

Across the

Editor's Desk

AHI Responds to FDA Proposed Policy Antibiotics in Feeds Report

The Animal Health Institute (AHI) declared that "we cannot associate ourselves with the premises" of the Food and Drug Administration's Antibiotics in Feeds Task Force Report. "In fact," the Institute said, "we emphatically disagree with most of their conclusions."

AHI's comments were submitted in a letter to the Hearing Clerk for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, in response to the FDA's February 1, 1972 proposed statement of policy concerning antibiotics in feeds. In the letter, AHI Executive Vice President Fred H. Holt continued that "members of the AHI are prepared to answer legitimate questions raised by the Task Force and are confident that research now being formulated and now under way will answer many of these questions"

Institute member companies manufacture more than 90 per cent of all the veterinary pharmaceuticals, biologicals, and feed additives sold in the United States

FDA Minority Report Cited-

The AHI letter drew heavily upon a report filed separately by seven of the FDA Task Force members. These separate views refuted sections of the complete Task Force Report dealing with the alleged human hazard "We are not alone in our view that antibiotics pose no demonstrable human health hazard and provide a clearcut consumer benefit," Holt's letter continued. "Seven of the 15 members of the Task Force felt compelled to issue a statement titled, 'Views of the Report of the Task Force on the Use of Antibiotics for Food Animals . . .'"

The FDA "Minority Report," AHI pointed out, begins with the statement "It is not unusual for individuals with scientific backgrounds to review the same set of data, particularly when the evidence is not clear-cut, and come up with difference conclusions based on those data." It was

this significant lack of consensus among the Task Force scientists themselves that led AHI to immediately question the full Report's scientific validity.

Prophylactic Drug Usage Defended-

Following a point-by-point refutation of parts or all of the Task Force's five premises and five conclusion, Holt asked FDA for clarification concerning its stance on prophylactic usage of animal drugs. He noted the FDA Report's logic on such usage appeared to the Institute to be contradictory.

"If one accepts the Task Force premise that the presence of resistant bacteria in animals constitutes a potential human health hazard," reasoned Holt, "then the removal of recognized effective prophylactic use of antibacterial agents creates a real potential human health hazard, since it follows logically that such removal will lead to an increase in incidence of various animal bacterial diseases."

However, AHI emphasized, there is little proven correlation between certain kinds of bacterial infections arising from animal bacteria and those infections arising from human bacteria. Moreover, the potential reduction of available meat, milk and eggs resulting from loss of antibacterials and the attendant drop in production efficiency must be seriously considered.

Holt concluded that, "a careful re-examination will disclose that this regulation (restriction of prophylactic usage of animal drugs) would not serve the public interest. On the contrary, it could contribute to the creation of a public health hazard."

In closing AHI reiterated its position that "certain legitimate questions do exist, and that AHI will participate in their scientific resolution." Further, "AHI requests an opportunity to comment once criteria for research have been completed . . . and made available to industry."

Combination Health Plan Is Better

Coming up in Congress are new ideas for expanding health care—almost 80 separate bills. The most extreme plan would establish a single massive Federal program costing an estimated \$70 billion annually. Another of the major proposals would rely primarily on private insurance carriers and cost approximately \$8 billion a year.

The first would require a tremendous

additional bureaucracy to handle millions of claims, plus a large "police department" to monitor hospital, physician, and laboratory fees and charges.

The other is a three-step proposal which would 1) mandate a minimum standard of health insurance for each employer to provide for his employees and their dependents, 2) create a pool which would pay the health insurance premiums for those who could not afford such payments; and 3) continue medicare for the aged, blind, and the disabled

At the other extreme the least expensive plan is one which would cover catastrophic illnesses only. While this plan is easier on the pocketbook, it does not treat the root causes of skyrocketing health-care costs, but prescribes only for one of the factors. The best buy is not always the cheapest nor the most expensive.

It makes good sense to weld the benefits of existing private medical care and private health insurance plans with a government program to assure that everyone will be eligible for adequate medical treatment. Under a total government take-over, the cure for runaway health expenses might be worse than the admitted ills of rising costs and insufficient facilities which now exist.

NOW IS THE TIME . . .

