



For Immediate Release
Contact: Janet Riley, 202/587-4245, jriley@meatami.com

**Media Needs to Check Background of Pseudo-Medical Animal Rights Group
and Cease Coverage of Alarmist and Unscientific Attack on Meat Products
*'Physicians Committee' Campaign Exploits Children and is Fear-Mongering at
Its Worst***

Attribute Statement to AMI Foundation President Randy Huffman, Ph.D.

Washington, DC, August 1, 2008 ---“A factually inaccurate, alarmist and exploitive new campaign aimed at scaring parents and school systems out of feeding children processed meats is just what those of us who know the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) have come to expect from this pro-vegetarian animal rights group in doctors’ clothing.

After all, it is this group’s actions that prompted the American Medical Association in 1991 to issue a news release stating that, ‘The AMA finds the recommendations of PCRM irresponsible and potentially dangerous to the health and welfare of Americans. [PCRM is] blatantly misleading Americans on a health matter and concealing its true purpose as an animal ‘rights’ organization.’ The California Medical Association also has criticized PCRM for ‘lies and misrepresentation.’

And most recently, in a story carried by STATS.org, Ron Kleinman, M.D., a leading medical expert on childhood nutrition, called the campaign ‘outrageous’ and chastised the group for exploiting children to achieve their political agenda.

What more does the media need to convince them that this effort is not worthy of coverage? Perhaps these facts will help:

- ✓ **Fact: PCRM’s goal is to create a vegan society.** PCRM bases its claims against processed meats on this longstanding and myopic view that vegan diets (extreme diets that include no animal products whatsoever) are better than balanced diets. PCRM also cites a controversial and inconclusive report by the World Cancer Research Fund as representing “consensus” when it has been widely challenged by scientists.

- ✓ **Fact: PCRM's Executive Director Neal Barnard until 2005 sat on the board of the Foundation to Support Animal Protection which has since become known as The PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) Foundation.** Need we say more?
- ✓ **Fact: There are safe levels of just about everything; balance and moderation are key.** Even botulism toxin, a very dangerous substance at certain levels, is approved to treat muscle spasms in people and to reduce skin wrinkling. Saying that there are “no safe levels” of a nutritious food product is simply outrageous and scientifically insupportable. Processed meats do play an important role in a balanced diet that includes fruits, vegetables, grains and dairy products.
- ✓ **Fact: Children derive important nutrition from processed meats – and they will eat them.** Children are notoriously picky eaters, but they enjoy many processed meats and derive essential vitamins, minerals, protein and amino acids to the diet. Uneaten bowls of lentil artichoke stew or potato cauliflower curry (two of PCRM's suggested recipes) contribute nothing to a child's diet.
- ✓ **Fact: Processed meats come in a variety of different formulations to meet many nutrition needs.** Some choices include low fat, fat free or regular processed meats; processed meats made from beef, pork or poultry; and low-salt, cured and uncured processed meats. Yet PCRM takes a broad swipe at an entire and very diverse category of products. That's as stereotypical as saying that all vegetarian diets are healthy when a diet of potato chips, beer and lollipops – *technically speaking* – is a vegan diet.
- ✓ **Fact: Vegans Derive Far More Nitrite From Their Vegetable Consumption Than Meat Eaters Derive From Cured Meats.** A liter of pomegranate juice contributes 100 times more nitrite to the diet than a hot dog and a spinach salad and a ham sandwich contribute about the same amount, according to one of the nation's leading experts on nitrite and nitrate. In fact, less than five percent of human nitrite intake comes from cured meats. Ninety-three percent is contributed by vegetables and by saliva. Will PCRM recommend that people stop eating vegetables or swallowing saliva? We hope not, because leading experts doing cutting edge research at the National Institutes of Health have found that nitrite is not just safe, it can be an important treatment for sickle cell anemia, heart attacks, brain aneurysms, even an illness that suffocates babies. ‘The idea it's bad for you has not played out,’ NIH Researcher Mark Gladwin, M.D., has said publicly.

Likewise, Nathan Bryan, Ph.D., of the Univ. of Texas-Houston Institute of Molecular Medicine, another nitrite expert, told *Food Quality* magazine, ‘Many studies implicating nitrite and nitrate in cancer are based on very weak epidemiological data. If nitrite and nitrate were harmful to us, then we would not

be advised to eat green leafy vegetables or swallow our own saliva, which is enriched in nitrate.’ .

- ✓ **Fact: The WCRF/AICR report that PCRM cites made selective use of science.** The WCRF review has been viewed with skepticism by respected scientists since its release in 2007. Many other disregarded studies show no relationship. In July, the prestigious *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* published an article by a team of world-renowned cancer researchers who cautioned the epidemiological research community about the limitations of epidemiology and suggested that “...false positive results are a common problem in cancer and other types of epidemiological studies.” The bottom line: The literature simply does not support the recommendations of the WCRF report and, in turn, PCRM’s outrageous claims.

- ✓ **Fact: Cancer rates broadly and colon cancer rates specifically are declining, despite claims by PCRM that they are increasing.** Colorectal cancer rates have been declining for most of the last two decades, according to the American Cancer Society, and so have colon cancer mortality rates.

Just as consumers need to eat a healthy, balanced diet, they need balanced information. Check with credible health sources like your doctor, dietician or the U.S. Dietary Guidelines. You can be assured that they will tell you that a healthy diet can include processed meats,” Huffman concluded.

For more information, visit www.meatsafety.org

Important Links/contacts:

Video message from Dr. Randy Huffman about nitrite and cured meats:

<http://www.youtube.com/meatnewsnetwork>

****Media who wish to speak with Dr. Huffman should call 202/587-4245***

Video Interview With Dr. Nathan Bryan of the Univ. of Texas-Houston Institute of Molecular Medicine About Health Benefits of Nitrite

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7snQOZqjRCg>

****Media who wish to speak with Dr. Bryan should call 713/500-2439***