



For Immediate Release

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Innovative Spoof Wins Internet “Academy Award”

[New York, NY] – The website for *The Meatrix* (www.TheMeatrix.com) the popular flash-animation spoof about the evils of factory farming, has won the 2005 Webby Award for best website for a charitable or nonprofit organization. Called the “Oscars of the Internet,” the Webby is the leading international award honoring excellence in web design, creativity, usability and functionality and is given annually by the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences.

“With *The Meatrix*, we engaged the public through entertainment and pop culture humor, and wove it through a visually exciting and educational website,” said Alice Slater, President of GRACE (Global Resource Action Center for the Environment), the group behind the internet film. “It is a tremendous honor that others have recognized how innovative our approach has been to raising public awareness about the devastating effects of factory farms.”

Since its debut in late 2003, over 7 million people have viewed the spoof of the popular *Matrix* films featuring a trenchcoat-clad cow named ‘Moopheus’ who reveals the ugly truth about modern factory farming to a pig named ‘Leo.’ Viewers learn how massive industrial feedlots pollute the environment, abuse animals and workers and are trying to replace traditional family farms as the leading producers of meat around the world. Critics everywhere from *Adbusters* and *PR Weekly* to *The Nation* have hailed the film as “the little film that did” and “a cult internet hit.”

“The nonprofit world tends to stay isolated, using old techniques and speaking only to itself both online and off,” noted Rebecca Bray, who designed the website behind the film. “It was refreshing to create a site that is less *Masterpiece Theater* and more *The Simpsons*, while still being informative and action-oriented. *The Meatrix* seems to appeal to people because we are not forcing a message. Instead, we give people information along with positive solutions and let each individual decide what he or she wants to do.”

After watching the humorous animated short, viewers are directed to an action page (www.TheMeatrix.com/action) where they can learn how to eat healthier and help support family farms by using the Eat Well Guide (www.EatWellGuide.org), a national online directory of meat, poultry, dairy and eggs raised using traditional, sustainable farming methods. Viewers can also learn more about factory farming and sign-up for email alerts to keep them up-to-date on the global fight against corporate agriculture.

Over the past year and a half, *The Meatrix* has enjoyed tremendous success on the independent film festival circuit, picking up seven major awards and countless accolades. In March, the film took home an award for Best Animated Short in the classic category at Austin's South by Southwest interactive film and music festival. *The Meatrix* has also received awards from the Environmental Media Association, the Annecy International Animated Film Festival, The Glynwood Foundation, and Media Rights' Media That Matters Film Festival.

"The message of *The Meatrix* crosses age, gender and class boundaries," said Diane Hatz, who develops content and marketing strategies for the site. "It is one of the first and most successful examples of bringing for-profit viral marketing techniques into the non-profit world. Marketing an issue can be challenging, but we leave the choice to the consumer. We simply provide the humor, facts, entertainment and positive solutions."

To stay ahead of the curve, Hatz says that GRACE has even more creative approaches in store for the sequel to *The Meatrix*, to be released later this year. "Not only will the story develop and progress, we'll be using even more creative and unusual online approaches to create greater interaction between the viewer and the issues of factory farming and sustainable food," she said.

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(Global Resource Action Center for the Environment) is a nonprofit organization that works with research, policy and grassroots communities to raise awareness and promote solutions to preserve the planet for future generations. Visit us at www.gracelinks.org