

## In Depth: Certified Humane®, a program of Humane Farm Animal Care



### HFAC Case Studies

This section provides background on the Certified Humane® (CH) certification program, a program of Humane Farm Animal Care (HFAC), and an overview of HFAC's:

- Standards
- Certification process
- Audit process
- Label use guidelines
- Marketing support
- Costs

### **HFAC Background**

**Mission.** The Certified Humane® certification program (CH) is an international program of Humane Farm Animal Care (HFAC), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to “improving the lives of farm animals in food production from birth through slaughter” by “driving consumer demand for kinder and more responsible farm animal practices.”

**History.** HFAC was founded in 2003 to promote and administer CH. Since then, HFAC has certified over 144 companies and over 5,000 farms for compliance with HFAC standards.





**For a Range of Farm Businesses.** HFAC certifies single operations, producer groups, beef marketing groups and its own category of “pooled product operations” – entities that (1) buy products from individual production operations that have been inspected by HFAC and found to be in conformance with HFAC standards (but are not certified individually), and (2) sell the pooled product under the PPO’s name. Additionally, HFAC certifies “Product Manufacturing Operations” (PMOs) – entities producing products that include animal-based raw materials from HFAC-certified operations. Restaurants may apply to be certified as PMOs, as well.

**Standards.** HFAC’s standards cover birth through slaughter and are driven by HFAC’s philosophy that “animals must be free to do what comes naturally.” Accordingly, HFAC states, “chickens must be able to flap their wings and dust-bathe, and pigs must have the space to move around and root.” Likewise, cages, crates and tie stalls are prohibited, and animals must be fed a diet of “quality feed, without animal by-products, antibiotics or growth hormones.” Finally, “producers must comply with food safety and environmental regulations,” and “livestock processors must comply with the American Meat Institute (AMI) guidelines, a slaughter standard written by Dr. Temple Grandin, a member of HFAC’s Scientific Committee.” Poultry producers must comply with the Poultry Slaughter Standards written by the HFAC Scientific Committee.

**Animals covered.** HFAC’s standards cover the following animals:

- Bison
- Beef and dairy cows
- Broiler chickens
- Laying hens
- Dairy, fiber and meat goats
- Pigs
- Dairy, fiber and meat sheep
- Turkeys

**Where Sold.** Relative to AWA and GAP, products with CH’s Certified Humane Raised and Handled® label are sold by the widest variety of distributors, retailers and restaurants. They can be found in the United States, Brazil, Canada, Chile and Peru. To search for CH products, visit [certifiedhumane.org/shop](http://certifiedhumane.org/shop).

**Looking Forward.** HFAC states that, in 2003, the CH program covered approximately 143,000 farm animals, and that, today, it covers over 100 million. According to HFAC, they are unlikely to cover other animal species in the near future. Rather, they are focused on continuing to promote the existing program, including its newer “Free Range” and “Pasture Raised” labels.

# HFAC STANDARDS

Each certification program covered in this guide requires compliance with standards covering various aspects of farm animal husbandry. Below is an overview of how HFAC develops its standards; which stages of life its standards cover; and HFAC's record-keeping requirements. To review all HFAC standards, visit [click here](#).

## Standards Development

HFAC states that it developed its standards in conjunction with a “40 member Scientific Committee...comprised of animal scientists and veterinarians from the United States, Canada, Europe, and South America.” Typically, according to HFAC, proposals for new or modified standards originate within this committee. However, HFAC staff, operators and other interested parties may also generate new or modified standards for review by the committee.

After the Scientific Committee agrees on the text of a new or revised standard, HFAC distributes the draft to producers potentially impacted by the proposed standard for their comments. HFAC's Standards Committee compiles comments from this “public comment” period, incorporates other comments from the Scientific Committee, considers the proposed standards and then presents final recommendations to the HFAC Board of Directors, which makes the final decision on whether to adopt the recommendations or make no change.

## Stages of Life Covered

HFAC's standards cover “birth through death.” They focus on feed and water, environment, animal management, health, transportation and slaughter. In addition, HFAC does traceability audits on all products to ensure they're coming from HFAC-certified producers and animals.

## Record-Keeping Requirements

HFAC's record-keeping standards are in place to allow auditors to review what has occurred on the farm in between audits and vary slightly across species. However, HFAC generally requires:

### A FARM PLAN REGARDING:

- Training program for caretakers
- Animal health and care of sick/injured animals
- Emergency procedures (for fire, flood, interruption of food, water, electricity, etc.)

