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Media note: AMI Foundation Vice President of Scientific Affairs Dr. Randy Huffman is available for comment by phone or in person. A broadcast quality taped response is available upon request. To preview the taped response, go to www.meatsafety.org or www.meatpoultrynutrition.org. To request the b-roll, contact jriley@meatami.com

**AMERICAN MEAT INSTITUTE CALLS WCRF PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS ON
MEAT CONSUMPTION EXTREME AND UNFOUNDED
*Institute Says Alarmist Messages Reflect Group's Anti-Meat Bias, Stand in Sharp Contrast to
U.S. Dietary Guidelines and Plain Common Sense***

Washington, DC, October 31, 2007 – The American Meat Institute (AMI) today said that World Cancer Research Fund's (WCRF) recommendations to limit red and processed meat intake to extremely low levels reflect WCRF's well-known anti-meat bias and should be met with skepticism because they oversimplify the complex issue of cancer, are not supported by the data and defy common sense.

“WCRF's conclusions are extreme, unfounded and out of step with dietary guidelines,” said AMI Foundation Vice President of Scientific Affairs Randy Huffman, Ph.D. “Headlines associated with this report may give consumers another case of nutrition whiplash. The consistent finding in diet and cancer research is inconsistency,” he added. “No health groups should be dispensing clear-cut recommendations on specific foods when studies continue to contradict each other time after time.” Huffman stressed that the recommendations stand in sharp contrast to mainstream advice in the U.S. Dietary Guidelines.

The causes of cancer are extremely complex and involve factors like genetics, the environment, lifestyle and a host of other issues, Huffman noted. “Given the complexities and conflicting research findings, it is inconceivable that WCRF could draw definitive conclusions and make such precise recommendations about specific food categories,” he said.

Harvard Data Showing No Relationship Between Meat and Colon Cancer Not Considered

Huffman expressed strong concern that all relevant research was not considered by the WCRF panel. In particular, he noted that the largest study ever done on red meat and colon cancer – a 2004 Harvard School of Public Health analysis involving 725,000 men and women

and presented at the 2004 American Association for Cancer Research Conference – showed no relationship between the two.

The paper, “Meat and fat intake and colorectal cancer risk: A pooled analysis of 14 prospective studies” was presented in abstract form, but never appears in its complete form in the published literature three years after it was presented. As a result, these data were not factored into WCRF’s 2007 report.

“This study uses what is considered perhaps the most reliable approach to analyzing relationships: pooling original data together and analyzing it,” Huffman said. “Given the study’s size, approach and very important finding, we’d like to know why it hasn’t published. WCRF and consumers deserve access to this federally funded data, which shows that red meat and processed meat were not associated with colon cancer.” Media reports indicate that lawmakers are now asking Harvard why the study has not published given its completion three years ago, given its federal funding and given the significant impact it may have had on WCRF’s conclusions.

“When this Harvard data showing no relationship between red meat and cancer is coupled with studies that found no association or only weak associations between red meat and cancer, we must absolutely dispute WCRF’s conclusions,” Huffman added.

Processed Meats Are Safe

Huffman also disputed the report’s extreme recommendations on processed meats. Huffman pointed out that “our own systematic review of the literature by independent epidemiologists has documented that 15 of 16 comparisons regarding processed meat and colorectal cancer were not statistically significant. The literature simply does not support the recommendations of the WCRF report,” he said.

“Processed meats that contain nitrite are safe and sodium nitrite is an essential ingredient whose safety is without question,” Huffman said. “The National Toxicology Program in 2000 – considered the gold standard when it comes to assessing cancer risk – fed very high levels of nitrite to rats and mice. The NTP panel determined that nitrite at these high levels did not cause cancer. Thus experts and the FDA concluded that the extremely low levels used to cure meats are safe as well.” NTP is a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Huffman said there are many misconceptions surrounding nitrite use and that chief among them is the major source of nitrite in the diet. “Humans derive 93 percent of their daily nitrite intake from vegetables and human saliva,” he said.

“Less than five percent of human nitrite intake comes from cured meats. If nitrite caused cancer – which it does not – then vegetables and swallowing would be the most significant risks to humans. And if nitrite were a carcinogen, then that would make WCRF’s recommendations to eat more fruits and vegetables downright dangerous.”

“It may not be the most exciting headline, but it is the best advice: eat a balanced diet in moderation,” he added. He said that meat products offer one of the best sources of protein, vitamins and minerals, some of which are not found in other foods, but are important for good health. Huffman advised consumers to take the following steps:

- Eat a balanced diet consistent with U.S Dietary Guidelines.
- Get daily exercise.
- Maintain a healthy body weight.

For more information, including an abstract of the Harvard study referenced above, visit www.meatpoultrynutrition.org or www.meatsafety.org.