's final risk assessment on animal cloning is filled with the same twists of logic, assumptions, and misrepresentations as the draft released in December 2006, despite thousands of comments criticizing the agency's analysis. For example, though the FDA acknowledges its responsibility to consider "the health of animals involved in the cloning process," the agency goes on to say that "our goal in evaluating the data on animal health ... was not to determine whether the animals involved in the cloning process experienced adverse outcomes, but rather whether any of these outcomes are unique to cloning."

Simply tallying what problems cloned animals experience, without assessing the frequency or severity of those problems, hardly constitutes a rigorous science-based decision the FDA claims to have made. By the FDA's logic, something that causes severe side effects in 30%, 50%, even 70% of cases should be treated no differently than something that causes minor effects in less than five percent of cases.

Julie Janovsky, Farm Sanctuary's director of campaigns, states that "It is an outrage that the FDA has misrepresented animal health and welfare implications. Cloning is a scientifically unsound and ethically challenged technology that has extremely disturbing welfare implications for animals."

Scientific studies included in the FDA's assessment reveal, for example, that 28 percent of cow clone pregnancies suffer from hydrops, an often fatal condition in which the mother and/or fetus swells with fluid. Over 50 percent of all calf clones suffer from Large Offspring Syndrome, in which the animal is grossly oversized and often displays other abnormalities that create "respiratory, cardiac, hepatic, renal, umbilical, and immunologic problems." Even older clones who appear healthy have been known to develop "adult clone sudden death syndrome," which casts doubt that cloned animals can ever be considered healthy. In contrast, these problems occur in less than five percent of conventional, non-cloned animals, if ever.

The FDA attempts to brush aside all these concerns by stating that problems are decreasing as the technology improves. However, data included in the FDA's own assessment contradicts this finding, and

despite years of research, less than five percent of cloning attempts result in an animal who reaches maturity. A leading cloning scientist has even stated that, even in the most optimistic scenario, no more than 20-30 percent of cloning attempts will succeed.

The FDA has stated that it is working with interested parties to address animal health issues by developing standards of animal care for cloning. However, as shown in a 2007 study, 42 percent of clones died despite receiving extensive veterinary care. In addition, the FDA has chosen to partner with the International Embryo Transfer Society and the Federation of Animal Science Societies in developing these standards, even though these groups consist of scientists with a vested interest in developing and promoting animal biotechnologies, not in animal welfare.

“Consumers have numerous reasons to want to avoid cloned foods, including concerns about animal welfare and the ethics of cloning,” said Tracie Letterman, Executive Director of AAVS. “The FDA has admitted that it does not evaluate the moral, ethical, or religious concerns with animal cloning. To protect the interests of consumers and animals alike, these issues need to be factored into any decision, as they are in Europe, Canada, and elsewhere around the world.”

Although the USDA is maintaining the voluntary moratorium on cloned animals, the public cannot be confident that they are not supporting cloning when the moratorium no longer covers the offspring of clones, is only voluntary, and is being managed by the cloning industry.

Farm Sanctuary and AAVS urge that a mandatory moratorium should be maintained until Health and Human Services sets up an advisory committee to openly and thoroughly deliberate the issues related to cloning that go beyond food safety, and beyond the FDA's analysis, including concerns about animal welfare and ethical implications. Food producers, processors, and marketers must also take responsibility and pledge not to use cloned animals or offspring in their products.

About Farm Sanctuary

Farm Sanctuary is the nation's leading farm animal protection organization. Since incorporating in 1986, Farm Sanctuary has worked to expose and stop cruel practices of the "food animal" industry through research and investigations, legal and institutional reforms, public awareness projects, youth education, and direct rescue and refuge efforts. Farm Sanctuary shelters in Watkins Glen, N.Y., and Orland, Calif., provide lifelong care for hundreds of rescued animals, who have become ambassadors for farm animals everywhere by educating visitors about the realities of factory farming. Additional information can be found at <http://www.farmsanctuary.org> or by calling 607-583-2225.

About AAVS

The American Anti-Vivisection Society (AAVS) is the oldest non-profit animal advocacy and educational organization in the United States dedicated to ending experiments on animals in research, testing, and education. Founded in Philadelphia in 1883, AAVS pursues its objectives through legal and effective advocacy, education, and support of the development of non-animal alternative methods. Additional information can be found at <http://www.aavs.org>, <http://www.endanimalcloning.org>, or by calling 215-887-0816.

###