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1814 Metzertott Rd. A3
Adelphi, MD 20783
December 28, 2000

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Jane Henney, MD
Commissioner, FDA
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 1471
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Ms. Henney:

I am writing to suggest that the FDA strongly consider banning the use of human antibiotics for animal growth promotion in agriculture.

Antibiotic resistance in bacteria is a serious problem. Antibiotics are a very potent weapon against bacterial disease, but only if bacterial strains do not develop resistance. Use of the same antibiotics in animal farming and in human medical treatment promotes antibiotic resistance. Unfortunately, in animal farming, antibiotics are often given to healthy animals in low dosages to increase growth rates. This is exactly the kind of practice that increases antibiotic resistance. Low dosages may not be enough to kill all the bacteria, just kill the ones that are most susceptible. This naturally selects for the most antibiotic resistant individuals. When these dosages are given to all the animals, healthy or sick, resistance has plenty of opportunity to develop.

These ideas are very well known, and established. Even for humans, doctors are trained to verify that their patients have a bacterial infection before prescribing antibiotics. This limits the number of unnecessary antibiotic prescriptions.

Both of us have no doubt felt the amazing power of antibiotics to cure illness. Farmers may benefit from the use of antibiotics to promote growth in healthy animals. However, this benefit would seem to be strongly outweighed by the benefit from slowing the growth of antibiotic resistance. Therefore, I encourage you to ban the use of antibiotics used in human treatment for animal growth promotion in agriculture.

Sincerely,



Kent Thurber

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C2681

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"WHO-LIDAY"
from the
U.S. Postal Service

Commissioner Jane Henney, MD
FDA
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 1471
Rockville, MD 20857

