



Investor Relations | Smithfield Foods USA, Global Food Company

Smithfield Foods Announces BBB Issuer Default Rating From Fitch

SMITHFIELD, Va., Jan. 03, 2017 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Smithfield Foods, Inc. today announced that Fitch Ratings, a leading provider of credit ratings, commentary and research, has assigned Smithfield an investment grade Issuer Default Rating (IDR) of BBB, with a stable outlook. Fitch is the second rating agency to formally assign an investment grade rating to Smithfield, following Standard & Poor's assignment of a BBB- Corporate Credit Rating in October 2016.

In its assignment of a BBB IDR, Fitch noted Smithfield's leading position in the global pork industry, its continued improvement in product mix towards higher margin packaged meats, as well as Smithfield's and its parent company's prudent approach to leverage and liquidity.

"We are pleased to achieve this rating from Fitch," said Kenneth M. Sullivan, president and chief executive officer of Smithfield Foods. "This rating is a clear recognition of Smithfield's continued strong operating performance, prudent financial management, the power of its integrated business model, and the clear benefits of its relationship with its parent company in setting a path towards future growth and success."

Smithfield's rating was upgraded one level due to the relationship with its parent company, WH Group, a Hong Kong-based and publicly traded company with shareholders around the world, including numerous investors in the United States. Fitch assigned a BBB+/Stable rating to WH Group while Smithfield earned a stand-alone of BBB-. Recognized by Fitch in its analysis, Smithfield's relationship with WH Group provides the world's largest hog producer and pork processor with greater access to China, the largest and fastest growing pork market.

More information about Smithfield Foods may be found at smithfieldfoods.com.

This news release may contain "forward-looking" information within the meaning of the federal securities laws. The forward-looking information may include statements concerning the company's outlook for the future, as well as other statements of beliefs, future plans and strategies or anticipated events, and similar expressions concerning matters that are not historical facts. The forward-looking information and statements are subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed in, or implied by, the statements. These risks and uncertainties include availability and prices of livestock, raw materials and supplies, livestock costs, livestock disease, food safety, product pricing, the competitive environment and related market conditions, ability to make and successfully integrate acquisitions, operating efficiencies, access to capital, the cost of compliance with environmental and health standards, adverse results from ongoing litigation and actions of domestic and foreign governments.

About Smithfield Foods

Smithfield Foods is a \$14 billion global food company and the world's largest pork processor and hog producer. In the United States, the company is also the leader in numerous packaged meats categories with popular brands including Smithfield®, Eckrich®, Nathan's Famous®, Farmland®, Armour®, John Morrell®, Cook's®, Kretschmar®, Gwaltney®, Curly's®, Margherita®, Carando®, Healthy Ones®, Krakus®, Morlino® and Berlinki®. Smithfield Foods is committed to providing good food in a responsible way and maintains robust animal care, community involvement, employee safety, environmental and food safety and quality programs. For more information, visit www.smithfieldfoods.com.

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