



CENTER FOR
FOOD SAFETY



INSTITUTE FOR AGRICULTURE AND TRADE POLICY

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CENTER FOR FOOD SAFETY AND INSTITUTE FOR AGRICULTURE AND TRADE POLICY PETITION FDA TO REMOVE ARSENIC FROM ANIMAL FEEDS

Groups Urge Government Ban of Common Additives Used in Feed for Chicken, Turkeys and Hogs

Washington, DC, December 08, 2009 – Today, the Center for Food Safety (CFS) and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), filed a petition with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) calling for the immediate withdrawal of approvals for all animal drug applications for arsenic-containing compounds used in animal feed. These additives are commonly used in poultry production to induce faster weight gain and create the appearance of a healthy color in meat from chickens, turkeys and hogs. The petition was supported by a coalition of food and farm groups around the country.

“The fact that arsenic - a known and powerful carcinogen - in these feed additives leads to arsenic residue in chicken is now well known,” said the Center for Food Safety’s Executive Director Andrew Kimbrell. “FDA’s failure to investigate the mounting evidence that these compounds are unsafe is a breach of the public trust, and the use of arsenic-containing compounds in food animal production is a needless and dangerous risk to human health.”

“Arsenic can be poisonous. Its use in animal feed, therefore, is unnecessarily risky and has not been shown to be safe given the latest science,” said David Wallinga, M.D. of the IATP. “To best protect public health, all avoidable exposures to arsenic should be eliminated. FDA can and should act.”

Arsenic-containing compounds have been approved additives to animal feed since the 1940s and are currently used in chicken, turkey and swine production. Most arsenic-containing animal feed additives are not used to treat sickness. Instead, arsenicals are generally approved for “increased weight gain, improved feed efficiency, and improved pigmentation.” The European Union has never approved the use of arsenicals in animal

feed, acknowledging the lack of science supporting health or safety standards for such use.

Arsenic-containing compounds are most widely used in chicken production, and most chickens receive arsenic-laced feed. In 2004 and 2005, the IATP tested for total arsenic in retail packages of raw chicken and in “fast food” chicken sandwiches and nuggets. Test results revealed detectable levels of arsenic in the majority of both supermarket and fast food chicken with higher levels found in brands of chicken raised conventionally. Lower or non-detectable levels of arsenic were found in certified organic and other “premium” brands where the use of arsenic-containing feed additives were either legally prohibited or claimed not to have been used. These results strongly suggest that use of arsenic-containing compounds in poultry feed leads to arsenic residues in U.S. marketed and eaten chicken.

The groups include: Food Animal Concerns Trust, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, San Francisco Physicians for Social Responsibility, Food and Water Watch, Center for Biological Diversity, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Center for Environmental Health, Institute for a Sustainable Future, Health Care Without Harm and Ecology Center of Michigan.

To read the full petition, visit:

<http://www.healthobservatory.org/library.cfm?refid=107024>.

For IATP’s report, visit: *Playing Chicken: Avoiding Arsenic in Your Meat*, visit:

<http://www.iatp.org/iatp/publications.cfm?accountID=421&refID=80529>.

The Center for Food Safety is national, non-profit, membership organization, founded in 1997, that works to protect human health and the environment by curbing the use of harmful food production technologies and by promoting organic and other forms of sustainable agriculture. On the web at: <http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org>

The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems. On the web at: www.iatp.org