

**American Anti-Vivisection Society ♦ Center for Food Safety
Consumer Federation of America ♦ Consumers Union
Farm Sanctuary ♦ Food & Water Watch
Humane Society of the United States**

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Consumers May Receive Unwelcome Gift This Holiday Season

*Coalition Condemns Food and Drug Administration Plans for Cloned Foods as Irresponsible,
Calls on FDA to Respect Will of Congress and Maintain Cloning Moratorium*

December 18, 2007— This holiday season, people have more to fear than the dreaded fruitcake. Advocacy and watchdog groups are putting consumers on alert. The meat and dairy products they buy may soon come from cloned animals, and they will not even know it. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has completed its analysis on cloning, which means that an announcement could come by the end of this month that animals can be cloned and sold for food, and without labels.

“Surveys have repeatedly shown that consumers are wary of food from cloned animals,” said Chris Waldrop, Director of the Food Policy Institute at the Consumer Federation of America. “We need a much more comprehensive assessment of the potential implications of allowing food from cloned animals into the food supply.” The impacts on U.S. agriculture, trade, and the integrity of the food supply are still largely unknown. Unlabeled products from cloned animals in the food supply could have significant repercussions.

The U.S. Congress shares the groups’ concerns. Just last week, the Senate passed the Farm Bill (H.R. 2419) with a provision introduced by Senators Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Arlen Specter (R-PA) requiring the FDA to delay its decision on cloned animals until additional studies can be completed by the USDA and the National Academy of Sciences (NAS). The House-Senate conference is expected to decide on the provisions of the final Farm Bill in early 2008.

“With Friday’s passage of the Farm Bill, the Senate has sent the FDA an unequivocal message; the public wants more information before clones are released into the food supply,” said Center for Food Safety Legal Director Joe Mendelson. “The prudent approach outlined in the Mikulski-Specter Amendment calls for thorough and peer reviewed testing before any green light is given to cloned food. American consumers deserve no less than the best recommendations based on the most exhaustive scientific review.”

“The FDA risk assessment ignored the fact that most clones never make it to adulthood because they die in gestation or shortly after birth, and also failed to consider whether clones might need more drug treatments,” said Dr. Michael Hansen, Senior Scientist, Consumers Union. “We agree with the Senate that the NAS should take another look at the safety questions.”

In addition, the House has passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act with language that strongly encourages the FDA to maintain the voluntary moratorium on cloned foods and directs the agency to complete a study with the USDA investigating the economic and trade implications of introducing cloned animals into the food supply. The Senate is expected to pass the Act later this week.

“There is broad bipartisan support for this cloning legislation,” said Tracie Letterman, Executive Director of the American Anti-Vivisection Society. “Congress is clearly telling the FDA to wait on animal cloning because more information is needed about human health, animal welfare, and economic impacts. The FDA should respect that.”

Opposition to the FDA’s plans has also united an unlikely set of allies. Consumer and animal advocacy organizations, environmental groups, and the dairy industry have all urged the FDA to wait for further study before allowing food from cloned animals.

“It is much too soon for this controversial technology to be unleashed in the marketplace, especially without requiring it to be labeled,” said Wenonah Hauter, Executive Director of Food & Water Watch. “When it comes to cloned food, the FDA should listen to the public instead of the biotech industry.”

Opinion polls show that the vast majority of Americans do not want food from clones and are opposed to cloning for health, food safety, moral, and ethical reasons. The FDA received over 150,000 comments expressing outrage over its plans to allow animal cloning for food products.

"Animal protection advocates support scientific advancement, but cloning lacks any legitimate social value and decreases animal welfare in a dramatic way," said Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of The Humane Society of the United States. "Congress has signaled that FDA needs to slow down the application of this bad idea, and we hope the agency will terminate the plan entirely."

Much of the concern stems from the fact that over 95 percent of cloning attempts fail, resulting in diseased and deformed animals, and the long-term health effects of consuming the “successful” clones are unknown. Many leading U.S. producers have already rejected using cloned animals.

“With the public increasingly concerned about the treatment of farm animals,” said Julie Janovsky, Campaign Director for Farm Sanctuary, “the cloning legislation acknowledges the fact that cloning may lead to even harsher conditions for animals used to produce food”.

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