



## News Release

For Immediate Release

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### **Niman Ranch Raises Consumer Appetites for Sustainable, Humanely Raised Pork, Helping to Restore U.S. Family Hog Farms after Years of Decline**

*More than 600 Gather in Des Moines to Celebrate Small Independent U.S. Family Farmers*

**Des Moines, IA.** (September 8, 2017) — Niman Ranch, a leader in sustainable agriculture and humane livestock practices, convened its 19<sup>th</sup> annual farmer appreciation dinner with customers and partners to celebrate small independent hog farms across Iowa and surrounding states. Speakers included journalists, advocates, academic leaders and humane animal expert and renowned scientist, Temple Grandin.

Niman Ranch began hog production in 1995 with one farmer, Paul Willis, from Thornton, IA. Since that time the company has expanded to 629 hog farmers in 12 states. During that same period, national hog farming declined significantly. From 1970 to 2016 the U.S. lost 92% of its hog farms while the size of the farm increased over 1400%.

General Manager Jeff Tripician compared the loss of family hog farming in the U.S. to qualifying as an endangered species. He cited a loss of more than 97.8% of hog farmers since 1950. “With an alarming 2.2% survival rate, hog farms should be on an endangered list,” said Tripician. “When something is near extinction it is our obligation to provide programs for their conservation. That is what we are committed to do at Niman Ranch.”

In addition to increasing the Niman Ranch hog farmer network by nearly 100% over the last decade, the Niman Ranch farmer is significantly younger than the national average. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that the average age of farmers has steadily increased to 58-years old over the last 30 years, contrary to the Niman Ranch farmer’s average age of 48.

“Niman Ranch remains committed to helping make small family farms viable and to supporting the communities in which they thrive,” said Paul Willis, founder of the Niman Ranch Pork Division. “We know we’re doing something right because more young people want to work with us. Our animals are raised with care and we care deeply about the farmer, the environment and the customer.”

Willis credited the success of Niman Ranch to the consistent commitment to the farmer, the animals and the land and the loyalty of customers. “Customers range from the busy shopper at a progressive grocery store in California, to colleges, hotels, fast casual restaurants, to a top chef in New York City and every state in between,” said Willis. “They honor the work we do as farmers by cooking with the most sustainable, humane and best tasting product.”

Niman Ranch pork is third-party certified under the Certified Humane® program and from hogs raised by a community of small, independent U.S. family hog farmers who adhere to some of the strictest animal welfare protocols in the industry, including:

- No antibiotics - EVER
- No gestation or farrowing crates
- Raised outside or deeply bedded pens
- Never fed animal by-products

Niman Ranch products are available nationally.

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*With more than 40 years as an industry leader, Niman Ranch is a community of more than 720 independent family farmers and ranchers who raise livestock traditionally, humanely and sustainably to deliver the finest-tasting meat. All Niman Ranch pork, beef, lamb and prepared products are certified under the Certified Humane® program and available nationwide at both food service and retail locations.*