

Harmful Levels Of Antibiotics Not Present In Milk

BY SIDNEY BARNARD
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 Articles in the Wall Street Journal on December 29 and January 2 did not provide all of the facts about alleged antibiotics in milk. Apparently none of the results exceeded maximum levels set by the Food and Drug Administration of 10 parts per billion (ppb.) in either of the studies. There has been no indication that test results were confirmed by High Pressure Liquid Chromatography, as required by the FDA.

It is assumed that testing was done using the Charm II Test. This very sensitive laboratory equipment will detect levels up to 1,000 times greater than those set by regulations. Yet, it indicates that minimal amounts of some antibiotics may be present in milk. However, it is not practical nor is it significant to reach zero tolerance of all adulterants from food. Perfection will never be reached, even though electronic equipment may be developed to test for levels of less than 1 ppb.

Pennsylvania regulatory and dairy industry testing programs use the latest technology to be sure that consumers do not get milk and dairy products containing antibiotic levels which approach FDA tolerances or might be harmful. The official B. STEROTHERMOPHILUS Disc Assay is required to be used by FDA as the official test.

The Charm II equipment is used by about 25 dairy plants in Penn-

sylvania to screen loads of milk prior to acceptance. This and other screening tests are confirmed by one of the two official methods. Nearly every load of raw milk is tested, so that any antibiotic positive in milk is diverted for other than human use.

It is virtually impossible for consumers to purchase milk containing levels of any antibiotics

above the FDA level of 10 ppb. No one would be sensitive to levels of antibiotics below this, as far as I am aware.

Fluid milk in Pennsylvania is safe and wholesome. Antibiotics, chemicals and other adulterants are not present above tolerances in milk. The PA Department of Agriculture tests samples from all processing plants four times a year

and tests for all possible adulterants. There are both incentives and penalties for dairy farms, so that antibiotics and adulterants will not be present in the milk they ship to a processing plant. Many farmers have test kits to test milk from a cow or their bulk tank to be sure milk is free of antibiotics.

After FDA completes their nationwide survey of store purchas-

ed samples they will provide results to the media. It is possible that tolerance levels may be lowered. Costs to test and discard adulterated milk in Pennsylvania presently are estimated to exceed \$3,500,000 annually. Pennsylvania is ready for any new program or change in tolerances.

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Grange Hosted Annual Farm Show Meeting

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)
 — During the 74th Annual Farm Show, the Pennsylvania State Grange hosted its annual Farm Show Meeting. The meeting, which was held at the Farm Show Complex on January 8, hosted an array of guest speakers.

Wally Evans, director of the Pennsylvania Agriculture Statistics Service, discussed the functions of the state service. He said, "For the most part, information is based on a cross section of Penn-

sylvanians farmers who volunteer their time and information."

Pennsylvania's State Secretary of Agriculture, Boyd E. Wolff, made a brief update on agriculture programs. He spoke on the Farmland Preservation Program, stating that the first easement has been issued in Lancaster County. In addition, he talked about the tuberculosis testing and stated that the first cycle was completed last month. "The cows need to pass

three negative tests in eight months," Wolff said.

Bruce Marra and David Dorsett, investment counselors, Capital & Security Management, Inc., gave an economical and market forecast and review for the coming decade. Capital & Security Management, Inc. is a financial service offered to Grange members through the State Grange Service Corporation.

George Wolff, legislative consultant, gave a legislative update.

One of his focal points was the controversial issue of wetlands. He said, "At one point, there were 10 different definitions for wetland."

Laura Long-Lesher, Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program, discussed the Dairy Promotion Programs on a national and state level. She said, "Milk is still perceived as a natural and wholesome product by 99 percent of consumers."

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