

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4205

January 20, 1999

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Jane E. Henney, M.D.
Commissioner
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
14-71 Parklawn Building
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Dr. Henney:

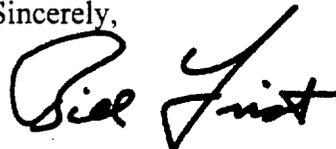
I am writing to inform you of my interest in FDA's potential role regarding the issue of antimicrobial resistance related to the use of animal antibiotics.

I have recently cosponsored a policy forum on the impact of antimicrobial resistance on human medicine. Although the most critical need is to examine the role of antibiotics in human medicine, I do intend to review the use of antibiotics in food animals as a part of a comprehensive look at this issue.

It is my understanding that the Veterinary Medicine Advisory Committee is holding a hearing to review the agency's proposal to modify the animal drug approval process to address concerns that the use of antibiotics in animals may transfer resistance to humans. I believe that the VMAC hearing is a useful undertaking. Clearly there is much to learn about this issue and the state of science is still very much in its infancy. To properly anticipate and handle this potential public health problem, we need to pursue significantly more research and meaningful data. Our efforts to deal with this potential problem as we move forward must be science-based, and proportional to the level of risk to human health.

I look forward to working with the FDA on an appropriate solution to this issue. I would appreciate your office informing me of all policy initiatives that you may be considering, regarding antibiotic use in both human and animal medicine. Again, I feel that it is important that the issue of antimicrobial resistance be reviewed in a balanced, scientific manner. Finally, I would appreciate your making my interest in this issue known to the VMAC prior to their upcoming meeting.

Sincerely,



Bill Frist, M.D.
United States Senator

cc: Dr. Steve Sundlof

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