### A RECORD OF:

- Animal feed provided
- Dated production data (alterations, castration, temperature, ammonia levels, etc.)
- Building features (total floor area, max capacity, etc.)
- Quarantine procedures and use of medication
- All incoming and outgoing animals, including transport records
- Complaints

Most of HFAC's record-keeping requirements include things many farmers will already be doing, such as recording the dates of physical procedures (castration, etc.), tracking medication use, and noting all animal sales or transfers. In addition to providing a record for auditors to review, record-keeping helps producers spot trends on their farms and operate their businesses effectively by measuring key outcomes. HFAC does not require records to be kept in any specific way. Farmers are welcome to keep their records the old-fashioned way, putting pen to paper in notebooks, logs or calendars. Similarly, HFAC accepts Excel sheets and Word documents.

**Note: Standards Deviation Requests**

If you believe you are complying with the spirit of a standard, but achieving that result through practices different than the standard specifies, you may contact HFAC and request a deviation. The relevant species subcommittee of the Standards Committee will determine whether or not to permit it.

# HFAC CERTIFICATION PROCESS

HFAC certifies farms, producer groups, beef marketing groups, product manufacturing operations (including restaurants) and “pooled product operations,” described above. The certification process described below applies to individual farms. Information about the certification process for Producer Groups, Pooled Product Operations (PPOs), and Product Manufacturing Operations can be found on the following pages, and in further detail in the [HFAC Policy Manual](#).

## STEP ONE

### Review HFAC Standards & Policies

- Read the HFAC standards for the species you wish to certify and the HFAC Policy Manual to confirm your farm will comply with relevant standards and policies.
- Confirm that your slaughter facilities are agreeable to being inspected for compliance by an HFAC auditor.

## STEP TWO

### Submit Application

- Review the application process and submit an application form and a \$75 application fee to HFAC.
- **Note:** HFAC treats your business information as confidential.

## STEP THREE

### Schedule & Facilitate an Inspection

- After you apply, HFAC will undertake an Initial Review of your application to evaluate whether your operation is capable of complying with HFAC standards.
- If your application satisfies the Initial Review, an HFAC inspector will contact you to schedule and conduct an inspection (audit). To learn more about the inspection process, including costs, [click here](#).
- **Note:** HFAC treats observations and information collected during the course of the inspection as confidential.

## STEP FOUR

### Obtain Certification & Use Label

- HFAC will make a certification determination.
- Approved operations will be provided a Certification Mark License Agreement governing label use.
- The certification fee will follow the HFAC Fee Schedule.
- Certification is valid for 1 year.
- **Note:** You may appeal a certification decision or enter a dispute resolution process for other program concerns.

## STEP FIVE

### Recertification & Changes to Certification

- HFAC-certified businesses must renew their certification annually by submitting a completed application form and application fee. The renewal process begins about 60 days before a business' certification expires, and includes generally the same steps as the initial certification.
- You must notify HFAC if you change the types or amounts of products certified or you make significant changes to your management or organizational structure. You must withhold products produced under the changed procedures until HFAC has reviewed the changes (possibly resulting in an Amended Certificate of Certification).
- **Note:** Your certification may be suspended or revoked for nonconformances, as set forth in the HFAC Policy Manual.

## HFAC CERTIFICATION PROCESS FOR PRODUCERS GROUPS

The certification process described below applies to Producer Groups, which are defined as a “close-knit group of producers that uses similar production practices, markets their products in common, and is managed by an Internal Control System (ICS). The ICS is the system used by the Producer Group to provide oversight of the group’s activities and conformance with certification standards. The ICS inspects production operations, monitors minor nonconformances and keeps records for the group.

HFAC requires that producers seeking certification as a Producer Group must:

- Use uniform farming practices that reflect a consistent process or methodology
- Produce similar products
- Be managed under one central, uniform and consistent administration
- Establish and implement their own system of internal control, supervision and documentation of producer practices to ensure conformance with HFAC certification standards
- Maintain an education program to ensure that all members understand the applicable certification standards and how they apply to their specific operations
- Utilize central processing, manufacturing, distribution and marketing facilities
- Maintain an operator complaints log

When a Producer Group applies for certification, HFAC determines whether it will conduct 100% of the audits or whether the Group’s Internal Control System may instead provide information to HFAC to evaluate conformance with HFAC standards and procedures. HFAC may choose to rely on the ICS for a portion of inspections if it determines that the ICS’s records mirror HFAC’s own findings and the ICS:

- Inspects all producers at least annually
- Inspects all new producers before including them in the Producer Group
- Performs inspections in a manner rigorous enough for HFAC to use the resulting findings to determine conformance with HFAC’s standards
- Appropriately address any instances of nonconformance
- Maintains adequate records of its inspections
- Assists producers in understanding and conforming with HFAC’s standards

The ICS must be established and functional before HFAC will accept the Producer Group. If HFAC determines that the ICS can carry out its own inspections, the ICS must complete its inspections and send all records and documentation to HFAC according to a predetermined schedule. HFAC will conduct annual inspections of the ICS and at least 10% of the Producer Group’s farmers to ensure compliance, with inspection fees of \$800 per day per inspector.

