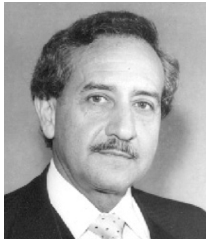


# MEAT AND POULTRY

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## The President's Message



By John Calcagno  
Institute President

It is hard to believe that our industry has once again been a victim of vicious attacks such as those regarding "pink slime" in recent weeks. Even the terminology for this meat product has been twisted to a point that is hard to believe. This is certainly worthy of investigation.

This newsletter contains information on this attack and it details some of the actions that some reasonable people are taking to reclaim the viability of finely textured beef as a safe and reliable part of our nation's food system.

I find it particularly despicable that such an attack can so easily be launched by self-styled, unprofessional, consumer advocates who have neither the authority or the professional background to make such accusations.

I am joining with a number of state governors and the operators of Beef Products Inc. in calling for an investigation.

I am also quite upset that representatives at the USDA helped perpetuate this scare while insisting that the product is safe and wholesome. Somehow, they also fell prey to the prevailing hysteria by suggesting that schools and other public institutions should make their own safety judgments.

I hope investigations are held and the American people will receive real science-based information so that FTB and the companies now in danger of

*(Continued on Page 4)*

## Leaders Call Attack on "Pink Slime" a "Smear Campaign," Seek Investigation

Agribusiness giant Cargill Inc. said it would cut production of meat scraps critics call "pink slime" and said consumer resistance to the filler could lead to higher hamburger prices during the grilling season beginning this spring.

Cargill's move came two days after leading producer Beef Products Inc. shut down three of four facilities making the filler and said 650 jobs were at risk. Cargill did not say whether any jobs at its plants were affected.

Concern that higher hamburger

prices could discourage consumer demand for beef drove down cattle futures prices at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange more than 1 percent last week.

At issue is a product the meat industry calls "finely textured beef" that is made from the scraps of meat left over from breaking a carcass into cuts such as steaks and roasts. It was widely used as filler in hamburger.

Consumer activists including  
*(Continued on Page 2)*

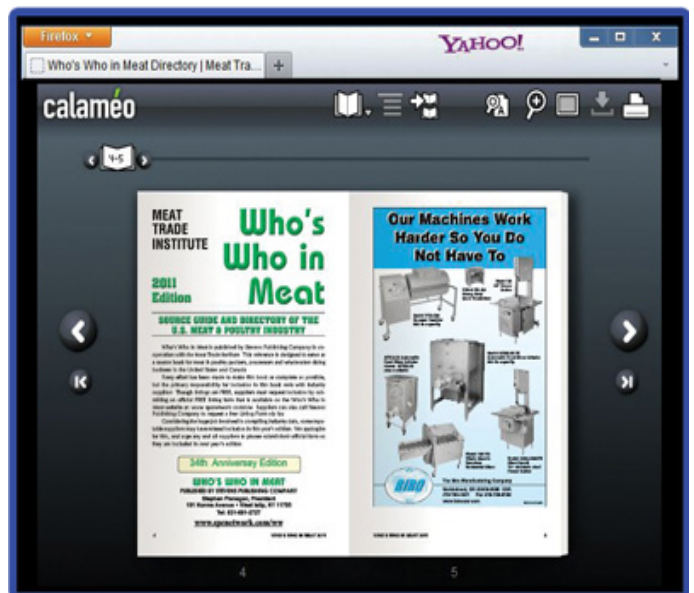
## Who's Who in Meat Announces Interactive Online Edition

The Meat Trade Institute is proud to announce that its "Who's Who in Meat" Directory is now available for real-time access on the internet. The web based edition can be accessed at web address: [www.spcnetwork.com/ww](http://www.spcnetwork.com/ww) by clicking on the "View or Download Current Edition Now" option at the top of the "Main Menu" page.

Once at the "View Page", you can review Who's Who with a simple click of your mouse.

The online edition includes hotlinks to the websites of all advertisers.

A huge new benefit for Who's Who in Meat participants is a vastly largest distribution for the directory. In recent years, the Institute has distributed



## Pink Slime Smear Campaign...

(Continued from Page 1)

celebrity chef Jamie Oliver campaigned to ban it, calling it "pink slime" and showing pictures of unsightly globs on television and the Internet.

"Some Cargill customers have eliminated FTB (finely textured beef) from their products. Some Cargill fresh beef customers have asked us to provide ground beef without (it)," Cargill spokesman Mike Martin said.

The beef industry was caught off-guard by the campaign, which prompted a flood of consumer complaints and led to supermarket chains and food companies rejecting the product. This could force meat packers to use higher quality beef for hamburger and increase prices.

Supporters of the meat industry fought back, calling the product safe to eat. Iowa Governor Terry Branstad appeared with U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack in Des Moines, Iowa and said consumer activists were conducting a "smear campaign" against meat producers.

