U.S. Hides, Skins and Leather are a Byproduct of Meat Production

- **HIDES, SKINS AND LEATHER** produced in the United States are a byproduct of the meat industry.

- **LEATHER** is produced using the recycled hides and skins of farm animals after they have been harvested for their meat.

- **ANIMALS ARE NOT SLAUGHTERED FOR THEIR HIDES OR SKINS** to produce leather. Instead, the leather industry serves as a recycler, reusing a valuable natural resource and ensuring respect for the animals. If no leather were ever be produced again, the animals would still be harvested for food. It is both responsible and ethical to use the entire animal for beneficial purposes.

- **CATTLE HIDES**, which are the most widely used hide or skin for leather production, represent approximately 5 – 7% of the total value of a U.S. beef animal. The meat is the most valuable product of the animal, valued anywhere from 85 – 90% of the total value.

- There are only a few products that animal hides and skins can be used for, and **LEATHER** is typically the most valuable to society. Without leather production and other animal byproduct recycling industries, hides and skins produced by the meat industry would be sent to landfills or destroyed as waste.
Information about Animal Welfare in the United States

• The U.S. meat industry is one of the **MOST HEAVILY REGULATED INDUSTRIES** in the nation. Thousands of pages of laws and regulations govern every aspect of the meat packing business, including how livestock are treated.

• Humane animal handling and slaughtering practices in meat packing plants are mandated by federal laws and regulations. Those standards are monitored by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspectors nationwide, who are present in meat packing plants during every minute of operation. USDA inspectors are empowered by law to take action in a plant any time they identify a violation of humane handling and slaughtering practices.

• Furthermore, the U.S. meat industry has worked with leading veterinarians and animal health experts to develop additional programs and industry audits to ensure animals are treated humanely. The most widely adopted program in the industry is the NAMI Animal Handling and Audit Guide (www.animalhandling.org).

• In addition to humane and ethical concern for animals, there are distinct economic benefits that result from humane handling for meat packers. When an animal is stressed due to heat, anxiety, rough treatment or other issues, the meat that comes from the animal will be of a lesser quality. The meat packer has an incentive to treat the animal well.

**U.S. Humane Slaughter Act and its rules require:**

• That animals must be handled and moved through chutes and pens in ways that do not cause stress.

• That livestock must be rendered insensible to pain prior to slaughter. The Act details the methods that must be used to stun animals.

• That animals must have access to water and that those kept longer than 24 hours must have access to feed.

• That animals kept in pens overnight must be permitted plenty of room to lie down.

• That non-ambulatory livestock in the stockyards, crowd pens or stunning chutes may not be dragged.

These comprehensive federal requirements are the minimum standards for animal welfare. Industry’s own voluntary standards take federal requirements a step further.