Producer Group inspections have three main components – assessments done in the ICS office, assessments done in the field and any activities done to conclude the inspection. Assessments in the office focus on evaluating the Producer Group’s ICS to ensure that all management systems are fully implemented and to review producer files for accuracy and completeness. Assessments done in the field focus on inspecting some of the group’s farms and comparing those results with the results of the ICS’s inspection of the same operation. The inspection concludes with an Exit Interview, where the inspector discusses any nonconformances and presents a summary of the audit activities and findings to the managers of the Producer Group. The inspector submits his/her findings to HFAC in a written Inspection Report. From there, the certification process mirrors that of farmers, with a certification determination and annual recertification audits.

## HFAC CERTIFICATION PROCESS FOR POOLED PRODUCT OPERATIONS

The certification process described below applies to Pooled Product Operations (PPOs) that buy products from individual producers that have been inspected by HFAC and found to be in conformance with HFAC standards. PPOs are not certified individually, but they sell product under the PPO’s name. PPOs pay HFAC for the inspections of the producers from which they buy products and pay the certification fees for the pooled product that is being sold as Certified Humane® under the PPO’s name.

The certification process generally mirrors that of farmers, with an initial review of standards, submission of application (including the \$75 fee), scheduled audit (\$800 fee), certification determination and annual recertification audits. The PPO submits its own application along with the individual application for each of the producers participating in the pool. If all of the PPO’s documents are turned in together, the PPO pays a single application fee and pays the audit fees for all of the producers being inspected. PPOs are responsible for maintaining an audit trail of all certified products contributing to the pool and their sale, handling and processing. HFAC inspects PPO processing/slaughter facilities annually to confirm that there has been no co-mingling of certified and non-certified product during processing. Notification of the certification determination is sent to the PPO, along with copies of the inspection reports for the individual farms and any necessary corrective actions forms.

# HFAC CERTIFICATION PROCESS FOR PRODUCT MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS (AND RESTAURANTS)

The certification process described below applies to Product Manufacturing Operations (PMOs) looking to sell products using Certified Humane® ingredients and bearing the Certified Humane® logo. PMOs are entities producing products that include ingredients or raw materials from HFAC-certified operations.

EXAMPLES OF PRODUCT MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS				
Animal Based Raw Materials	➔	Product Manufacturing Operation	➔	Manufactured Products
Raw Milk	➔	Dairy Processor	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pasteurized whole milk</li> <li>• Skim milk</li> <li>• Cream</li> <li>• Dry milk powder</li> <li>• Ice cream (multi-ingredient)</li> </ul>
Eggs in the Shell	➔	Egg Processor	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bulk liquid eggs</li> <li>• Egg whites</li> <li>• Powdered eggs</li> <li>• Baked goods containing eggs (multi-ingredient)</li> </ul>
Whole Meat Carcass	➔	Food Processor	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cut &amp; packaged fresh meat</li> <li>• Jerky sticks</li> <li>• Pre-cooked chicken chunks</li> <li>• Canned meat in meat broth</li> <li>• Vegetable beef stew (multi-ingredient)</li> </ul>
Raw Animal Hide	➔	Tannery	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leather</li> <li>• Leather shoes (multi-ingredient)</li> <li>• Leather furniture covers</li> </ul>
Wool Fleece	➔	Wool Mill	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaned fleece</li> <li>• Wool yarn</li> <li>• Wool sweater (multi-ingredient)</li> </ul>

Certified Humane® requires food manufacturers to be audited to ensure that all the ingredients going into the product are coming from Certified Humane® producers. The certification process generally mirrors that of farmers, with an initial review of standards, submission of application (including the \$75 fee), scheduled audit (\$800 fee), certification determination and annual recertification audits.

HFAC determines PMO certification by reviewing each product to ensure the PMO:

- Has a sourcing plan to ensure that all the animal-based ingredients are produced by HFAC-certified operations
- Ensures sufficient product identification and segregation of HFAC-certified ingredients during storage, handling, and/or manufacturing
- Keeps sufficient records to show conformance with HFAC standards for:
  - Sourcing ingredients,
  - Product segregation, and
  - Complaints to operators. (Must maintain a complaints log)
- Has product label(s) that conform to HFAC's label and seal use regulations



## HFAC INSPECTION PROCESS



HFAC employees conduct audits, which it calls “inspections,” to assess and potentially certify your operation’s conformance with HFAC standards and policies. HFAC inspects processes, facilities, animals and records.

