Nov. 16, 1999

Ms. Bernice Schneider
1623 NE 172nd Street
Miami FL 33162

FDA Commissioner Jane E. Henney
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Md. 20857

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Dear Sir,

As a member of C.S.P.I. and a contributor to O.S.C.R. I would like to urge the government to prohibit livestock producers from routinely adding medically important antibiotics to animal feed to promote growth.

The increased use of antibiotics automatically increases the spread of resistant strains of microbes. The past forty years has seen a race between constantly mutating microbes and researchers trying to come up with new antibiotics to combat them.

Bacteria can pass genetic material that confers resistance directly from one bacterium to another, and even between different species.

Antibiotics given to farm animals can induce resistance not only in the animals who received them but in other livestock on the farm and in farm workers themselves. Bacteria that become resistant to one antibiotic are likely to confer resistance to several others as well. We are now finding new strains of Old Diseases for which we do not have any effective antibiotic treatment — or one that is prohibitively expensive or as dangerous as the disease itself.

We should take more precautions to prevent the spread of resistant strains of bacteria. Overseas, and in developing countries, new strains of multiple-drug-resistant infections are cropping up — deadly diseases that have no real cure and can be treated only by quarantine.

The European Union has banned antibiotics used by humans from animal feed. This decision is supported by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization.

Yours truly,

Bernice Schneider

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