

Consumer group defends farmers' antibiotics

STAMFORD, Conn. — Consumers will be paying higher prices for meat, poultry and dairy products without any added benefit if a Food & Drug Administration proposal to restrict use of antibiotics in animal feeds is adopted, the Consumer Alert Council has charged.

In comment submitted to the FDA, Consumer Alert President Barbara A. Keating said that nearly 30 years of experience using low levels of antibiotics in animal feeds has yet to

reveal any apparent negative effect on animals or humans from the practice.

However, the same years have seen virtual disappearance of diseases once commonplace in cattle, hogs and poultry and increased productivity, she said.

FDA adoption of its proposal, Mrs. Keating argued, would represent "a scientific and social retrogression."

"It would seem today that we deal with two extremes," Mrs. Keating said, "the reckless use of chemicals or

pesticides without concern about possible side effects... (and) a blind determination to rid the countryside of every trace of pesticide and strip our food of anything chemical or unnatural, regardless of proven safety and obvious benefits."

"We believe the FDA would do well," she continued, "to accept the recommendations of the National Advisory Food and Drug Committee to take no action other than to keep

benefits of the antibiotics — a cost that would be borne by consumers at the meat and dairy counters of their grocery stores.

Still other factors, she said, would include increased loss of animals to disease — a circumstance now relatively unusual because of the "Preventive medicine" aspect of the use of antibiotics in feed — and higher veterinarian costs to

farmers. These costs, too, would be passed along to consumers, Mrs. Keating said.

Consumer Alert, based in Connecticut, is a national organization of consumers aligned in their desire to preserve freedom of choice in the marketplace and in their opposition to government regulatory actions which result in needless costs for consumers.



Barbara A. Keating

apprised and ready to weigh any new developments should they be presented."

Mrs. Keating said restrictions on use of low levels of antibiotics in animal feed would have significant negative economic impact on farmers, which would result in higher prices for consumers.

Farmers, she said, see a real reduction in animal growth rates, reduced egg and milk production, and a slowing down in breeding of livestock if the FDA proposal is adopted. Use of the antibiotics stimulate animal growth and egg and milk production, and promotes increased fertility.

Action to restrict use of these antibiotics, she said, would require use of considerably more grain to try to compensate for these lost

Comment time extended on horse import rules

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Agriculture has extended to May 1, 1978, the deadline for submitting public comments on proposed federal regulations that would specify conditions under which breeding horses over two years old (731 days) could be imported from countries affected by con-

tagious equine metritis (CEM), a recently discovered venereal disease of horses.

The proposed new regulations would permit a horse over two years old to be imported under specified conditions from the United Kingdom, Ireland and

France—where CEM has been reported. National veterinary officials would have to certify that specific training records show the horse never to have been bred and never to have been on a farm where horses are bred, and that three successive culture specimens taken from the horse at least seven days apart are negative for CEM.

Horses from Australia, where CEM has also been diagnosed, could not be certified under these proposed rules because USDA veterinarians have not been asked to make on-site inspections necessary to determine if Australian horses could meet these modified requirements.

Currently USDA regulations only provide entry requirements for geldings, weanlings, yearlings, or horses imported under temporary permits—90 days or less—for non-breeding purposes.

Public comments on the proposed regulations should be submitted to the Deputy Administrator for Veterinary Services, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA, 6505 Belcrest Rd., Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Shoener named Extension dir.

UNIVERSITY PARK — J. Allan Shoener, Schuylkill County Extension agent on Penn State University's Cooperative Extension Service staff, has been appointed co-extension director of Schuylkill County, effective March 1.

According to Mrs. Ruth F. Funk, regional assistant extension director, Shoener will be in charge of educational Extension programming in the county in addition to carrying out his agricultural activities.

He was appointed to the position previously held by David L. Kantner who was

promoted to assistant director for the Southern Allegheny Extension Region.

A native of Pottsville, Shoener was named to the Schuylkill County Extension staff in April 1977. He earned a bachelor of science degree in animal husbandry from Penn State in 1962.

Prior to being named to his present position, he was an administrative assistant for Agway, Inc.; assistant county supervisor for the Farmers Home Administration; and soil conservationist for the U.S. Soil Conservation Service.

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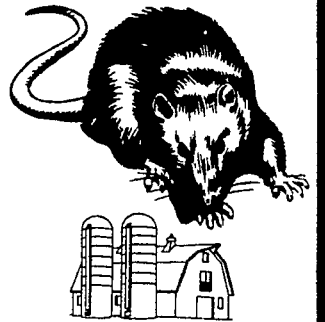
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