### When Are Inspections Required?

- **Initially:** HFAC conducts an inspection as part of the initial application process.
- **Annually:** After certification, HFAC conducts inspections annually as a part of the certification renewal process.
- **Unannounced:** HFAC may perform unannounced inspections in order to assess an operation’s continued conformance with HFAC standards and policies.
  - Unannounced inspections are performed using the same procedures as routine inspections except that the inspector does not contact the operator about the inspection more than 24 hours prior to arrival at the certified operation.
  - Inspectors are permitted to perform unannounced inspections without any prior notice to the operator, but, according to HFAC, some notice is normally given to ensure that the needed personnel can participate.
- **For Program Assessment:** Periodically, HFAC selects random member farms to audit (also unannounced) in order to assess the effectiveness and consistency of the HFAC auditing program, as well as the performance of its auditors. Random audits may cover a full farm or just a particular species or management practice.

### Who Conducts Inspections?

- **Generally:** HFAC contracts with approximately 30 inspectors. In creating a plan for the inspection, HFAC first determines which aspects of your business need to be inspected and then determines who from the HFAC list of inspectors is most qualified to conduct the inspection.
- **Background & Training:** All of HFAC’s inspectors are required to either have a Masters or Ph.D. in animal science or a veterinary degree. Additionally, each inspector has expertise in a specific species. All inspectors participate in an inspection-training program. After the initial training, each auditor is accompanied by a more experienced auditor during at least his or her first two audits. After the apprentice inspections, the experienced inspectors evaluate the new inspectors to determine whether or not the new inspector needs additional training.

- **Impartiality:** HFAC states that it seeks to ensure that the chosen inspector has not been involved in (or employed by a business or person involved in) the design, supply, installation or maintenance of products related to your operation within 24 months of the inspection. All inspectors fill out a declaration of interest form so that HFAC can ensure they are not inspecting an entity with which they have a relationship. If you object to the use of a particular inspector, you may contact the Director of Certification to explain the objection. At HFAC's discretion, another inspector may be assigned.

## What Happens During an Inspection?

The inspection process varies somewhat depending on the type of entity being inspected. However, it generally involves the following steps. (For information about the inspection and certification process for specific kinds of business entities, review the HFAC Policy Manual Part 3.)

### Pre-audit: *Off-farm Activity*

- **First contact.** An HFAC inspector will contact you to schedule the inspection visit. The inspector will explain and answer questions about the inspection process.

### Audit Part 1: *On-farm Activity*

- **Discussion.** The inspector will meet with you to discuss the inspection schedule and procedures. Next, the inspector will meet with farm managers and employees to discuss their roles and responsibilities and determine their knowledge of HFAC requirements.
- **Observation of Procedures, Facilities, Animals.** The inspector will observe the procedures you use to manage and care for the farm animals in order to determine the level of conformance with HFAC standards and policies. Observed practices and procedures include animal nutrition and animal condition, housing, sourcing stock, animal identification methods, husbandry practices, handling systems, implementation of animal health plans, availability of emergency action plans, management of casualty animals and the general environment of the operation.
- **Review of Records.** The inspector reviews records listed on [page 34](#); documents referenced on the Application for Certification; records related to tracing animals; records documenting the products used in the management of your operation; and information provided by veterinarians, feed suppliers and other parties who provide goods and services to your farm.
- **Exit Interview.** At the end of the inspection, the inspector will meet with you to summarize the inspection findings and provide you with an overview of the observed nonconformances, if any. During this meeting you have the opportunity to provide corrections, clarifications, and additional information.
- **Overall Length.** The length of the inspection varies depending on the size and complexity of the operation, but average between a half day and full day.

