

AAC Animal Agriculture Coalition
A Forum for Animal Agriculture

July 16, 2009

Margaret A. Hamburg, MD
Commissioner

Joshua M. Sharfstein, MD
Deputy Commissioner

Food and Drug Administration
10903 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20993

Dear Dr. Hamburg and Dr. Sharfstein:

The Animal Agriculture Coalition (AAC) thanks you for your time and interest in meeting with us recently to discuss the complex issues related to the use of antibiotics to keep food animals healthy and productive. We were encouraged by your statements at that time, and believed our meeting was the beginning of a new dialogue on approved uses of antibiotics in food producing animals.

However, we confess Dr. Sharfstein's testimony at this week's House Rules Committee hearing was not only surprising, it leaves us a bit confused as to the status of FDA's policy review of this important issue. It would seem from his official statements relative to the use of antibiotics for growth promotion and prevention of disease in food producing animals that FDA has already made policy decisions on these critical issues absent any scientific basis or further dialogue between the agency and animal agriculture. This is disappointing.

To better understand FDA's underlying reasoning for its statements at this week's committee hearing, to provide additional information not fully explored at the Rules Committee hearing, and to hopefully reengage what we'd hoped would be an ongoing dialogue with you, AAC respectfully requests a second meeting with you at your earliest convenience. We, of course, will endeavor to meet your schedule.

As we expressed during our initial meeting with you, we commend and share your commitment to public health. We also have a commitment to contribute to public health by raising healthy animals that produce safe and wholesome meat, milk and eggs for American consumers. Healthy animals are a vital first step in the food safety chain. Studies show meat

from healthy animals is less likely to contain food-borne pathogens. Careful, judicious use of antibiotics is one of several important tools used by producers and veterinarians to keep animals healthy.

We also reiterate our invitation to arrange for you to visit a variety of working farms so you can see firsthand how producers and veterinarians work to protect animal and public health by using a variety of tools to keep food animals healthy and the food supply safe.

We look forward to your response to our request for a second meeting to further discuss this issue and FDA's public statements this week. We believe such opportunities for in-depth discussions can lead to an approach to this issue that benefits the American public without penalizing American farmers and ranchers, or negatively impacting food safety, security, availability and consumer price.

Thank you again for your time and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Kerry Thompson
AAC Chair

Richard Sellers
AAC Vice-Chair

Animal Agriculture Coalition Membership

Animal Agriculture Alliance
American Association of Bovine Practitioners
American Association of Swine Veterinarians
American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians
American Dairy Science Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Horse Council
American Meat Institute
American Rabbit Breeders Association
American Sheep Industry Association
American Society of Animal Science
American Veal Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
Animal Health Institute
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Veterinary Biologics Companies
Biotechnology Industry Organization
Catfish Farmers of America
Council for Agricultural Science and Technology
Federation of Animal Science Societies
Holstein Association USA, Inc.
Livestock Exporters Association of the USA
Livestock Marketing Association
National Aquaculture Association
National Association of Federal Veterinarians
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Chicken Council
National Dairy Herd Improvement Association
National Farmers Union
National Grain and Feed Association
National Institute for Agriculture Security
National Institute for Animal Agriculture
National Milk Producers Federation
National Pork Producers Council
National Renderers Association
National Turkey Federation
North American Elk Breeders Association
U.S. Animal Health Association
U.S. Poultry & Egg Producers Association
United Egg Producers