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**100 Years Later, Most Consumers Don't Recognize Level of Meat Inspection
That Occurs In the United States**
*AMI Says 'If Upton Sinclair Were Alive Today, He'd Be Amazed By the U.S.
Meat Industry'*

Washington, DC, June 28, 2006 – One hundred years after a federal law put meat inspectors in every meat plant, most consumers don't understand the frequency or intensity of meat inspection in the United States, according to new consumer data released by the American Meat Institute. AMI unveiled the data as part of its recognition of the anniversary of the Federal Meat Inspection Act.

According to the data collected June 7 by Opinion Dynamics, many consumers thought the banking industry (35 percent) was more heavily regulated and inspected than the meat industry (21 percent). Yet meat inspectors by law must be present in federally inspected meat packing plants during every minute of operations, according to AMI. Sixty percent of consumers also underestimated the frequency of inspections, with most saying that inspectors visited plants "occasionally." Only 12 percent of respondents responded accurately that meat inspectors are in packing plants continuously.

As part of its celebration, AMI unveiled a new brochure that carries the message, "If Upton Sinclair were alive today, he'd be amazed by the U.S. meat industry." Upton Sinclair authored the groundbreaking novel *The Jungle* in 1906 that inspired passage of the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the formation of AMI. The brochure was released today to media nationwide and can be downloaded on www.meatami.com.

According to the brochure:

- Food safety has improved dramatically. *E. coli* O157:H7 incidence on ground beef has declined from nearly one percent to less than 0.2 percent since 1999 and *Listeria monocytogenes* has declined from 4.5 percent on ready-to eat meat and poultry since

1990 to 0.55 in 2004. Likewise, foodborne illnesses associated with these products are down dramatically.

- The meat industry's worker safety profile has been transformed since 1990. Declines in worker illness and injury have been sustained for 15 years.
- Each year, Americans spend less of their disposable income on meat – just 2 percent in 2004. The U.S. overall spends less of its disposable income on food than any other nation in the world.
- The proportion of fat in the diet contributed by meat, poultry, and fish fell from 33 percent in the 1950s to 24 percent in 2000.

“Our industry represents a great American success story,” says AMI President J. Patrick Boyle. “Through both hard work and team work, we are proud to offer Americans the most abundant and affordable meat supply in the world.” Boyle credits the Federal Meat Inspection Act with spurring a century of progress. “One hundred years ago, I’m quite confident that this new law was seen as overwhelming,” Boyle said. “Today, USDA regulatory officials and the industry have developed a mutual respect and a joint commitment to safety and quality that have helped make our meat supply the envy of the world.”

AMI Foundation President James H. Hodges, who joined the Industry in 1970 and joined the Institute in 1984 said that the food safety profile of U.S. meat products has literally been transformed in his lifetime. “Today, we produce fresh, uncooked products that have lower bacterial counts than many of the cooked products we produced in 1970. Never did I think we could accomplish what we have. And that’s why I’m also confident that we can tackle future challenges that emerge.”

As part of its celebration today, AMI served Washington-based media chef-prepared meats. And the Institute honored a very special guest: Dr. Dewey Bond, the oldest living AMI staff member who ran the AMI government affairs office in the 1950s when AMI was still based in Chicago.

To view an electronic version of the new brochure, go to www.MeatAMI.com. Click on Centennial Information in the Hot Topics box.

AMI represents the interests of packers and processors of beef, pork, lamb, veal and turkey products and their suppliers throughout North America. Together, AMI's members produce 95 percent of the beef, pork, lamb and veal products and 70 percent of the turkey products in the U.S. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the Institute provides legislative, regulatory, public relations, technical, scientific and educational services to the industry. Its affiliate, the AMI Foundation, is a 501(c)(3) organization that conducts research, education and information projects for the industry.