

December 21, 1999

2506 '00 JAN -6 A11 '03

Jane Henney, M. D., Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 1471
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Dr. Henney,

I am writing to urge the FDA to follow the lead of the European Union and move immediately to ban the use of antibiotics important in human medicine as growth-promoters in livestock. Overuse of antibiotics has been linked to the emergence of antibiotic-resistant diseases. Many of the drugs used to enhance growth in chickens, pigs, and cattle are the same as, or closely related to, those used to treat diseases in humans. These drugs are currently available for unregulated use by livestock producers as growth promoters. The use of these powerful and important drugs should be restricted to the treatment of disease, in animals and in humans, in order to ensure that treatment for potentially deadly bacteria will continue to be available.

Fearing a rise in untreatable infectious diseases, the European Union, led by Sweden and Denmark, has banned all growth-promoting uses of antibiotics used in human medicine. The antibiotics are still available for use in treatment of animal diseases, but are distributed by veterinarians and licensed pharmacies, rather than on the open market. The FDA should follow the lead of the European Union and take action against drugs being used in the United States as growth promoters. The EU experience has proved that yields and quality can be maintained without the use of antibiotics as growth promoters.

The FDA should move to protect Americans from the emergence of antibiotic-resistant diseases. Preventing antibiotic overuse in meat production is a crucial step. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

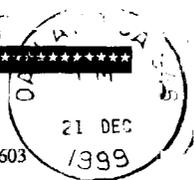
Sincerely,



Rose M. Roberts

99P 0485

C2263



Jane Henney, M.D., Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 1471
Rockville, MD 20857