

Dear Mrs. Henney -

Please, please

# TAKE Action

WINTER 2000-2001 earthwise

to discontinue routine use of antibiotics for livestock!

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## PREVENT UNTREATABLE DISEASES

thank you Regina B. Munn

### WHAT'S AT STAKE

The effectiveness of antibiotics in curing human disease.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

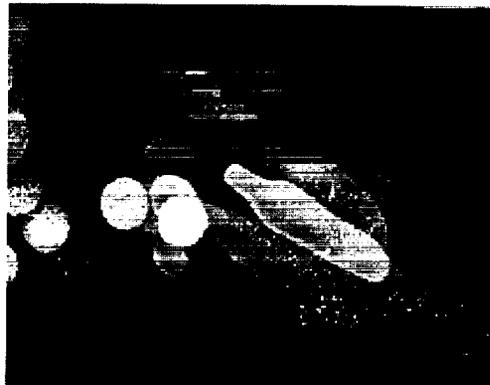
Urge the Food and Drug Administration to ban the use of human antibiotics to make livestock grow faster.

### 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

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

Richard Edelman

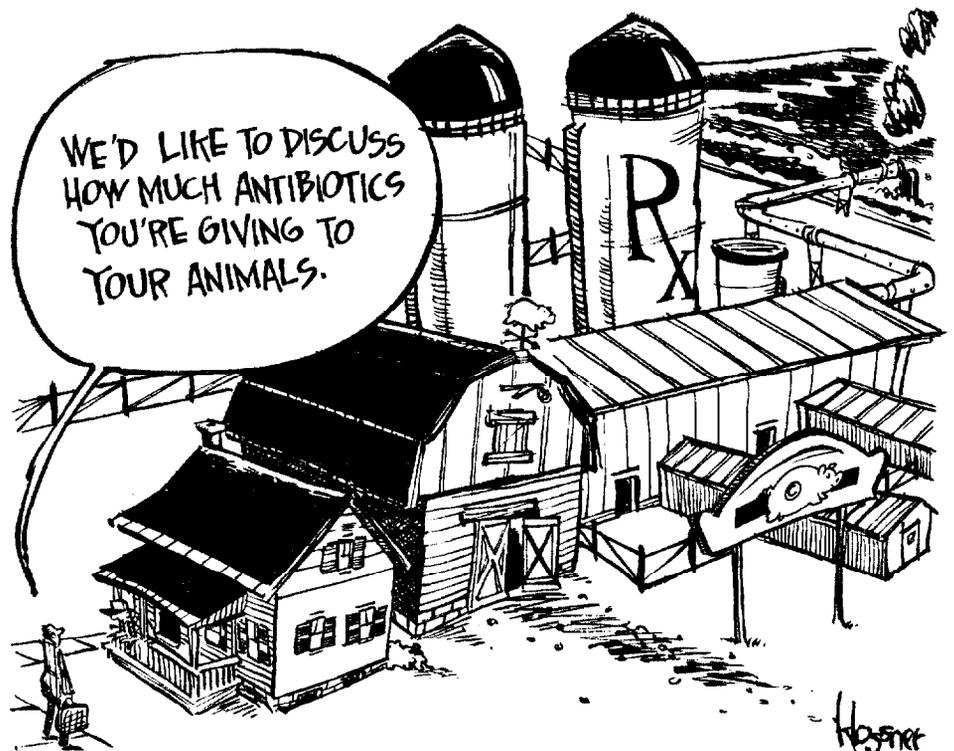
But the Food and Drug Administration is dragging its feet. While it studies the problem, how many diseases will become untreatable?

We must act now.

### WHO TO CONTACT

Jane Henney, M.D., Commissioner  
Food and Drug Administration  
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 1471  
Rockville, MD 20857  
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Or send an email or fax from the UCS website at [www.ucsusa.org/fact](http://www.ucsusa.org/fact).



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# Organic Farming *continued from front page*

Bt-producing bacteria. Every cell of the potato plant produces Bt, so the beetles are exposed for the entire growing season. Since resistance is a function of length of exposure, the transgenic application of the Bt will result in resistance; it's simply a matter of time.

Whereas using Bt as one of several tools is a way to preserve it so that my kids, when they go into farming, will be able to use it.

Unfortunately, the EPA acted hastily in approving not only Bt potatoes, but Bt corn and Bt cotton. For example, Bt pollen from corn going offsite, landing on milkweed, and poisoning the Monarch butterflies—that should have been studied before letting these crops into the environment.

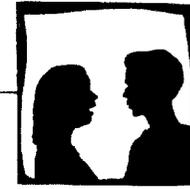
In the past, organic farmers have worried about chemical pollution from

drifting pesticide sprays. The risk of genetic pollution is worse. Imagine if an organic corn grower was growing his crop near a transgenic corn grower and the pollen blew onto his farm. It could not only disqualify his corn crop for that year, it could disqualify his farm.



There's an effort under way to try to have 30 percent of US farm production organic by the year 2010, which seems like a pretty tall order. But there are progressive farmers that are now sitting on the sidelines trying to see, "Is the market big enough for me to go in?" It can't be overstated how important it is to purchase organic food, because that is what is going to promote the changeover. \*

*This is only some of our interview with Jim Gerritsen. Hear the rest on the Web at [www.ucsus.org/agriculture](http://www.ucsus.org/agriculture).*



dialogue

*I keep hearing that biotechnology will help reduce world hunger. Is this technology necessary to feed the world?*

—Jill Foreman  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

No. Today there is abundant food, yet an eighth of the world's population is chronically undernourished. This is primarily for reasons that have little to do with technology, such as lack of income to buy food, inadequate infrastructure like roads to get products to market, and trade policies that disadvantage farmers in the developing world.

A recent study by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization found that growth in global agriculture over the next three decades should be more than sufficient—without genetic engineering—to meet world demand for food. Genetically engineered crops were omitted from this assessment due to ambiguities over the long-term promise, safety, and consumer acceptance of the technology. So far, there is little reason to believe that genetic engineering would be markedly better at improving crops than more proven traditional technologies.

More productive crops are only part of the solution to the world hunger problem. Significant changes are also needed outside of agriculture—such as improving the incomes of the poor in developing countries to enable them to feed themselves. \*



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