

December 24, 2000

Jane Henney, M.D.

Commissioner

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Food and Drug Administration

5600 Fishers Lane, Room 1471

Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Commissioner Henney, M.D.:

I urge you to ban the use of human antibiotics to make livestock grow faster because I am very concerned about the effectiveness of antibiotics in curing human disease.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers the overuse of antibiotics in animal agriculture the principal cause of antibiotic resistance in food-borne bacteria like salmonella and campylobacter. By unnecessarily pumping huge quantities of antibiotics into healthy animals, producers are creating conditions where bacteria can quickly develop resistance to these drugs. When this happens, doctors have fewer tools to combat human disease.

The European Union has already acted, banning all growth-promoting uses of antibiotics that can have a role in human medicine. In June, the World Health Organization repeated its call for the "termination or rapid phasing out of the use of antimicrobials [which include antibiotics] for growth promotion if they are also used for treatment of humans." But you are dragging your feet. Please act now.

I remain, seeking to prevent untreatable diseases,

Claire Martineau

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