



## Myth vs. Fact

**MYTH: Antibiotics for animals are overused, and up to 70% of all antibiotics used in the United States go to healthy animals.**

**FACT: Antibiotics are used carefully and judiciously to prevent diseases. This statistic is based on faulty, non-scientific assumptions.**

- An activist organization created and industriously circulated this statistic to paint a false picture of animal agriculture. The unreliability of this estimate is demonstrated by the fact that it includes tens of thousands of pounds of product never marketed in the United States.
- By their own admission, nearly half of the total estimate includes compounds never used in human medicine, meaning there are no antibiotic resistance concerns associated with these uses.

**“The 70% statistic is agenda-driven junk science that is flat-out false.”**

— DR. MIKE APLEY, KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

- Antibiotics are a preventative tool used by veterinarians to keep animals healthy and, in turn, keep humans safe from diseases that could be transmitted from animals. The use of antibiotics is tightly controlled by the FDA to ensure their safe use.

**Science doesn't support blaming the livestock industry for antibiotic resistance. “Pound for pound, humans and their pets use 10 times the amount of antibiotics used in food animal production.”**

— CONGRESSMAN LEONARD BOSWELL (D-IA)

- Additional non-scientific regulation imposed by Congress is likely to have unintended consequences. It is often too late to administer antibiotics after an outbreak or epidemic has already occurred.

**“We use antibiotics to promote health and prevent disease. Removing the ability to use antibiotics in animal agriculture would increase the chance of animals contracting diseases.”**

— DR. RON PRESTAGE, NATIONAL TURKEY FEDERATION

**MYTH: The use of antibiotics in food animals leads to diseases in humans that can't be treated.**

**FACT: While human antibiotic resistance is a serious public health issue, the biggest resistance problems are not related to antibiotic use in animals.**

- There is no scientific evidence that antibiotics used in food animals have any significant impact on the effectiveness of antibiotics in people.
- A recent Institute of Food Technologists expert panel report stated that correlating the risk of antibiotic use in animals and antibiotic resistance in humans is not possible. Antibiotic-resistant intestinal bacteria may be present in food animals, regardless of the animals' exposure to an antibiotic.

**“People would be more likely to die from a bee sting than for their antibiotic treatment to fail because of macrolide-resistant bacteria in meat or poultry.”**

— DR. STEPHANIE DOORES, PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

- A study conducted at the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine in 2004 — in which the potential risks associated with increased levels of antibiotic-resistant bacteria in poultry were compared with the potential benefits associated with decreased risk of foodborne illness — found that the potential benefits to human health associated with the use of antibiotics in chicken far exceeded the increased human health risks associated with antibiotic resistance.

**MYTH: Banning the use of antibiotics in food animals will make humans safer and healthier.**

**FACT: Denmark tested this theory by actually banning certain antibiotics used in the feed in 1999, and what followed was an increase in sick and dead animals that caused veterinarians to use antibiotics to treat the outbreaks.**

- A 2002 World Health Organization report found that the ban did not have any significant effect on clinically resistant diseases in humans.
- The AVMA said Denmark's voluntary ban on the use of antibiotics for growth promotion “has not resulted in a significant reduction of antibiotic resistance in humans” while disease and death in hogs increased.
- The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act of 2009 (PAMTA), which would phase out the use of certain antibiotics also used in human health, would likely have a more drastic effect. Features of this bill would be more restrictive than measures imposed by Denmark and the European Union.

**“The loss of antibiotics for growth promotion and prevention in Danish swine production has been followed by a 100% increase in the use of antibiotics labeled for treatment, as more pigs became ill. Unfortunately there has been no improvement in public health as measured by no reduction in Salmonella or Campylobacter resistance levels in human infections.”**

— DR. SCOTT HURD, FORMER DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOOD SAFETY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE