

 regular page**Industry News - PM****Most consumers want antibiotic restrictions, survey reveals****By Michael Fielding on 12/12/2011**

A new survey finds 75 percent of Americans want government to do something to restrict the use of antibiotics in the animal farms that produce those turkeys, hams and other meats, and that 71 percent believe that antibiotic overuse and misuse is causing antibiotic resistance and a human health crisis.

Those numbers increase when survey numbers focus solely on parents, with 79 percent of parents favoring government restrictions on antibiotic use in animal agriculture and 79 percent believing the misuse is causing a health crisis.

This, according to results of an October survey of 2,211 people age 18 and older conducted by Toluna and commissioned by Applegate Farms, which makes natural and organic meat products from animals raised without antibiotics.

"As a parent and the owner of a business that deals daily with animal agriculture, I want antibiotics to keep working for all of us - humans and animals," said CEO Stephen McDonnell. The Food and Drug Administration reported earlier this year that 80 percent of the antibiotics sold in the United States go to animals used for food. "When people hear that number, they know in their gut that it's not right," added McDonnell, who will be presenting information about antibiotic-free animal agriculture at a congressional briefing hosted by Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY) Tuesday.

Although meat that is produced from animals administered antibiotics can be labeled "natural," the survey found that seven in 10 parents find the practice misleading; nearly eight in 10 parents favor a change in regulations that would prevent companies from labeling meat and poultry sourced from animals treated with antibiotics as "natural."

Three quarters of parents surveyed said that the widespread use of antibiotics in animal agriculture may lead to antibiotic resistance transferring from animals to humans. Parents strongly favor regulations that would limit the use of antibiotics for treating sick animals, and eliminating the use of antibiotics to compensate for the effects of overcrowded and unsanitary conditions on industrial farms.

Some veterinary medicine professors dispute the premise that antibiotics are used to compensate for overcrowded or unsanitary conditions, noting that large food animal operations are often more hygienic and more likely to have sophisticated medication regimes closely overseen by veterinarians.

(Editor's Note: See the December issue of Meatingplace in Print for an analysis of both sides of the antibiotics debate.)

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Originally posted by **H. Reardon**

If Applegate Farms is using this for marketing, it will back fire. Should the government mandate that antibiotics can't be used they will no longer have a niche market. "Raised Without Antibiotics" will then be a commodity. There are products already available for consumers who don't want antibiotics used. The free market enables that. If 75% wanted it, the market would provide it without mandate. The truth is, they don't care enough about it to pay the difference in price. Consumers vote with their wallet and based on market share, most are not buying the "Raised Without Antibiotics" brands. When 75% want it enough to pay for it, the market will provide it. \$

There is no "free market" here. Big business and Washington are too tightly interwoven for that to occur in this country.

Monday, December 12, 2011

Posted by Comrade

Reply

I am third generation meat processor and livestock farmer. I grew up on an Angus farm that didn't know about antibiotics . . less than 0.05% ever needed medical care out of the many hundred of cattle my family ran through the operation every year. I have since worked with hundreds . . I mean hundreds of farms through out the world that never use antibiotics except for health reasons and that is less than 1% of the time and only for health reasons. The parma industry has brain washed the livestock industry that they can not raise animal without the continuous use of sub-therapeutic antibiotics. Most of the livestock operation I work with have at one time been a conventional operation. They will tell you that a treatment of antibiotics during a stressful time, such as weaning, is very important. You might as well give your children a regiment of antibiotics when they first go off to Kindergarten . . it would be the same thing. My point is, they are over used in the industry and we all need not get defensive, but rather look with open minds. A lot has been learned on how to raise without sub-therapeutics. Technology has advanced this way of raising livestock. And I have proof that the increase of cost, all things equal, is only a few pennies.

