

Proposed ban on antibiotics in livestock feed unnecessary, says ACSH

NEW YORK, N.Y. — The use of antibiotics as animal feed additives has not been shown to be a threat to human health. Consumers would pay substantially more for meat and poultry if the

use of antibiotics in livestock and poultry feeds were prohibited. So states a new report from the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH), an independent national scientific organization.

Low doses of antibiotics have been added routinely to livestock and poultry feeds for more than 30 years, because the drugs promote the animals' growth and permit them to be brought to market more economically.

This practice has been questioned because it could increase the prevalence of antibiotic-resistant bacteria which might cause human diseases that would be difficult to treat.

The Food and Drug Administration has proposed banning most uses of penicillin and tetracycline in animal feeds, but Congress has ordered FDA to postpone action on this issue until more scientific evidence is available.

"During the more than 30 years in which antibiotics have been used as animal feed additives, no human health problems attributable to this practice have been reported. There have been no known outbreaks of untreatable bacterial disease as a result of the feeding of low doses of antibiotics to livestock, not even among farmers, slaughterhouse workers, or other groups of people who come into contact with farm animals daily," said Dr. Richard A. Greenberg, Associate Director of ACSH.

"The feeding of antibiotics to farm animals does pose a theoretical health risk," Dr. Greenberg continued. "Fortunately, though, we don't have to rely on theory alone to determine whether this risk is a significant one. We also have a large body of evidence from practical experience."

"The widespread use of low doses of antibiotics in livestock

feed during the past three decades has provided us with a 'natural experiment' on an enormous scale. The thirty year record of safety that has come out of this 'experiment' is strong evidence in favor of permitting the addition of antibiotics to livestock feeds to continue."

Consumers might have to absorb economic losses as high as \$3.5 billion per-year if the addition of penicillin and tetracycline to animal feeds were discontinued, according to studies cited in the ACSH report.

ACSH recommends that the health impact of the use of antibiotics in animal agriculture should continue to be assessed periodically, to see if conditions have changed in any way that might lead to a significant hazard in the future.

The American Council on Science and Health is an independent, nonprofit consumer education organization promoting scientifically balanced evaluations of food, chemicals, the environment, and health. ACSH has offices in New York, New Jersey, and Washington, DC.

A single complimentary copy of the ACSH report ANTIBIOTICS IN ANIMAL FEEDS: A THREAT TO HUMAN HEALTH? can be obtained by sending a self-addressed, stamped (37 cents postage), business-size (#10) envelope to ACSH, 47 Maple St., Summit, NJ 07901.

Chester County man wins 4-H beef leadership award

FARM SHOW — Conrad Grove of RD 1, Downingtown, has been named the winner of the J. Ira Coble Memorial Award for outstanding service as a Pennsylvania 4-H beef club leader.

Grove received a plaque during ceremonies Thursday at the 68th Farm Show. The award is in memory of Coble, who served 43 years as a Dauphin County 4-H beef club leader.

The award winner started his 4-H service in 1960 when he was elected by the 4-H members as leader of the Kimberton 4-H Beef Club. As leader, he conducted meetings, arranged for speakers, and organized shows. He holds sessions on his farm with emphasis on judging, branding and properly weighing animals.

Farm manager of Devereux Soleil Farm, Grove was responsible for establishing the Chester County 4-H average daily gain and feed efficiency award in 1981. He currently is helping set up a county 4-H carcass show to measure feed efficiency, carcass grade and yield data.

The award winner also helped establish the Devereux Foundation 4-H Fund to sponsor a 4-H beef club Christmas banquet, summer beef show, judging clinics and leader training.

A native of Virginia, Grove showed steers for ten years and won numerous awards at the state fair in Richmond.



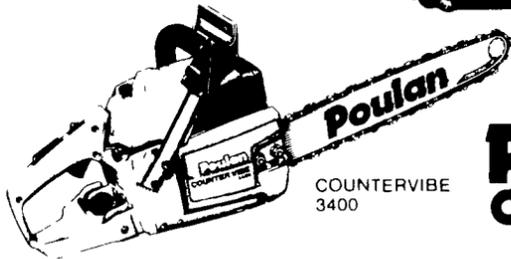
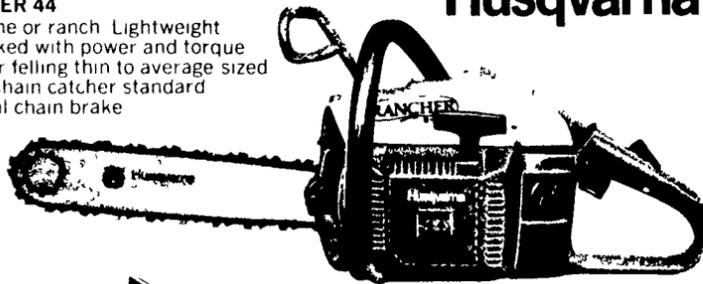
Conrad Grove, left, of R1 Downingtown, receives the J. Ira Coble Memorial Award for 4-H beef leadership from David Coble.

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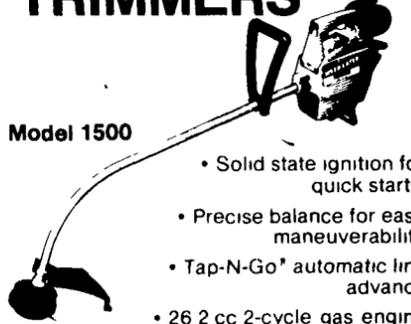
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