



PHARMACEUTICALS EXPORT PROMOTION COUNCIL

(Set up by Ministry of Commerce, Govt. of India)

COPY

Date : 06-03-2010

Banned in 160 Nations... Yet U.S. FDA Regards it as Safe?

Posted by Dr. Mercola | March 06 2010 | 70,515 views

A livestock drug banned in 160 nations and responsible for hyperactivity, muscle breakdown and 10 percent mortality in pigs has been approved by the FDA.

The beta agonist ractopamine, a repartitioning agent that increases protein synthesis, was recruited for livestock use when researchers found the drug, used in asthma, made mice more muscular.

Ractopamine is started as the animal nears slaughter.

How does a drug marked, "Not for use in humans. Individuals with cardiovascular disease should exercise special caution to avoid exposure. Use protective clothing, impervious gloves, protective eye wear, and a NIOSH-approved dust mask" become "safe" in human food? With no washout period?

The drug is banned in Europe, Taiwan and China, and more than 1,700 people have been "poisoned" from eating pigs fed the drug since 1998, but ractopamine is used in 45 percent of U.S. pigs and 30 percent of ration-fed cattle.

Dr. Mercola's Comments:

Ractopamine, aka Paylean and Optaflexx, is banned in 160 countries, including Europe, Taiwan and China. If imported meat is found to contain traces of the drug, it is turned away, while fines and imprisonment result for its use in banned countries.

Yet, in the United States 45 percent of pigs, 30 percent of ration-fed cattle, and an unknown percentage of turkeys are pumped full of this drug in the days leading up to slaughter.

Why?

This drug, manufactured by Elanco Animal Health, increases protein synthesis. In other words, it makes animals more muscular ... and this increases food growers' bottom line.

Adding insult to injury, up to 20 percent of ractopamine remains in the meat you buy from the supermarket, according to veterinarian Michael W. Fox. Yet this drug is marked "Not for use in humans," and is known to increase death and disability in livestock.

Why is Ractopamine Allowed in U.S. Meat?

While other drugs require a clearance period of around two weeks to help ensure the compounds are flushed from the meat prior to slaughter (and therefore reduce residues leftover for human consumption), there is no clearance period for ractopamine.

In fact, food growers intentionally use the drug in the last days before slaughter in order to increase its effectiveness.

"How does a drug marked, "Not for use in humans. Individuals with cardiovascular disease should exercise special caution to avoid exposure. Use protective clothing, impervious gloves, protective eye wear, and a NIOSH-approved dust mask" become "safe" in human food? With no washout period?" asks columnist Martha Rosenberg.

She answers:

"The same way Elanco's other two blockbusters, Stilbosol (diethylstilbestrol or DES), now withdrawn, and Posilac or bovine growth hormone (rBST), bought from Monsanto in 2008, became part of the nation's food supply: shameless corporate lobbying.

A third of meetings on the Food Safety and Inspection Service's public calendar in January 2009 were with Elanco, a division of Eli Lilly -- or about ractopamine."

Massive Industry Lobbying Gets Agribusiness What it Wants ... at Your Expense

Industrial agriculture lobbyists wield incredible power in Congress, and the fact that ractopamine is in U.S. meat is a shining testimony to this.

Time magazine put it quite well when they described current farm policy as "a welfare program for the megafarms that use the most fuel, water and pesticides; emit the most greenhouse gases; grow the most fattening crops; hire the most illegals; and depopulate

rural America."

There are too many conflicts of interest to name, but, for example, you may be surprised to learn that former Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack is now the Secretary of Agriculture, an appointment that took place despite massive public outcry.

What was needed for an effective Secretary of Agriculture was someone who would develop and implement a plan that promotes family-scale farming and a safe and nutritious food system with a sustainable and organic vision.

What we got was yet another politician who's already made room in his bed for the industry lobby. Overall, Vilsack's record is one of aiding and abetting Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) or factory farms (the ones that use chemicals like ractopamine) and promoting animal cloning.

Cozy Connections Allowed rbGH Hormones in Your Dairy Products, Too

Michael Taylor, a former vice president of public policy and chief lobbyist at Monsanto Company, is now the senior advisor for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Who is Michael Taylor?

He is the person who not only "oversaw the creation of GMO policy," according to Jeffrey Smith, the leading spokesperson on the dangers of GM foods, but also oversaw the policy regarding Monsanto's genetically engineered bovine growth hormone (rbGH/rbST).

This growth hormone, which has been banned in Canada, Europe, Japan, Australia and New Zealand because of cancer risks and other health concerns, was approved in the United States while Taylor was in charge at the FDA. Smith writes:

"Taylor also determined that milk from injected cows did not require any special labeling. And as a gift to his future employer Monsanto, he wrote a white paper suggesting that if companies ever had the audacity to label their products as not using rbGH, they should also include a disclaimer stating that according to the FDA, there is no difference between milk from treated and untreated cows."

Taylor's white paper, which again was untrue as even FDA scientists acknowledged differences in the rbGH milk, allowed [Monsanto to sue dairies that labeled their products](#)

rbGH-free!

In a similar vein, the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine's Office of Surveillance and Compliance sent a 14-page warning letter to Elanco regarding ractopamine three years after its approval for use in pigs. They accused the company of withholding information about "safety and effectiveness" and "adverse animal drug experiences."

Nonetheless, the next year the FDA decided to approved ractopamine for use in cattle, too, and later for turkeys as well.

What Should You do if You Don't Want Drugs and Chemicals in Your Food?

As the U.S. agriculture industry now stands, antibiotics, pesticides, GM ingredients, hormones and countless other drugs are fair game in your food. So if you purchase your food from a typical supermarket, you are taking your chances that your food is teeming with chemicals and drugs -- even those that have been banned in other countries.

So please do your health a favor and [support the small family farms in your area](#). You'll receive nutritious food from a source that you can trust, and you'll be supporting the honest work of a real family farm.

It all boils down to this: if you want to optimize your health, you must return to the basics of healthy food choices. Put your focus on WHOLE foods -- foods that have not been processed or altered from their original state -- food that has been grown or raised as nature intended, without the use of chemical additives, drugs, hormones, pesticides and fertilizers.

It's as simple as that!

It is not nearly as daunting a task as it may seem to find a local farmer that can supply your family with healthy, humanely raised animal products and produce. At [LocalHarvest.org](#), for instance, you can enter your zip code and find farmers' markets, family farms, and other sources of sustainably grown food in your area, all with the click of a button.

Once you make the switch from supermarket to local farmer, the choice will seem natural, and you can have peace of mind that the food you're feeding your family is safe.