Monday, December 12, 2011

Posted by Angus

Backfire

Reply

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Monday, December 12, 2011

Posted by H. Reardon

[Reply](#)

When people hear the big numbers of antibiotics going to animals, they freak out. But truly, what is the proportion of antibiotics used to body weight? Animals are bigger, it makes sense there would be more antibiotic use. If we are not allowed to use antibiotics for prophylaxis, how do we keep animals healthy? Wouldn't it be better to be proactive than reactive? I can quote certain articles if needed, but I imagine the amount of antibiotic used for prophylaxis is not as much as used for treatment after an animal gets sick. Also people assume automatically antibiotic use in animals, antibiotic resistance in humans. Well, there needs to be a lot of events that happen for this to occur. First, an animal needs to be treated with antibiotics. Second, at slaughter resistant bacteria needs to be in the meat. Third, this bacteria needs to survive processing. Fourth, consumers need to eat the resistant bacteria. Fifth, the consumer needs to get sick and sixth, not respond to treatment due to antibiotic resistance. Now add that all together and the risk becomes extremely low. There are studies done by former deputy undersecretary Dr. H. Scott Hurd that go through and quantify these risks. Also, maybe part of the problem is the over-prescribing of antibiotics? Note: I have nothing against organic production. But people should be able to make their own informed choices about what they eat.

Monday, December 12, 2011

Posted by Amber D

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By reading the results of this it seems obvious that we need to see the materials & methods of this study. Judging by the results it would be my guess that the question wording/inference likely seemed to suggest that there is no government influence over antibiotic use currently, which is of course false. Dose, route and administration along with meat and milk withdrawal times are all dictated by government agencies. This along with an antibiotic free company sponsor seems to indicate a very questionable study.

Monday, December 12, 2011

Posted by BW

[Reply](#)

I wonder what the repeatability and confidence level is for this subset of the US population? I also wonder what the demographic split looks like beyond parents and non-parents?

Monday, December 12, 2011

Posted by Pigman

[Reply](#)

I'm not sure but I do not believe Applegate raises any animal protein. To my knowledge they purchase it and further process it. In my opinion this survey and the congressional witch hunt it promotes is entirely propaganda and PR. The first sentence conveys the intention of misleading the public; "survey finds 75 percent of Americans want government to do something to restrict the use of antibiotics in the animal farms that produce those turkeys, hams and other meats". This purposefully misleads the public to believe the government currently does nothing. The truth is the USDA does a great deal to restrict the use of

antibiotics. I appreciate Applegate's role in the market place, and fully support their niche in it. There is obviously a small segment of our population that can afford to follow their beliefs and ignore science. More power to them. However, if Mr. McDonnell is not careful, the lunatic fringe who deal in belief in the place of fact will wrest control of the asylum, and we go back to 1920's husbandry, and the cost of a chicken will go from, .79/lb. to \$7.90/lb. At that point the fringe will assert themselves again and conclude the federal government has a responsibility to put a chicken in every pot. Where will Applegate Farms be when the government is buying all the food, and distributing it.

Monday, December 12, 2011

Posted by Meatman

[Reply](#)

The statement that FDA reported the percent of antibiotics sold in the U.S. for animals is simply false. To the extent that fact was given to respondents of the survey, it shows the bias in the survey. In fact, FDA cautioned against using numbers to come to that conclusions.

<http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/InformationbyDrugClass/ucm261160.htm>

Monday, December 12, 2011

Posted by Ron Phillips

[Reply](#)

No sound science to back up these claims? Well then, we don't have any choice but to believe it when they use words like believe, believing, may.

Monday, December 12, 2011

Posted by Douglas Craven

[Reply](#)

"Faith Based" science in action again. Virtually no science supports any of these perceptions or conclusions. Yet, once again the public is not presented with both sides of the argument for or against antimicrobial use in food animals or with the concerns about antimicrobial abuse in human medicine as the primary factor relating to resistance. Nor has any economic analysis ever been conducted analyzing the effect of removing antimicrobials on the efficiency of food animal production and the real economic cost to consumers, particularly those that can now barely afford high quality, nutrient dense foods such as meat products. This problem is growing rapidly as prices skyrocket due to ethanol policy etc. The public is also never presented with an analysis of the relative health and wholesomeness of food animal products produced with and without antimicrobials. The facts might be very interesting - if we were actually interested in facts. Finally and disconcertingly, the fact that this survey was funded by Applegate Farms means that we are now pitting one industry production system against another to the ultimate detriment of all.

Monday, December 12, 2011

Posted by NoLemming

[Reply](#)

So...if you're a "parent" that makes you an informed authority on the effects of the use of antibiotics in the science of animal husbandry. I did not know that.

Monday, December 12, 2011

Posted by Art Van Delay

[Reply](#)

So the study was commissioned by a company that raises antibiotic free meat and it just happens to

support their position? Go figure.

Monday, December 12, 2011

Posted by doug

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