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December 24, 1999

Jane E. Henney  
FDA Commissioner  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville MD 20857

Dear Ms. Henney:

I am alarmed that so many diseases formerly treatable with antibiotics are returning as real health threats. Some examples are tuberculosis and several staph infections. There is consensus within the medical profession regarding the cause of this public health crisis. The bacteria responsible for these diseases have developed antibiotic-resistant strains.

Part of the problem is that physicians over-prescribe antibiotics. Patients frequently expect and sometimes demand prescriptions for all sorts of ailments, which are not caused by bacterial pathogens, such as influenza or other viral infections. However, another part of the problem is that livestock producers routinely add medically important antibiotics to animal feed to promote rapid growth.

I am writing to request that you do everything in your power to inform the American public and physicians of the extent of the threat resulting from the taking or writing prescription for antibiotics when the diagnosis does not require such treatment. I understand that this is a long-term effort and that you are not charged with the responsibility to control this aspect of the problem. But your advocacy should improve public perception and might influence physicians' behavior.

**However, it IS within your power to prohibit the addition of medically important antibiotics to animal feed immediately. I urge you to do so without delay.** Surely it is better (and far less expensive) to pay a few cents more for animal products than to risk the outbreaks a variety of fatal infectious diseases which are not treatable by currently available antibiotics.

Sincerely,



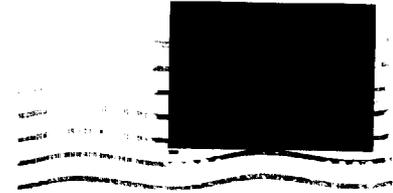
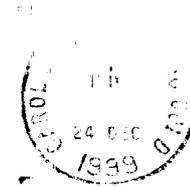
Dr. Edwin Homeier  
Two Atrium Way #409  
Elmhurst, IL 60126

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**2 Atrium Way Apt 409**  
**Elmhurst, IL 60126**



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**Rockville MD 20857**