## Audit Part 2: Slaughter Facility

HFAC will inspect your slaughter facility to ensure it is compliant with HFAC standards. If it is not, either the slaughter facility must make the necessary changes to become compliant, or you will have to use another compliant slaughter plant in order to become certified. For livestock, HFAC requires that producers applying to the program have their animals slaughtered at facilities that meet American Meat Institute (AMI) guidelines. For poultry, HFAC requires that producers applying to the program have their animals slaughtered at facilities that meet the Poultry Slaughter Standards written by HFAC's scientific committee, which include:

- Slaughtering birds within four hours of arrival at the plant and within 12 hours of feed withdrawal on farm
- Ensuring that birds are not suspended for more than 90 seconds before they are stunned
- Ensuring at least 90 seconds have elapsed post-slaughter before putting birds in the scalding tank

### Post-Audit: Follow-Up & Corrective Action

- **Determination.** After the inspections, the inspector compiles an inspection report. Based on that report, HFAC makes one of three written certification determinations:
  - 1) Your operation complies with all relevant HFAC policies and standards and is awarded certification;
  - 2) Your operation has one or more “minor nonconformance” with the relevant HFAC standards and policies, and must make the required corrections within a 30-day period;
  - 3) Your operation has one or more “major nonconformance” with the relevant HFAC standards and policies, and is therefore denied certification.
- **Conditional Certification.** An operation is granted “Conditional Certification” if it has one or more minor nonconformance with HFAC standards and policies. During the Initial Certification Process, HFAC may issue a “Certificate of Conditional Certification” to allow an operation with one or more “minor nonconformance” to use the HFAC seal while it is undertaking corrective actions. If operations with conditional certification do not correct “minor nonconformances” within 30 days, they are denied certification.
- **Denial.** If your farm is denied certification, you must wait six months before reapplying.

### Additional Inspection Information

For additional information on the HFAC inspection process, review HFAC Policy Manual Part 3, including the following charts:

Initial Certification Process Flowchart	Part 2, D
Renewal of Certification Process Flowchart	Part 2, E

## HFAC LABEL USE GUIDELINES



**License Agreement.** HFAC controls ownership, use and display of its certification mark through the Certification Mark License Agreement. This Agreement describes HFAC's legal rights to address incorrect references to the certification system or misleading use of licenses, certificates or marks found in advertisements. The Agreement also requires members to supply HFAC with samples of their packaging, advertising or promotional materials bearing the HFAC mark upon HFAC's request. HFAC's Certification Mark License Agreement is not publicly available. For questions on label topics not covered here, contact HFAC directly.

**USDA-FSIS Label Approval.** As described in the [USDA-FSIS Labeling](#) section, prior to use of the Certified Humane Raised and Handled® label, approval by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety & Inspection Service (FSIS) is required.



## HFAC MARKETING SUPPORT

According to HFAC, the program provides the following marketing support to its members:

- **Internet Visibility.** According to HFAC, the CH website averages over 12,000 unique visitors a month. The website directs visitors to where they can buy products with the Certified Humane Raised and Handled® label, lists CH-certified producers and profiles CH farmers.
- **Social Media.** New products and producers are posted on the HFAC Facebook®, Instagram® and Twitter® pages. HFAC also distributes a monthly newsletter with readership in the thousands which highlights special products, new farm stories and world news.
- **Downloadable Free App.** This app lists stores that sell products with the Certified Humane Raised and Handled® label, as well as which products are in each store. HFAC standards, a list of CH-certified producers, FAQs, a media kit and a donation platform are also available on the app for easy access for farmers.
- **Press Releases.** HFAC issues press releases for all new producers that successfully complete the Certified Humane® certification process.
- **Sourcing Outreach.** HFAC actively works with supermarkets and other retailers to find buyers for CH-certified products.
- **Promotion by Welfare Organizations.** HFAC claims that over 70 “humane organizations” promote its program on their websites, in their publications and in targeted direct mailings, reaching national audiences.
- **Media Visibility.** HFAC highlights that numerous publications have profiled the CH program and directed readers to where to find products with the Certified Humane Raised and Handled® label.

## HFAC COSTS

As set forth below, HFAC has annual application, inspection and certification fees. For some qualified “small operations,” HFAC partially or fully subsidizes inspection costs.

### Annual Application & Inspection Fees

Application for Initial Certification	\$75
Application for Renewal Certification Fee (annual)	\$75
Inspection Fee: Farm	\$700/day/inspector
Inspection Fee: Processor, Product Manufacturing Operation, Pooled Product Operation, Slaughter and Handling Facility	\$800/day/inspector

## Annual Certification Fees

HFAC's certification fees are based on the amount of product processed and the number of animals or animal products sold because they are certified, not because there is a label on the package. Certification fees are generally paid on a monthly basis, but small operations may be allowed to pre-arrange quarterly payments at the discretion of HFAC's Executive Director.

