

# FDA proposals will raise costs, Congress told

WASHINGTON, D.C. — a pound, a congressional and Drug committee has been told. Dr. L.M. Skamser, American Cyanamid Company, told the Subcommittee on Dairy and Poultry of the House Agricultural Committee that

it is neither wise economics nor prudent public health practice to allow food-producing animals to become sick before authorizing treatment. FDA has proposed banning the use of tetracyclines at low levels for disease prevention, growth promotion and feed efficiency.

FDA Commissioner Donald Kennedy recently said the action would be taken because of fear that such uses present a theoretical hazard to human health, even though, he admitted, actual evidence of such hazard does not exist.

The subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Charles Rose (N.C.) held three days of hearings on the impact of regulation upon the poultry, dairy and honey industries.

Dr. Skamser told the subcommittee FDA has said, in effect, "the fact that there is no evidence of actual hazard simply means we have missed the evidence, not that it doesn't exist."

The witness said the search for hazard has spanned more than 20 years. "Literally hundreds of research reports are available," he said, "from university, hospital and industry laboratories."

"In 1973," the witness said, "FDA set up criteria for further research. Industry has diligently performed this Herculean task with results that further substantiate the safety of antibiotics in feed and the continued effectiveness of the same antibiotics when used for treatment."

"And still FDA is not satisfied — now we are asked to prove absolute zero — that

there is not even a theoretical hazard — and that is an impossibility!"

Dr. Skamser cited FDA statements that substitutes are available for some but not all uses of tetracyclines. However, FDA has also said the same questions of theoretical hazard have been raised about nearly every substitute proposed.

"If the agency is serious about protecting the public from theoretical hazards," the veterinarian said, "then it must move diligently to get these other villains off our farms."

Pointing out that more than 100 billion poultry and livestock have received antibiotics in their feed since the practice began some 27 years ago, Dr. Skamser listed these results:

...Americans have more meat, dairy and poultry products available than ever before;

...There are no widespread, untreatable disease epidemics among poultry or livestock on American farms;

...American farm families, handling medicated feeds and animals which consume medicated feeds, have health records as good as those of non-farm families;

...There are no widespread epidemics of untreatable disease among humans because of antibiotics in livestock feeds.

Responding to FDA criticism of industry for not developing alternate products, Dr. Skamser

pointed out that since chlortetracycline was first approved for use in feeds in 1950, sixteen new antibiotics have come on the market.

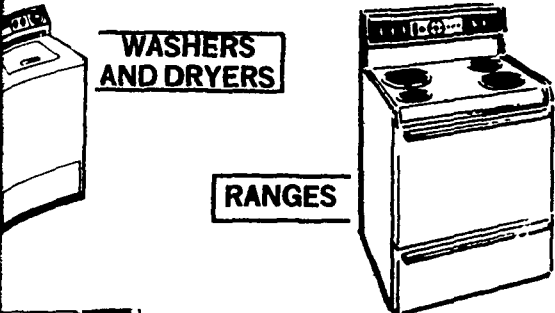
"That is not a record of research neglect," he stated.

"FDA should not be allowed to pursue a philosophy that will make it virtually impossible to clear new drugs as well as cause the removal of some drugs already approved and on the market," Dr. Skamser said.

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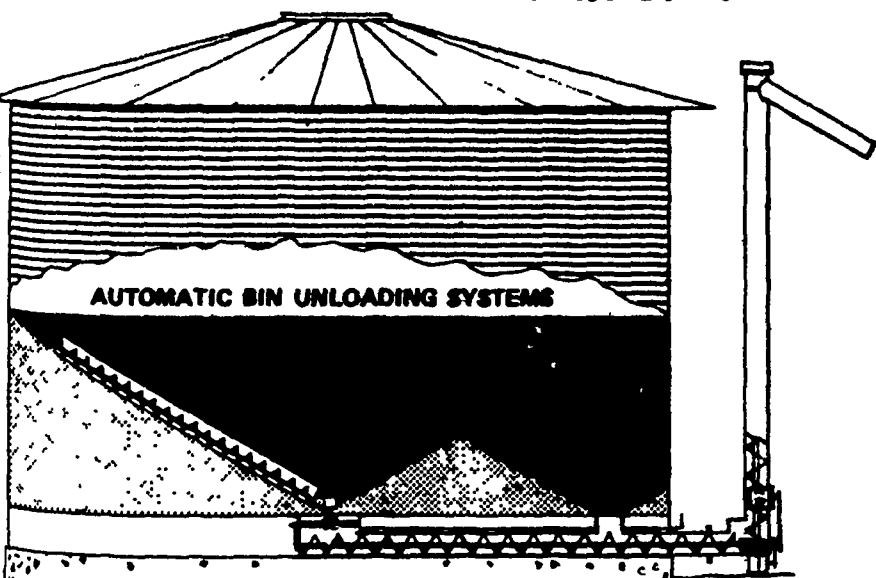
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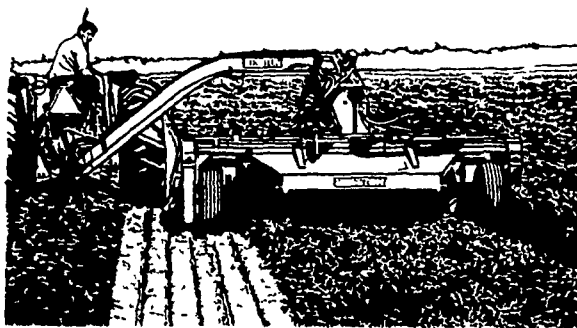
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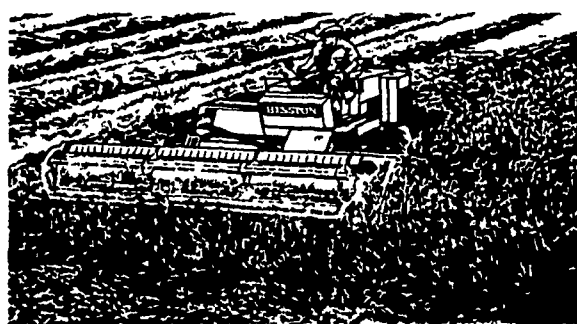
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