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CARBON MONOXIDE MEAT PACKAGING SYSTEM OFFERS KEY FOOD SAFETY BENEFITS, NEW UNIVERSITY ANALYSES SHOW

Kalsec, Inc. Should Be Red-Faced Over Its Misleading and Unscientific Attacks on Red Meat Packaging System

(July 26, 2006 – Washington, DC) New university-based analyses show that a meat packaging system that uses low oxygen combined with gases including minute levels of carbon monoxide to prevent premature browning also can prevent the growth of pathogenic bacteria.

The new analyses -- done independently of one another by Dr. J. Chance Brooks, assistant professor of meat science at Texas Tech University, and Dr. Michael Doyle, director of the University of Georgia's Center for Food Safety and Quality Enhancement – showed that this packaging system effectively prevented the growth of pathogens that were artificially introduced into packaging systems.

In a story reported by WSB TV Atlanta July 17, Dr. Doyle, who did a limited analysis at the request of a local reporter, said, "The carbon monoxide [packaged] beef would be safer, it would also look better and taste better. This is a good process."

This news seems to have prompted another desperate press release by Kalsec, Inc. this week attacking this innovative system that prevents spoilage, prevents premature browning and maintains flavor of retail meat products.

"Kalsec's behavior is like that of a temperamental child who doesn't get his way. FDA has affirmed the acceptability of this system eight times. Leading scientists have said the system is both safe and offers clear benefits. But still, Kalsec kicks and screams and refuses to concede," said AMI Foundation Vice President of Scientific Affairs Dr. Randy Huffman. Huffman pointed to a recent scientific perspective published in the May 2006 edition of the journal *Food Technology* in which four globally recognized food scientists wrote, "Claims that CO packaging will result in unsafe products is scientifically not sound." The scientists stated "a valid argument can be made that CO packaging creates opportunities to increase safety." The co-authors concluded: "Because scientific studies have validated the safety of low-CO packaging technology for fresh meat, it seems appropriate to let the marketplace decide the success or failure of the process."

"Kalsec's tired claims that this system is harmful to consumers are as scientifically believable as the once held notion that the earth is flat. Both claims can be scientifically dismissed " Huffman added. He speculated that Kalsec is seeking victory in the court of public opinion because their case would lose on its merits in a court of law.

Huffman pointed out that this low-oxygen packaging system is much like other gas packaging systems used to maintain the crispness of potato chips, the pop of a soda, and to

prevent wilting in bag salads. It is a technology to be valued, not disparaged. He cited the following additional comments from leading experts as evidence of the packaging system's safety:

Dr. Melvin Hunt, professor of meat science, Kansas State University, to the Kansas City Star:

"Over the last few weeks, media have persuaded some consumers that they are being misled because meat that would have otherwise turned brown is still red. Some retailers are now fearful of selling products packaged in this impressive, safe and cutting edge technology. The effort to discredit the science that went into it – and efforts to discredit the federal agency that reviewed it three times -- is scientifically inaccurate and unfortunate.

A close look at this media scare shows motives that are as transparent as carbon monoxide itself. But carbon monoxide packaging technology has a real benefit to consumers. The only benefits generated by these unfounded safety allegations are to the company that stirred the controversy – and to the media outlets that benefit from the attention grabbing story."

Texas Tech University Press Release:

"In a related microbiological study, a research team headed by Dr. Mindy Brashears found that beef inoculated with pathogenic bacteria, *Salmonella* and *E. coli* O157, and then packaged with carbon monoxide had less pathogenic bacteria after 14 days than similarly inoculated beef wrapped in traditional packaging without carbon monoxide."

Dr. Alden Booren, professor, Michigan State University in a letter to The Honorable Carl Levin, U.S. Senate.

"The risk of a significant food safety hazard occurring in meat packaged using this low-oxygen carbon monoxide modified atmosphere packaging (MAP) technology does not change when this technology is compared to conventional retail meat wrap technologies. For this reason I would not hesitate to utilize the technology in the Meat Laboratory Pilot Plant, a facility I help manage at Michigan State University."

Dr. Gary Acuff, professor, food microbiology, Texas A & M University in a letter to the editor of Meatingplace magazine.

"Low-oxygen modified atmosphere packaging is a safe technology that provides significant consumer benefits, not the least is a longer shelf-life than aerobic packaging. Adding very low levels of carbon monoxide to the atmosphere provides an acceptable color that helps meet consumer expectations. The use-by date on every package tells consumers the point at which the product will no longer be acceptable. This is not a misleading technology; however, facts seem to be getting lost in the publicity generated by critics."

EU Scientific Committee on Food, 2001.

The EU Scientific Committee on Food (SCF) in 2001 determined that the use of CO under intended conditions of use in meat packaging is safe. The committee concluded "there is no health concern associated with the use of 0.3% to 0.5% CO in a gas mixture of carbon dioxide and nitrogen as a modified atmosphere packaging gas for fresh meat provided temperature during the storage and transport does not exceed 4 C."

Huffman also urged consumers and media to visit www.meatsafety.org for additional information about this packaging system and a host of other meat safety issues.

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