CERTIFICATION FEES		
Cattle	0-25,000 animals	\$1.10/head
	25,001-50,000 animals	\$0.82/head
	50,001-75,000 animals	\$0.62/head
	75,001-100,000 animals	\$0.47/head
	100,001-200,000 animals	\$0.37/head
	200,001-300,000 animals	\$0.22/head
	300,001-400,000 animals	\$0.07/head
Pigs	0-35,000 animals	\$0.55/pig
	35,001-65,000 animals	\$0.45/pig
	65,001-100,000 animals	\$0.35/pig
	100,001-200,000 animals	\$0.25/pig
	>200,000 animals	\$0.15/pig
Dairy Cows	Hundredweight of milk	\$0.015 (1/8 <sup>th</sup> cent/gallon)
Goats	For milk	\$0.008/gallon
	For meat	\$0.23/head
Laying Hens	Case of 30 dozen eggs	\$0.07
Broiler Chickens	1-6,000,000 birds	\$0.003/lb
	6,000,001-15,000,000 birds	\$0.0025/bird
	15,000,001-30,000,000 birds	\$0.002/bird
	>30,000,000 birds	\$0.0015/bird
Sheep/Lamb	Per head	\$0.23
	Per gallon	\$0.008
Turkeys	Per pound	\$0.0023
Young Dairy Beef	Per head	\$0.55
Bison	0-500 animals	\$1.00/head
	501-2500 animals	\$0.75/head
	> 2500 animals	\$0.50/head

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**Subsidies for “small operations.”** Upon request, HFAC may partially or fully subsidize the costs of inspections for qualified “small operations.”

SIZE OF OPERATIONS ELIGIBLE FOR SUBSIDIZED INSPECTION FEES	
Species covered by the certificate application	Number of animals being certified is not greater than:
Beef Cattle	50 head
Broilers	100 head
Dairy	30 head
Goats	50 head
Layers	100 head
Pigs	50 head
Sheep	70 head
Turkeys	70 head
Young Dairy Beef	30 head

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**Transition Costs.** Additionally, there may be costs associated with transitioning a farm to meet CH standards in preparation for an application for certification.

To review HFAC’s Fee Schedule, [click here](#).



# ECHO FARM PUDDINGS

## ECHO FARM

### Hinsdale, New Hampshire



**Operation Profile:** 100 cows (Milking Shorthorns & Jerseys)

**Certification:** Certified Humane®, a project of Humane Farm Animal Care (HFAC)

## Background

In 1987, Bob and Bonnie Hodge purchased 35 acres in Hinsdale, New Hampshire. Their goal was to start a 4-H club on the property – to show horses, sheep and eventually cows. In 1990, their daughters, Beth and Courtney, convinced them to buy Milking Shorthorn heifers, and a dairy operation slowly formed. After returning from college, Beth and Courtney took over farm management and developed the Echo Farm Puddings business. Today, Echo Farm milks approximately 100 cows – half Milking Shorthorns and half Jerseys. Echo Farm sells its “Echo Farm Puddings” products through distributor United Natural Foods Inc., as well as at Whole Foods Market® (WFM), and various other retailers, primarily in New England and the New York City metro area.

## Getting Certified

In 1999, the Hodges heard about an animal welfare certification program and applied when they realized that their operational practices complied with many of the program's standards. When one of the certification program's leaders, Adele Douglass, departed to found a new program, Humane Farm Animal Care (HFAC), the Hodges applied to HFAC for certification. Echo Farm was approved, making it the first dairy farm to become Certified Humane®.

According to the Hodges, they did not have to undertake significant transition costs to become HFAC-certified. They attribute this to being first-generation farmers who did not have to contend with revising longstanding practices that fall outside program standards. Currently, beyond the standard application fee of \$75, Echo Farm pays between \$900 and \$1000 for the inspection fee and certification costs—a “royalty,” as Beth puts it, that Echo Farm pays HFAC per product with the Certified Humane Raised and Handled® label. However, according to Beth, the increased revenue that results from their certification, as well as the market access the certification enables, far outweighs these costs.

Beth reports that the HFAC inspections have been rigorous, particularly in the beginning, when the inspector would spend a full day at the farm. However, now that the program has familiarity with their operation, the inspector typically spends a half-day on site. Nonetheless, Beth says that she and her employees usually spend two full days preparing for the inspection to ensure that all relevant paperwork is readily accessible. Echo Farm has gone through the Corrective Action Plan process a few times for minor inconsistencies with HFAC standards, sometimes from standards being amended, but has been able to correct any deficiencies.

**“The majority of farmers will find that the standards make sense and complying actually improves a farm’s productivity.”**



## HFAC Certification Outcomes

**Product Differentiation & Business Growth.** Beth believes that there is increasing concern from consumers about how farm animals are treated, and sees the Certified Humane Raised and Handled® label—which she uses on the farm’s website as well as on all of their product packaging—as providing validation for their business’ animal welfare claims.

