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Hormones Administered**
Uncured—
NO Nitrites or Nitrates**

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- ◆ **MOIST, TENDER, DELICIOUS!**
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- ✓ **Roast Beef**
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- ✓ **Ham**
- ✓ **Bulk Bacon**

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www.maverickranch.com

*Natural. Minimally processed. No artificial ingredients or preservatives. USDA permits no preservatives in this product.
**FEDERAL REGULATIONS DO NOT PERMIT THE USE OF GROWTH HORMONES IN BUFFALO, PORK, OR POULTRY PRODUCTION

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Family Farm Since 1835

No Antibiotics • Veggie Grown™
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Like-minded consumers seek out pesticide-free food because they, too, worry about the chemicals that they ingest and that are potentially harmful to the environment. "The knowledge increases with education and level of income," says Moore.

"I think consumers nowadays are more educated about food and concerned with providing products that are nutritional and wholesome, not only for themselves but also for their families," says Barbara Quijano, vice president of sales and marketing, Plainville Farms, Plainville, NY. The family-owned farm produces over 600,000 natural turkeys a year.

"Health is always a huge concern," says Marquez of Organic Valley. "Environment is another concern, and the two are linked."

Dairy cows at Organic Valley and Organic Prairie are raised without the added hormones some farms use to increase milk production. "The consumer doesn't want milk from cows pumped up with a hormone," she adds.

Of those consumers looking for hormone-free food, young mothers are some of the pickiest. "So many women are pregnant or have young kids and worry about what they put in their bodies," Marquez notes.

Rick North, project director of the campaign for safe food for Physicians for Social Responsibility, Oregon Chapter, Portland, OR, cites two reasons educated consumers are concerned about hormones in their dairy products. First is an increase in udder infections. "That means farmers are going to use more antibiotics. The second is cancer. It significantly increases another growth hormone called IGF1. Excess levels of IGF1 have been linked very strongly to cancer in humans. From milk, it comes into us.

"We don't say there's absolute proof that it causes cancer, but why take an unnecessary risk?" asks North.

Antibiotic use in conventionally raised animals also sends more consumers to the natural category. "Antibiotics are a big issue for a couple of reasons," says Applegate's McDonnell. "One is, in our opinion, it allows growers to produce animals in an unsustainable way. It allows them to give animals cheaper feed, which is bad for the immune system, and it allows them to crowd the animals in ways they shouldn't be crowded. They're on drugs, from the minute they're born until the minute they die. It's done to cheapen the product.

"The increased levels of resistance to antibiotics in animals and people is another issue," says McDonnell. "Antibiotics become increasingly ineffective."

While many people choose natural food because they believe it is more healthful, concern about the environment is a growing reason consumers choose natural — especially organic — food.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

"None of us has figured out what the successor to organic will be," says K. Dun Gifford, president of Boston, MA-based Oldways Preservation Trust.

"I think you can predict that if you have a good story — a good message — you can appeal to Americans to change the way they eat," he says. "Organics are a big deal. People poo-hooed it at first. In this country, we really don't have any deep-rooted traditions, except that we change."

So what is his best guess? "It's trending towards localism — eating more local foods. What happens with these kinds of trends is they start small and they build, and the big companies start going. 'Hey, we've got to get in on this!'"

Eating locally grown and produced foods is an idea that has been strongly embraced in Europe. But will it catch on here?

"This is a slippery slope," Gifford says. "What's local? Fifty miles away? Are people going to say, 'Okay, I'm all for eating local, except for oranges,'" he laughs. "And, hey, where are we supposed to get our coffee? And our chocolate? And the spices we used to flavor our locally made ham?"

Stickers on rotisserie chicken packages may one day proclaim that the chicken came from the farm next door, but it certainly will not stop Gifford from enjoying it with a piece of imported Italian cheese. **DB**

"If you go back 10 or 20 years, there was no concern about the environment in respect to the food supply," says Oldways' Gifford. "There's an upward trend with that."

"Agriculture is now the No. 1 pollutant in the world," says Marquez. "Natural does not address that. It means no additives in the processing. It does not mean organic agriculture."

That does not mean a product must be certified organic to be environmentally friendly. It does mean environmentally conscious consumers are reading more labels and doing their homework to find out exactly how their food was grown.

HUMANE TREATMENT

Many feel the food they are eating comes from happier animals if no pesticides, hor-