

For Immediate Release:
Wednesday, January 4, 2011

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FDA Prohibition on Cephalosporin Small Step Forward

Statement of CSPI Food Safety Director Caroline Smith DeWaal

FDA's action is a small step forward on the path to preventing foodborne outbreaks from antibiotic-resistant pathogens. The order prohibiting certain uses of cephalosporin in many food-producing animals is clearly warranted, though it may be too little, and it is definitely too late. CSPI has identified at least [five foodborne outbreaks](#) since 2001 linked to cephalosporin-resistant *Salmonella*, which resulted in at least 200 illnesses and one death.

Extralabel use of cephalosporin is only a part of the problem. FDA should act soon to [restrict or eliminate](#) all unnecessary uses of antibiotics critically important to human medicine, so they can be preserved for future generations. [According to Dr. Margaret Chan](#) (http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2011/whd_20110406/en/index.html), Director-General of the World Health Organization, without urgent corrective action, "the world is on the brink of losing these miracle cures."

Recently, FDA rejected a [petition](#) (http://www.cspinet.org/ar/petition_3_99.html) by CSPI and other organizations to ban subtherapeutic uses of antibiotics in animals. The use of antibiotics in livestock increases the prevalence of antibiotic-resistant pathogens, which leads to infections in humans that are difficult or impossible to treat. This partial step should be followed with more definitive action to protect consumers from the illnesses caused by excessive use of antibiotics in food-producing animals.

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The Center for Science in the Public Interest is a nonprofit health advocacy group based in Washington, DC, that focuses on nutrition and food safety policies. CSPI is supported by the 900,000 U.S. and Canadian subscribers to its Nutrition Action Healthletter and by foundation grants.

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