

ACSH on antibiotics

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These statutory requirements also regulate their handling, their distribution, and the intimate details of their legal use down to the individual farmer or grower. AHI, in cooperation with both representatives of animal producing groups and the United States Department of Agriculture, is also continually engaged in successful efforts to assure the proper, and not the 'indiscriminate,' use of antibiotics and other animal drugs," AHI told Secretary Heckler.

A new antibiotics report, conducted by the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH), concludes: "The use of antibiotics as animal feed additives has not been shown to be a human health threat, Consumers would pay substantially more for meat and

poultry if the use . . . was discontinued."

The ACSH study directly addresses the fears for human health raised by critics.

"The dire consequences that some people have predicted for the past 15 or 20 years simply have not come about," writes Dr. E.M. Foster, director of the Food Research Institute, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and a member of the ten-scientist panel that reviewed the ACSH report.

The question of a theoretical health risk from feeding antibiotics to farm animals is addressed by ACSH associate director Dr. Richard A. Greenberg.

"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," Greenberg asserts. Greenberg co-authored the report with Kathleen A. Meister, M.S., an ACSH research associate.

"The widespread use of low doses of antibiotics in animal feeds during the past three decades has provided us with a 'natural experiment' on an enormous scale," Dr. Greenberg explains. "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 and poultry feeds to continue."

"I want to emphasize that this does not deny the existence of a potential risk of great concern," said Dr. Fergus M. Clydesdale, professor of Food Science and Nutrition at the University of Massachusetts and a reviewer of the ACSH report. "However, it does make possible the difficult

task of examining a benefit-risk equation for antibiotics in feed. The benefits are cost savings and the potential for more food in a world that has just seen the largest population increase in history. The risks are theoretically valid and important to consider but have not been supported by thirty years of experience. Therefore, it would seem that the benefit side of the equation should be favored," concludes Clydesdale.


ACSH is an independent, non-profit consumer education

organization promoting what it describes as "scientifically balanced evaluations of food, chemicals, the environment, and health." ACSH has offices in New York, New Jersey, and Washington, D.C.

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¢ postage), business-size (#10) envelope to ACSH, 47 Maple Street, Summit, New Jersey 07901.

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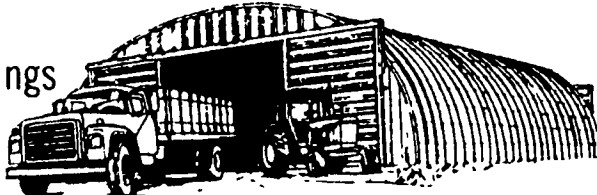
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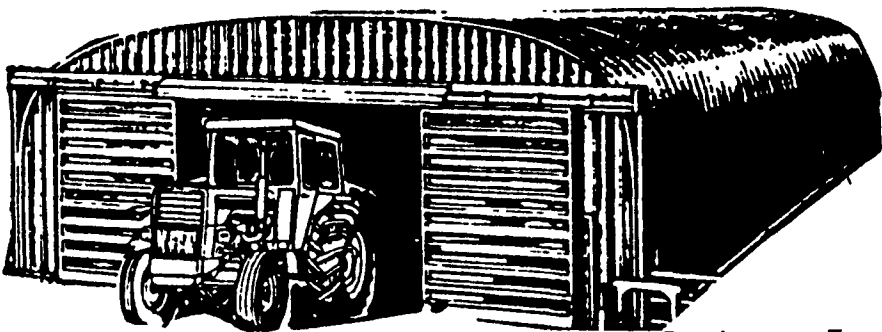
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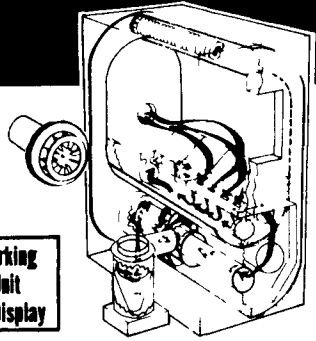


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