Vilsack said the agency would stick with its recent announcement allowing school districts to choose whether they wanted hamburger with filler for school lunches.

Hundreds of school districts had asked the USDA to ban the product from school lunches and government had a duty to respond, Vilsack said.

"Let me reiterate without any equivocation something that we have

said hundreds of times ... this product is safe," Vilsack said. "There's no question about it."

The nation's top three supermarket chains -- Kroger Co., Safeway Inc. and Supervalu Inc. -- all said they would no longer sell hamburger containing the product. Walmart, the nation's largest food seller, said it would no longer use the product in its trays of hamburger.

McDonald's was the first major fast food company to stop buying hamburgers including finely textured beef last August and some other fast food companies quickly followed.

Cargill said it was not completely halting production of the beef product, which is made at four of its five plants.

In another bid to counter the negative image of the product, Branstad will accompany fellow Republican governors Sam Brownback of Kansas and Rick Perry of Texas on a tour of a Beef Products Inc plant in South Sioux City, Nebraska.

Branstad, who said he had been eating the beef filler for 30 years, blamed the campaign against it on people opposed to any meat in the diet and said it could damage his farm state's economy. Iowa is dependent on raising livestock and the corn and soybeans farmers grow to feed the animals.

"There are groups out there that don't like meat consumption, who don't want people eating meat," Branstad said.

Any sharp pullback in demand for beef could put a significant dent in earnings of meat companies, which are gearing up for the spring outdoor grilling season.

Finely textured beef is made by taking the carcass scraps and heating them to separate the fat. Some producers spray it with ammonia to kill bacteria, and then add it to hamburger. The beef industry says the product is 98 percent lean meat. ■

### AFA Foods Files for Bankruptcy, Blames "Pink Slime" Attention

AFA Foods, a ground beef processor, has filed for bankruptcy and blamed media coverage of "pink slime" for the sudden lack of demand in their products. "Ongoing media attention has called into question the wholesomeness" of the meat, and has "dramatically reduced the demand for all ground beef products," AFA interim Chief Executive Officer Ron Allen said in court papers obtained by Bloomberg.

It's worth nothing that AFA foods isn't the first pink slime company to feel the backlash: As NPR reported last week, Beef Products Inc., a rival pink slime company, suspended production at three plants because of consumer concerns. ■

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## Who's Who in Meat Online Edition Makes Debut

(Continued from Page 1)

1200-1500 directories per year. The online edition, though only launched in the last 30 days, has already resulted in more than 1500 new users of the book with thousands more expected.

### **Make sure your company is part of it.**

The next edition of Who's Who in Meat is currently in production. Please go to the Who's Who website to review your company's listing information. The online edition is fully searchable so you should be able to locate your listing in short order. If your listing requires an update, please use the online listing form on the main website or send updated listing info via email to: [spcnetwork@earthlink.net](mailto:spcnetwork@earthlink.net). You can also call the publisher directly at 631-661-2727.

"I am very happy to announce our online edition," Meat Trade Institute President John Calcagno said. "This enhancement will allow the impact of "Who's Who in Meat" to be multiplied all over the country as more industry executives use this tremendous industry resource. Please log in today to make sure your listing is accurate and please consider running your interactive ad in our next edition." ■

## Europe Ends Beef Trade War with US and Canada

Europe ended a two-decades old beef trade war with the United States and Canada by allowing the increasing imports of high-quality meat while keeping a ban on hormone-treated beef.

The European Parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of a deal to resolve the dispute, which erupted in 1988 when Europe banned imports of beef products from animals that are given growth hormones.

In retaliation, the United States and Canada, with the backing of the World Trade Organization, limited imports of certain EU products ranging from chocolate to cheese and mustard in 1999.

The deal will see the 27-nation European Union increase imports of hormone-free US beef by 25,000 tonnes, bringing the annual total to 45,000 tonnes, and Canadian beef imports by 3,200 tonnes.

The United States and Canada have already fulfilled their end of the bargain by lifting the sanctions on European products.

The parliament voted 650 in favour, 11 against to endorse the 2009 agreement. ■



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## The President's Message

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financial collapse can reclaim their position in the marketplace.

This is the very least we should expect from USDA and other agencies in the face of unsubstantiated and hysterical actions by the nation's press on behalf of individuals carrying an anti-meat bias.

Please call me with any comments and suggestions on how best to proceed.

The good news this month is that the Meat Trade Institute has launched a new, internet-based edition of the "Who's Who in Meat" Directory.

This interactive directory contains all the information from our print edition, but also includes hundreds of hot-links to industry companies and industry suppliers.

I hope you will log on to the Who's Who website and see what I mean: [www.spcnetwork.com/ww](http://www.spcnetwork.com/ww). Once there, click into the site and select the option: "View or Download Current Edition Now" and then select "View Current Edition Now".

You can also download a copy that can be saved on your computer or lap top for use at any time.

Let me know what you think. ■



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