

Dr. Jane Henney, Commissioner  
Food and Drug Administration  
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 14-71  
Rockville, MD 20857

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Dr. Henney,

A new study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* links the use of antibiotics in poultry to America's growing resistance to antibiotics. The study contends that when livestock are given antibiotics to prevent infection and spur growth, they begin to build a resistance to the antibiotics. Repeated exposure to antibiotics causes resistant strains to evolve. Even after animals are slaughtered, the bacteria may remain and people may then ingest the antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Antibiotics are critical for treating infectious disease, but due to overuse they are failing to cure diseases.

Approximately 90% of all antibiotics used in agriculture are given to promote growth or prevent disease, rather than to treat infection. The benefit to agribusiness is rapid growth and lower costs while the cost to consumers is the potential for ineffective antibiotic treatments.

I urge you to ban the use of antibiotics as livestock growth promoters.

- Other countries, believing that potential human health risks are warranted, have acted to reduce the use of antibiotics in agriculture.
- Due to increasing evidence, the CDC and the FDA agree that the agricultural use of antibiotics is a significant source of antibiotic resistance among foodborne pathogens.
- Eliminating the use of antibiotics as growth promoters will decrease the occurrence of antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria. This has been illustrated by a recent case in Denmark where the growth-promoting antibiotic, avoparcin, was banned. In a three-year period, the prevalence of antibiotic-resistant enterococci bacteria in chicken declined from 82% to 12%.

Sincerely,  
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**ENCOURAGE  
KINDNESS  
NOT CRUELTY**