Also, according to Beth, the certification has opened doors to retail stores that the farm could not have otherwise accessed, such as Bread & Circus retail stores, which were eventually acquired by WFM. This increased market access has translated to increased revenues.

**Improved Farm Practices & Business Organization.** HFAC required stricter protocols than their family had been observing for keeping water and food separate from manure, for keeping concrete alleyways clear of mud, and for maintaining sufficient and well-organized records and emergency plans.

**Technical & Marketing Support.** HFAC has opened up marketing opportunities for Echo Farm Puddings by offsetting their costs in attending a trade show and providing them with marketing materials. It has also provided them technical advice on how they could improve animal welfare practices on their farm. Finally, being certified by HFAC has enabled Echo Farm to connect with other certified members who, in turn, have provided Echo Farm with marketing and technical advice of their own.

## Why Certify with HFAC?

According to the Hodges, “With the increased scrutiny by both consumers and retail chains, being certified has helped our business grow, especially in the natural products sector, and it has helped to differentiate our products from others on the shelf. We believe that the majority of farmers will find that the standards make sense and complying actually improves a farm’s productivity.”

## PETE & GERRY'S ORGANIC EGGS

### WARD FAMILY FARM

Monroe, New Hampshire

**“Integrity in labeling is important now, and will become even more important in the future, and I believe that when it comes to animal welfare, there is no higher and more trusted standard for consumers than Certified Humane®.”**



*Hens grazing on a pasture on the Ward Family Farm.*

#### **Operation Profile:**

- Home farm with ≈ 40,000 hens
- Processes over 3,000,000 eggs per day
- Partners with 130 family farms in the U.S.

**Certification:** Certified Humane®, a project of Humane Farm Animal Care (HFAC)

#### **Background**

In the 1980s, the Ward Family Farm was struggling, unable to keep up with industrial-scale egg producers. So when the third generation of Wards inherited the farm, they took it in a new direction. Carol Ward Laflamme (Gerry's wife) and her cousin Peter (“Pete”) Stanton shifted to cage-free, organic production, eventually becoming the first Certified Humane® egg producer in the nation. They credit this shift for significantly benefiting their business.

Fast forward to 2019: Carol and Gerry's son Jesse is the CEO, and the Ward Family Farm—now the home farm of Pete and Gerry's—has six barns housing approximately 40,000 hens, along with one of the company's two processing facilities, which processes just over 100,000 eggs per day. Additionally, Pete and Gerry's partners with 130 small family farms throughout the United States that raise Pete and Gerry's hens. In accordance with Certified Humane® Free Range standards, these hens have access to grass pastures (weather permitting), lay their eggs in traditional nests and have dust areas to perform natural behaviors. Pete and Gerry's products are available in fine food retailers across the nation, as well as in some restaurants and colleges.

## Getting Certified

To credibly distinguish themselves in a marketplace saturated with unverified claims, Jesse and his family sought a program that certified compliance with strict “free range” requirements. In 2003, they chose Certified Humane® because they viewed it as trustworthy, and Jesse believed its robust standards could help Pete and Gerry’s expand in its target retail markets.

In order to become certified and maintain certification, Jesse explains that the farm has had to make some changes, including installing more scratching and dust-bathing areas, increasing the amount of available perching area, and creating elevated perches that timid hens can use to remove themselves from the larger flock. Jesse reports that with every rigorous audit, the company has to make a few small, reasonable changes, such as adding additional shade structures to pasture.

Beyond the standard application fee of \$75, Pete and Gerry’s pays a few hundred dollars annually for its audit fee, as well as the audit fees for its supplier farms. It also pays the certification cost in the form of a royalty on products sold with the Certified Humane® label. Overall, Jesse has found the program fees to be “very reasonable” and invaluable to consumers who are searching for trustworthy companies.



*Feeding the hens on Ward Family Farm.*

## HFAC Certification Outcomes

**Benefit to Animals.** According to Jesse, the overall percentage of mortality over the life of a free range flock is lower than average for similar flock sizes. Moreover, their indoor scratching space and outdoor range areas allow the hens to exercise.



*A brood of hens exploring Ward Family Farm.*

**Cutting Through Market Confusion.** Jesse notes that with consumers growing increasingly aware of unverified claims made by producers, the Certified Humane® label helps differentiate Pete and Gerry's by providing important third-party credibility. Pete and Gerry's uses the Certified Humane® logo on its website and all of its brand materials and packaging.

