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JOINT NEWS RELEASE: FDA and USDA Determine Swine Fed Adulterated Product

USDA to Compensate for Depopulation

WASHINGTON, April 26, 2007 – The USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) today notified State authorities that swine fed adulterated product will not be approved to enter the food supply. Based on information currently available, FDA and USDA believe the likelihood of illness after eating pork from swine fed the adulterated product would be very low; however, the agencies believe it is prudent to take this measure.

FDA determined that a shipment of rice protein imported from China was contaminated with melamine and melamine-related compounds. The product was imported during the week of April 2, 2007 by Wilbur-Ellis, an importer and distributor of agricultural products. The rice protein was used in the production of pet food and a byproduct was used to produce animal feed.

The contaminants in question include melamine and melamine-related compounds, including cyanuric acid, the combination of which is a potential source of concern in relation to human and animal health. Scientific research indicates that melamine alone, at detected levels, is not a human health concern. However, no scientific data exist to ascertain the effects of combining melamine and melamine-related compounds. Therefore, a determination has not yet been made regarding the safety of the product.

Because the animal feed in question was adulterated, USDA cannot rule out the possibility that food produced from animals fed this product could also be adulterated. Therefore, USDA cannot place the mark of inspection on food produced from these animals.

USDA is offering to compensate producers who euthanize swine that were fed the adulterated product. USDA is authorized to use Section 32 funds to restore farmers' purchasing power. USDA is also offering the expertise and assistance of Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) personnel in carrying out depopulation activities, to ensure animals are euthanized and disposed of in accordance with Federal and State laws.

FDA and FSIS are coordinating with State authorities in eight states where the adulterated feed is known to have been purchased. Eight pork producers in the states of California, Kansas, North Carolina, New York, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Utah are known to have purchased the feed. These combined operations involve approximately 6,000 hogs. All of the animals are currently being held under state quarantines in CA, NC, NY and SC. In KS, OK and UT producers agreed to hold the animals until further

notice. Authorities are also in contact with a feed mill in Missouri that might have received adulterated feed.

Pork and pork products derived from animals that were fed the adulterated product will also be destroyed. In CA and UT, pork from federally inspected plants is being held under FSIS direction. In SC, a state inspected plant is voluntarily holding swine that were fed the adulterated product. FSIS, FDA and state authorities are in the process of determining whether any meat from animals that were fed the adulterated product has entered commerce. If that has occurred, FSIS will work with states and industry to take the appropriate action.

FDA and FSIS are continuing the effort to trace the adulterated feed. If additional producers are identified who fed the adulterated product to animals, they will also be offered compensation by USDA for depopulation and disposal.