



THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF *TENNESSEE*

2012 Twenty-First Avenue South, Nashville TN 37212 615/297-7134

June 28, 2001

Office of the Commissioner
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857-0001

Re: Data Tracking System for Antibiotics Use

Dear Commissioner:

The League of Women Voters of Tennessee is aware of concerns being raised in the medical community, regarding antibiotic resistance in treatment of infectious diseases in people. We understand that both overuse of medication in human treatment, and widespread use of antibiotics for growth-enhancement purposes in the livestock industry may contribute to this problem. At this time, it appears that a reliable, national or regional system of data centers to comprehensively track antibiotics does not exist.

The League of Women Voters of Tennessee believes that full and long-range data tracking are needed to assure wise policy and decisions, especially when these can impact health or public natural resources, e.g. soil and water. There are few publicly available data on quantity of antibiotic use at this time, from which risk to public health, and potential risk to water resources, for example, could be scientifically studied as basis for sound policy.

The League urges your Agency to move at this time to establish a relevant data system in the United States. We have surely learned from other agricultural sectors, how quickly organisms can develop resistance under conditions of prolonged use. For example, more than 500 insects are known to be resistant already to many pesticides. We must ensure that salmonella and other bacteria do not, likewise, become immune to treatment. As research and policy tool, a comprehensive data system should cover both human and agricultural use of antibiotics and should include treatment period, class, indication, and dosage.

The League of Women Voters of Tennessee would find development of such a data system especially helpful now, since Confined Animal Farming Operations may soon

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We participate, educate and advocate.

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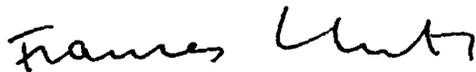
FDA Commissioner, p. 2

play a larger role in our state's agricultural system than before.

Again, we urge the Food and Drug Administration to initiate comprehensive tracking of antibiotics use in the United States.

Thank you for accepting our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frances Lamberts".

Frances Lamberts, Natural Resources
League of Women Voters of Tennessee

P.C. Sharon Fidler, President, LWV-TN