

KEEP ANTIBIOTICS WORKING

The Campaign to End Antibiotic Overuse

www.KeepAntibioticsWorking.com

STEERING COMMITTEE

Center for Science in the
Public Interest

Environmental Defense

Food Animal Concerns
Trust

Global Resource Action
Center for the Environment

Humane Society of the
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Physicians for Social
Responsibility

Safe Tables Our Priority
(S.T.O.P.)

Sierra Club

Union of Concerned
Scientists

Waterkeeper Alliance

February 8, 2006

Mr. John Strum
Director, Sunflower Markets
6533 Flying Cloud Drive, Suite 100
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

Dear Mr. Strum:

On behalf of Keep Antibiotics Working (KAW), a coalition of health, consumer, agricultural, environmental, humane and other advocacy organizations with a combined membership of more than nine million people, we write to congratulate you on the opening of your new store. Sunflower Market has the potential to increase the availability of and accessibility to healthful and sustainably produced products such as meat and poultry raised without the routine use of antibiotics. The proliferation of stores like yours reflects the growing recognition among retailers that consumers want better choices, including food raised with fewer drugs.

As you may know, overuse of antibiotics in agriculture contributes to the public-health crisis of antibiotic resistance. The Union of Concerned Scientists estimates that 70 percent of all antibiotics and related drugs used in the US – 25 million pounds a year – are routinely fed to poultry, swine, and beef cattle not to treat illness, but rather to promote slightly faster growth and to compensate for unhealthy or crowded conditions in industrial-scale livestock operations. Almost half of these drugs belong to classes of antibiotics that are important in human medicine. Use of antibiotic feed additives spurs the development of antibiotic resistant bacteria that can contaminate not only food, but also air, water, and soil.

The human health consequences of antibiotic resistance are serious. People infected with resistant bacteria are more likely to stay sick longer or not recover at all than those infected with bacteria easier to treat with antibiotics. Everyone is at risk, but children, seniors, and people with weakened immune systems are especially vulnerable. The American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association are among the more than 350 organizations that have called for an end to the antiquated practice of using medically important antibiotics as feed additives for agricultural animals.

At your convenience, KAW would like to request a meeting to further discuss our support for Sunflower Market, as well as brainstorm ways we can potentially collaborate

in the future. Please contact David Wallinga at (612) 870-3418 or DWallinga@iatp.org with any questions or to arrange for a meeting.

Thank you again for choosing to sell meat from suppliers that do not squander life-saving drugs by routinely feeding antibiotics to their animals. Because stores such as Sunflower Market have increased the demand for meat and poultry raised with fewer antibiotics, the meat production industry is changing its ways (please see enclosed article, 'Natural Chickens Take Flight,' *USA Today*, 01/24/2006). Your efforts will help keep antibiotics working effectively for those who need them.

Yours Truly,

Richard Wood
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