**Technical Advice.** Because Certified Humane® provides technical advice and subsidizes program costs for small producers, Jesse believes it is accessible to producers of all scales. Certified Humane® has also encouraged Pete and Gerry's producers to share ideas about how to comply with standards and improve hen welfare through improvements like new roost and nest designs.

## **Why Certify with HFAC?**

Jesse has this advice for farmers considering HFAC certification: A welfare-focused approach isn't "just good for our hens and the planet. It has also been good business. Consumers are searching for alternatives to the traditional food system. Integrity in labeling is important now and will become even more important in the future, and I believe that when it comes to animal welfare, there is no higher and more trusted standard for consumers than Certified Humane®."

# TETON WATERS RANCH

Denver, Colorado

*(originally Teton Valley, Idaho)*



**Operation Profile:** Partner with various suppliers in the U.S. and internationally to produce value-added, grass-fed and pasture-raised beef products

**Certification:** Certified Humane®, a project of Humane Farm Animal Care (HFAC)

## Background

Teton Waters Ranch started out as an experiment in environmental conservation in Teton Valley, Idaho. An environmentally minded real estate investor purchased the 6,000-acre property hoping to reclaim its native grasslands. In the first year of ownership, native grasses were replanted and the farm was hayed for a small profit. In the second year, the owner engaged in some contract grazing while also grazing a few of his own cows on the land. The cattle grazed rotationally, fertilizing the land as they ate. Because consumer demand for grass-fed and grass-finished beef was just beginning to grow, Teton Waters Ranch found a niche market.

As Teton Waters Ranch scaled up production, it encountered issues with whole carcass utilization and decided to make value-added products with the remainder. At first, it began with ground beef

and hot dogs, but soon realized consumers wanted additional value-added products. The company then pulled together a larger value-added program and quickly outgrew the ranch in Idaho. Teton Waters Ranch began to partner with grass-fed ranchers who shared its practices, and as part of the transition, relocated its offices to Denver, Colorado.

To meet demand, Teton Waters Ranch continues to work with partner ranchers and farmers both domestically and internationally to produce beef that is 100% grass-fed and grass-finished with no hormones or antibiotics. Teton Waters Ranch states that its mission is to deliver beef products that have been raised in a manner that is better for animals, the planet and the consumer.



**“Certification has opened doors to retail stores that the farm could not have otherwise accessed” and “translated to increased revenues.”**

## Getting Certified

When considering the different certifications available, Teton Waters Ranch decided on Certified Humane® because of the rigidity of the program’s standards, its commitment to animals and its familiarity to consumers. After making the decision in 2017, the company transitioned its full line and rolled out its new products featuring the Certified Humane® logo in 2018.

Because Teton Waters Ranch partners with thousands of producers, its move to Certified Humane® essentially meant that the company had to rebuild its entire supply chain over the course of a year. However, many of the partner farmers stayed on and became certified to continue supplying to the company. Teton Waters Ranch assumes the audit costs and provides technical assistance to encourage farm partners—especially those that might be resistant—to get certified. Additionally, a Teton Waters Ranch representative is on-site for every partner audit to act as a liaison between the Certified Humane® auditors and the farmers. The company also provides assistance to its farm partners when an audit discovers issues that require corrective measures.

## HFAC Certification Outcomes

**Environmental Benefits.** Teton Waters Ranch was founded with the purpose of environmental conservation and restoring native grasslands. By requiring that partner farms raise grass-fed and finished cattle, Teton Waters Ranch hopes to spread these benefits beyond its original 6,000 acres.

Also, according to Beth, the certification has opened doors to retail stores that the farm could not have otherwise accessed, such as Bread & Circus retail stores, which were eventually acquired by WFM. This increased market access has translated to increased revenues.

**Benefits to Animals.** Teton Waters Ranch is committed to ensuring cattle are treated humanely. Certified Humane® enables Teton Waters Ranch to ensure that humane standards, such as attention during weaning and pain relief at castration or dehorning, are applied across a larger set of farms.

**Audit Efficiency.** Teton Waters Ranch markets its products with a number of different claims that pertain to how cattle are raised and handled. While the Certified Humane® third-party certification does not address all of these, the audit process helps to confirm some of the company's internal protocols and market claims. As a result, farm partners can undergo a single audit, which they believe suggests the Certified Humane® audit was thoughtfully designed with producers' needs in mind.

## Why Certify with HFAC?

Teton Waters Ranch became Certified Humane® in a continuing effort to define and improve its program's standards, as well as to fulfill its mission of raising cattle in a manner that regenerates the land, makes full use of the animal, and encourages better practices across a broad range of farm partners.