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December 21 2000 1 JAN 17 AIO:44

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

Dear Ms. Henney:

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

As you know, 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, and that, in animal factories, these same antibiotics aren't used just to treat sick livestock. They are 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. As you know, when this happens (one strain of salmonella is now resistant to five antibiotics), doctors have fewer tools to combat human disease.

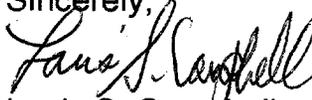
The European Union has already acted, banning all growth-promoting uses of antibiotics that have a role in human medicine. Last June, the World Health Organization repeated its call for the "termination or rapid phasing out of the use of antimicrobials [which, as you know, includes antibiotics] for growth promotion if they are also used for treatment of humans."

While the Food and Drug Administration is dragging its feet and studying the problem, how many diseases will become untreatable?

That is why I urge the Food and Drug Administration to ban the use of human antibiotics to make livestock grow faster.

I respectfully request that you inform me of what steps you intend to take in this matter in order that I may inform the head office of the Union of Concerned Scientists in Cambridge, Massachusetts, as well as its Washington, D.C. Office.

Sincerely,



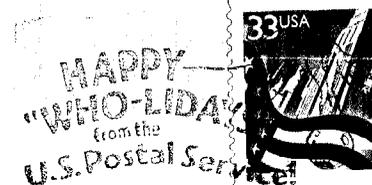
Louis S. Campbell

Member, Union of Concerned Scientists

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