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## LARGEST PASTURE-RAISED PORK COOPERATIVE IN THE SOUTHEAST GOES CERTIFIED NON-GMO BY AGW

-- The North Carolina Natural Hog Growers Association demonstrates commitment to transparent sustainability with Animal Welfare Approved and Certified Non-GMO by AGW --

**BEULAVILLE, NC (July 14, 2017)**—The North Carolina Natural Hog Growers Association (NCNHGA) is the first farming cooperative in the U.S. to be Certified Non-GMO by A Greener World (AGW). This is the *only* certification and logo in the U.S. and Canada that guarantees food is produced without the use of genetically modified feed, supplements or ingredients, and comes from animals raised according to the highest welfare and environmental standards.



Certified Non-GMO by AGW is an optional, additional accreditation for farmers meeting Animal Welfare Approved standards. A Greener World's flagship certification, Animal Welfare Approved is lauded by Consumer Reports as the only "highly meaningful" label for farm animal welfare, outdoor access and sustainability. While other non-GMO labels exist, Certified Non-GMO by AGW is the *only* non-GMO program in North America to guarantee:

- Animals raised outdoors on pasture for their entire lives, without the use of genetically modified feed, supplements or ingredients
- Animals raised according to the highest animal welfare and environmental standards in the U.S. and Canada
- High-welfare handling, transport and slaughter of animals--including an annual review of slaughter facilities

The NCNHGA was established in 2007, when a group of NC hog farmers banded together to pool their resources and build markets for their high-quality, high-welfare pork products. The NCNHGA decided to make Animal Welfare Approved certification a centerpiece of their operation--and make certification a requirement for all members--to help communicate their high-welfare and environmental management practices to customers. Although the cooperative has been certified by Animal Welfare Approved since 2009 for their high-welfare and environmental management practices, the members were eager to gain Certified Non-GMO by AGW status for their pigs. The rigorous process will involve every farm in the cooperative undergoing annual audits and input testing to ensure the integrity of the non-GMO claim. Audits are ongoing and the first farms have been certified; all members are expected to be certified by

the end of 2017. Certified Non-GMO by AGW is one of only two certifications in the U.S. that actually tests for the presence of GMOs. Organic certification, for example, does *not* require any routine GMO testing.

**Jeremiah Jones, President of the NCNHGA and farmer at GrassRoots Pork Co., says,**

“With the ever-growing consumer demand for non-GMO products, pursuing the Certified Non-GMO by AGW status for our pork products was the next logical step, and will help keep us at the forefront of the market. The certification process is rigorous, but achievable and affordable, and it shows our customers that we’re going above and beyond to offer a quality product that is what it says it is: truly sustainable.”

**Sam Suchoff of Lady Edison and The Pig Restaurant, says,**

“As a restaurateur, the fact I can now offer customers high-welfare, sustainable pork that is also 100 percent certified non-GMO is a real selling point. The Certified Non-GMO by AGW logo verifies the pork we serve comes from hogs raised according to the highest welfare standards out there *AND* without GMOs. It just makes complete sense from a business and retail perspective, and my customers appreciate it.”

The market for non-GMO products is surging. *Packaged Facts*--a leading publisher of market research in the food and beverage sector--forecasts the total global market for non-GMO foods and beverages will nearly double between 2014 and 2019. While GMOs are prevalent in the American food system, many consumers seek to avoid them for a variety of reasons--including the negative impact of GM crop production on the ecosystem. With guidance from USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), AGW developed the Certified Non-GMO by AGW in response to increasing demand among consumers, retailers and farmers for a trusted, verified non-GMO label claim for high-welfare meat, dairy products and eggs.

Certified Non-GMO by AGW pasture-raised pork from the North Carolina Natural Hog Growers Association is available at restaurants, retailers and food producers throughout the southeastern United States; check A Greener World’s online directory for details. For more information about Certified Non-GMO by AGW visit [agreenerworld.org/solutions-and-certificates/](http://agreenerworld.org/solutions-and-certificates/).

## **ABOUT A GREENER WORLD**

A Greener World (AGW) promotes practical, sustainable farming systems by supporting farmers and informing consumers. AGW’s growing portfolio of trusted certifications includes [Animal Welfare Approved](#), [Certified Non-GMO by AGW](#) and [Certified Grassfed by AGW](#). Each program is designed to have positive and measurable impacts on the environment, society and animals, and to encourage truly sustainable farming practices. AGW’s standards and procedures are robust and transparent, yet realistic and achievable for farmers.

AGW offers a range of resources to help people make informed food choices, including an [Online Directory](#) of certified farms and products and [Food Labels Exposed](#)--a definitive guide to food label claims (available in print, online, and as a smartphone app). For more information visit [agreenerworld.org](http://agreenerworld.org).

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