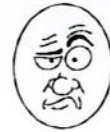




LABELS



Perception + Deception = Marketing?

Now let's have a little fun comparing apples and oranges. Let's face it, our little farm business can't grow unless we bring people over from the "dark side" of the supermarket! We won't be successful in doing this unless we expose some of the euphemisms created by the big marketing folks. Warning! Whatever warm and fuzzy you may have had about food labeling may soon become cold and clammy! When dealing with the food we provide to our families, ignorance is anything but bliss.



*If the label says fat-free, does that mean I get the fat for nothing?
Am I a weirdo if I like to watch the salad dressing?*
Words! Some people have the uncanny ability to manipulate words! If you have this trait, you could be missing your calling! Agribusiness needs you!

<i>If the label says.</i>	<i>then the USDA definition is...</i>	<i>and the ambiguity leads to...</i>
"Natural"	<i>A product containing no artificial ingredient or color and is only minimally processed.</i>	<i>All commercial chicken found in supermarkets were raised in high density confinements. These conditions are so dirty that the birds would die without antibiotics. By maintaining subtherapeutic levels of antibiotics in the feed, producers keep sick birds alive long enough to reach slaughter. Reality: Per the USDA, products labeled as Natural can and are legally raised with antibiotics.</i>
"Fresh" Poultry	<i>Poultry whose internal temperature has never been below 26 F.</i>	<i>My Dictionary shows 19 definitions for the word "fresh". The first one says "newly made." The last definition states "forward and presumptuous." Can't be this one. Chickens can't give you no lip, because chickens don't have lips! Reality: The chicken has never been below 26 F, yet we have no idea how old it really is.</i>
"Farm Fresh"	<i>There is no USDA definition for the word farm.</i>	<i>The picture on the package illustrates a farm with a pretty red barn, white fences and animals grazing on pasture, yet virtually all supermarket meat and eggs are now raised in highly concentrated confinements or feedlots. Reality: The farm on the package bears no resemblance at all to the environment in which your food was actually produced.</i>
"Free-Range" or "Free-Roaming"	<i>Producers must demonstrate that the poultry has been allowed access to the outside.</i>	<i>How long? How big an area? How often? The density in this area? Reality: These birds are raised in pole barns and "Free-Range" on a small packed clay yard totally denuded of vegetation. They may never eat one single blade of grass. This is better than conventional but again, bears no resemblance to the label which illustrates chickens roaming on fresh green pastures.</i>
"Organic"	<i>Raised in heated and air-cooled growing houses and fed an organic diet</i>	<i>Fed only certified organic feed. Antibiotics are not allowed, therefore, density will be less than conventional. Reality: While much better than conventional, the actual methods do not resemble the perceptions created on the packaging. (Pasturing is more important than certification!)</i>

"Irradiation" : Highly concentrated animal confinements nurture the growth of pathogens. High speed processing arrives as the vehicle to spread this bacteria. Producers & processors must either prevent the growth of the pathogens or kill the pathogens after they've contaminated the meat. Prevention is achieved by drastically reducing animal density, providing higher quality feed and allowing daily access to pasture, fresh air and sunshine. This is not practical nor cost-effective for large agri-business firms or many consumers. Instead, irradiation is one tool some processors use to kill pathogens after the fact. Irradiation uses ionizing radiation - meaning radiation with sufficient energy to knock electrons from the atoms of the meat. This results in positively and negatively charged particles that initiate chemical reactions. Research has proven that new chemicals are created in the meat after being irradiated. We do not yet know how these chemicals affect human health. We do know that irradiation diminishes the quality of the food. We also know that irradiation kills or inhibits the beneficial bacteria that naturally decompose the meat as it ages. Without these organisms, a consumer has no ability to "sense" the age of the meat. A new irradiation process uses "commercial electricity" to eliminate the indirect radioactive safety aspects. However, this does little or nothing to eliminate the concerns associated directly with the consumer.

Euphemisms: Electron Beam Processing and Cold Pasteurization.