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Contact: Peter Holter, HMI, (505) 842-5252  
Jane Blume, Desert Sky Communications, 505-294-1976

## Radio Commentary: Holistic Management International COO Peter Holter Reacts to Recent News Reports about Rising Prices for Corn and Corn Products

**ANNOUNCER'S INTRO:** Recent news reports have told us that ethanol - which is now the 'big player' in the alternative fuels arena - is using up corn that would otherwise be fed to cattle, dairy cows, swine, sheep and fowl. As a result, the prices being paid for corn are rising rapidly. These increases in turn drive up the costs of both the foods that we humans consume, and of the livestock feeds that contain corn.



### Comments from Peter Holter, COO of Holistic Management International.

**HOLTER:** The news stories did not pose or answer questions about why livestock are consuming corn-based feed in the first place. The answer would be that our industrial livestock industry confines the animals to pens and barns; therefore, they have to consume manufactured food.

It wasn't always this way. In the 19th century, "animals grazed and were sustained on the Great Plains, which were grasslands that covered almost 40% of North America. Only about 1% of the original ecosystem exists today because it has been converted to agriculture or is degraded and abandoned.

While the Great Plains did support millions of grazing animals and pack-hunting predators that fed on the grazers, the grasslands remained healthy because of the symbiotic and holistic relationship between the land and the animals.



The presence of predators kept the grazing animals on the move; and their hoof action worked the soil so that their manure was quickly absorbed. The soil's organic matter was increased, thereby fertilizing it and keeping it healthy.

Would it be possible to return to a more "natural" way of raising livestock? Over 23 years of working internationally with farming and ranching families to restore their lands to health and profitability, our organization, Holistic Management International, has accumulated abundant evidence that this is actually possible. Today, 30 million acres around the world (including the United States) are successfully cultivated using Holistic Management.



To change the paradigm of how we raise livestock, we would have to be willing to free up the necessary acreage; grow the grass and restore the grasslands with the animals present; and manage their grazing in such a way that replicates the behavior of those wild grazers of yesteryear and permits enough time to elapse for the roots of the plants to rest and recover.

**If we could bring animals back to the land in a holistically managed way - and restore the grasslands – then the benefits would be considerable:**

- Vast amounts of carbon would end up in plant roots instead of in the atmosphere. This would have a positive effect on global warming.
- We would increase the water resources of the land, in underground aquifers and in the prairie. regions (covered soil retains significantly more water than bare ground does).
- The overall habitat for wildlife would be improved.
- Outbreaks of pests and weeds would decrease, along with the attendant use of herbicides and pesticides.
- We could reduce the amount of methane that is produced by livestock in confined feeding operations.
- We could produce a high-quality, clean protein product for human consumption.
- We could create another source of biofuels. Research conducted at the University of Minnesota and reported in the December 2006 issue of Science magazine, indicated that biofuels derived from grassland plants yield up to twice as much energy per unit of land as corn-based ethanol does. This exciting development could hold the key to the future of alternative energy production.

And in the end, we would also improve our rural economies.

**ANNOUNCER'S OUTRO:** Peter Holter is COO of the Albuquerque-based non-profit, Holistic Management International.

