

Dr. Jane Henney, Commissioner  
Food & Drug Administration  
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 14-71  
Rockville, Md. 20857

2475 '00 AUG 16 P2:24

February 8, 2000

Dear Commissioner Henney:

I understand that your agency is considering a petition to ban the use of medically useful antibiotics as growth promoters in animals consumed for food. I am sure you are aware of the new study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that links the use of antibiotics in poultry to America's growing resistance to antibiotics. The study contends that when livestock are given antibiotics to prevent infection and to spur growth, they begin to build a resistance to the antibiotics. Repeated exposure to antibiotics causes resistant strains of bacteria to evolve. Approximately 90% of all antibiotics are given to promote growth or prevent disease, rather than to treat infection.

I would like to urge you and your agency to ban the use of antibiotics as livestock growth promoters. I hope you will take into consideration the following:

- Other countries, believing the potential human health risks are warranted, have acted to reduce the use of antibiotics in agriculture.
- Due to increasing evidence, the CDC and the FDA agree that the agricultural use of antibiotics is a significant source of antibiotic resistance among foodborne pathogens.
- Eliminating the use of antibiotics as growth promoters will decrease the occurrence of antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria. This has been illustrated by a recent case in Denmark where the growth-promoting antibiotic, avoparcin, was banned. In a three-year period, the prevalence of antibiotic-resistant enterococci bacteria in chicken declined from 82% to 12%.

I would like to ask you to give this matter your utmost consideration for the sake of future generations. Please advise me of the current status of this endeavor.

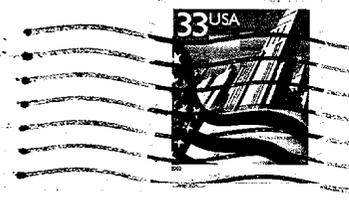
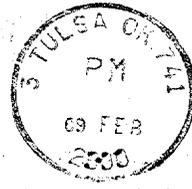
Sincerely,

G. K. Crabtree  
Rt. 1, Box 128  
Catoosa, Ok. 74015

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R. 74015



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