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December 20, 2000

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

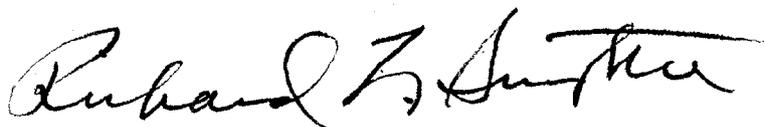
Dear Dr. Henney,

As a retired surgeon and a member of THE UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS, I am seriously concerned that the issue of the use of antibiotics used for treatment of humans, now being heavily and widely used for promotion of growth in agricultural settings, has not been treated with the urgency it deserves by the FDA.

At the time I retired 8 years ago, increasing antibiotic resistance was already a real problem. While I agree that our own profession has been careless in its use of the drugs, I must defer to the CDC in its position that the animal agricultural overuses is the principal cause of the increasing antibiotic resistance and should be terminated as it is purely driven by economic consideration, which should not be allowed to come before health considerations.

Thank you for taking the trouble of reading and considering my concerns.

Sincerely yours,



Richard L. Smythe, MD

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TAKE Action

PREVENT UNTREATABLE DISEASES

WHAT'S AT STAKE

The effectiveness of antibiotics in curing human disease.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

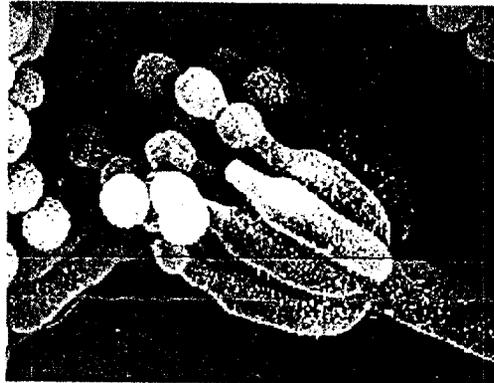
Urge the Food and Drug Administration to ban the use of human antibiotics to make livestock grow faster.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Many of the same drugs doctors use to treat illnesses such as food poisoning and staph infections are also used to raise pigs, chicken, and cattle for the kitchen. In animal factories, these same antibiotics aren't used just to treat sick livestock. They're also fed daily to healthy animals because producers believe that their animals grow quicker and reach slaughter weight sooner.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers the overuse of antibiotics in animal agriculture the principal cause of antibiotic resistance in food-borne bacteria like salmonella and campylobacter. By unnecessarily pumping huge quantities of antibiotics into healthy animals, producers are creating conditions where bacteria can quickly develop resistance to these drugs. When this happens—one strain of salmonella is now resistant to five antibiotics—doctors have fewer tools to combat human disease.

The European Union has already acted, banning all growth-promoting uses of antibiotics that have a role in human medicine. In June, the World Health Organization repeated its call for the "termination or rapid phasing out of the use of antimicrobials [which include anti-



Penicillin mold

biotics] for growth promotion if they are also used for treatment of humans."

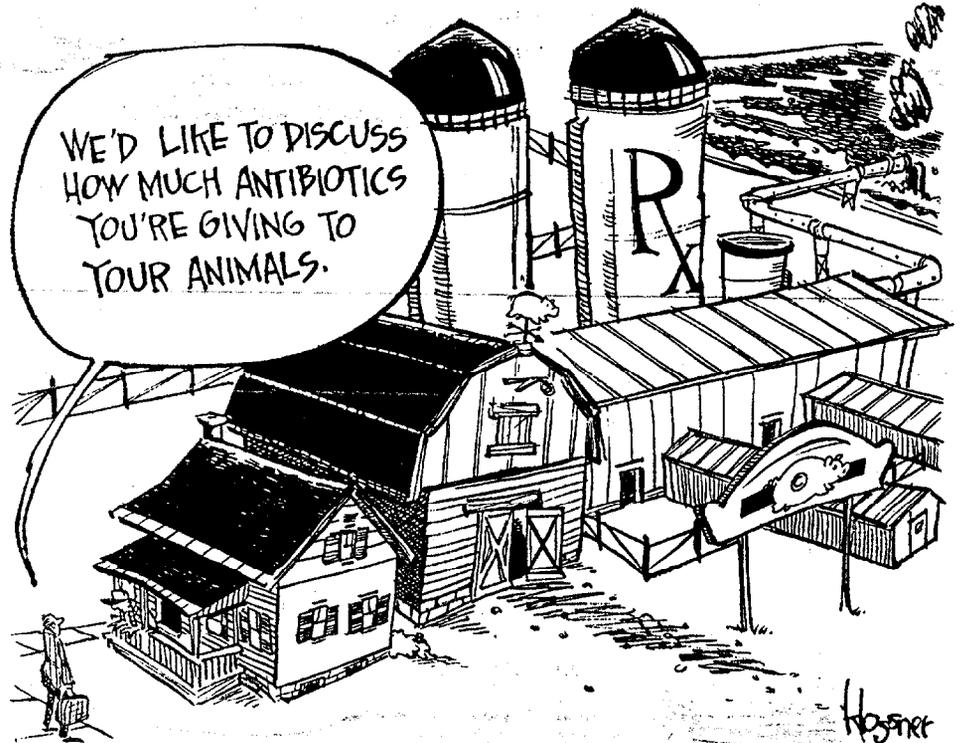
But the Food and Drug Administration is dragging its feet. While it studies the problem, how many diseases will become untreatable?

We must act now.

WHO TO CONTACT

Jane Henney, M.D., Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 1471
Rockville, MD 20857
Fax: 301-443-3100

Or send an email or fax from the UCS website at www.ucsus.org/act.

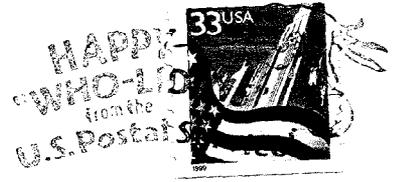


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