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January 17, 2001

Jane E. Henney, M.D.
Commissioner
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville MD 20857-0001

Dear Dr. Henney:

I am writing to urge you to collect and report data on the quantity of antibiotics used in the US, especially in agriculture.

The rise of antibiotic resistance due to overuse and misuse of antibiotics in both human medicine and agriculture is well documented. According to estimates in the Union of Concerned Scientists' recently released report *Hogging It!*, roughly 70 percent of all antibiotic drugs are fed to healthy cows, pigs and chickens annually for nontherapeutic purposes such as growth promotion. This astounding figure is far higher than that recently reported by industry for all agricultural uses of antibiotics.

The Union of Concerned Scientists acknowledges that its figures represent nothing more than the best estimate of agricultural antibiotic use currently available. It goes without saying that accurate information is a *sine qua non* for responsible decision-making. Reliable, government guaranteed information on US antibiotic use is necessary for creating effective solutions for reducing antibiotic use. I understand that the FDA has recognized the need for collecting such information, but it has yet to take steps to establish this needed system.

For these reasons, I urge the FDA to move now to establish a system for collecting basic data on both human and agricultural antibiotic use in this country, including the class, indication, dosage and treatment period.

Thank you for your attention to this very serious matter for the public health and welfare. I look forward to hearing from you regarding measures the FDA intends to take to address this vital issue.

Sincerely,

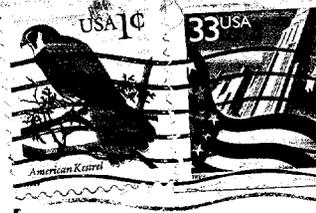


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