By Max Smith
Lancaster County Agent



To Plague Fertilizer Carefully

I'd like to repeat the word of caution about the possibility of burning plant roots and seeds by placing any nitrogen or potash fertilizer directly in contact with the plant or seed. In many cases the fertilizer may stop germination or burn the sprout to the extent that it will be stunted and not produce a normal crop. In most cases the fertilizer should be placed into the soil prior to the planting of the seeds or plants. In the case of some planters the fertilizer is safely placed to the side and deeper than the seeds. Home gardeners should be careful and not put any complete fertilizer in the bottom of a hole before setting in the plant; it's best to put it to the side of the plant and as deep or deeper than the roots. Be careful with fertilizers so they may aid the plant growth rather than destroy it.

To Clean Up Pastures

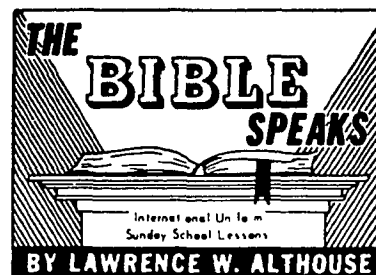
Solid waste disposal is such a problem with many folks that they take it out into the country and throw it over the fence into a woodlot or pasture field. Livestock producers that have grazing land near a public highway should first go over the area and remove all junk in fear of waste that may poison the animals. Items such as paint cans, glass, and pesticide containers may be harmful to the livestock. Don't take the chance of them not finding it, if it is there.

To Do Minimum Tillage

We've often heard the statement that many farmers prepare their soil too fine in this part of the country. In the case of a heavy clay soil it is inclined to bake and get a very hard crust, if the ground is pulverized too fine. This has happened to some fields and makes it difficult for seeds to get through the ground. Many farmers have found that the ground will absorb water better and grow just as good corn and tobacco when it is not worked down as fine as the garden might be. When there are heavy rains on a very finely worked clay soil, the ground will form a heavy crust that can prevent sprouts from growing.

To Apply Dormant Sprays

The pest control program on many trees and shrubs should begin now with the dormant oil spray; this is true with fruit trees as well as many ornamentals. The oil spray is very good for various types of scale that seem to be getting more severe each year. The proper time to spray a plant with the dormant oil spray is when the buds begin to swell. This spray, followed by several other sprays later in the summer, will do a lot to control the insects on most trees and shrubs. Rates should be followed according to the instructions in order to prevent burning. Spray operators should be careful not to get the oil spray on evergreens or on the paint of nearby buildings because it may burn the evergreens and dis-color the building.



WHAT GREATER BLESSING?

Lesson for April 9, 1972

Background Scripture Matthew 18:19-20, John 4:19-24, Acts 2:41-47; Colossians 3:14-17
Devotional Reading Revelation 19:5-10 (ending with "worship God")

Peter DeVries' novel, THE MACKERAL PLAZA, is about an imaginary modern church. Unfortunately, it is only partly "imaginary" and "The People's Liberal Church" and its pastor, the Rev. Andrew Mackeral, are less an exaggeration than most of us would like to think.

The church building itself is very contemporary. Five rooms downstairs include a dining area, kitchen and three parlors for committee and group meetings. On the second floor there is a large "all-purpose interior, divisible into different-sized components by means of sliding walls and convertible into an auditorium for putting on plays, a gymnasium for athletics, and a ballroom for dances. There is a small worship area at one end" (bold face mine).

The loss of worship

The "small worship area" is significant in America these days, for statistics tell us that worship attendances are dropping yearly.

Some time ago an unchurched man observed, "The decline in worship attendance is certainly 'bad news' for the churches." He was right, of course, but he didn't go far enough, for the decline of worship in this country will adversely affect not only churches, but the country as well.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "And what greater calamity can fall upon a nation than the loss of worship" Individuals and congregations are enriched by the practice of worship, but so are our communities and our nations. Worship has an effect upon our national character and without it a nation soon slides into decay.

Why we worship

Some people may attend worship services out of habit, others out of a sense of obligation or duty. But there are higher motives than these. We are told in Mark 1:35 that ". . . in the morning, a great while before day, he (Jesus) rose and went out to a lonely place, and there he prayed." Clearly, this was no mere feeling of duty or obligation. Jesus prayed in the early morning hours because he needed the Father's help. A five-second prayer would not do.

So it was in the early church, too. In Acts 2:41-47 we find people coming together to thank and praise God. This was not some superficial exercise, for look what it did to them: it made them a generous, sharing fellowship, a devout people respected even by those who opposed their Jesus Christ. It made them also a growing fellowship, for, as the writer of Acts says, "And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."

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