

April 29, 2025

Commissioner Martin Makary
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
10903 New Hampshire Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20993

cc: Secretary Robert Kennedy, U.S. Health & Human Services
Acting Director Timothy Schell, Center for Veterinary Medicine

Dear Commissioner Makary,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to urge you to respond to the recently filed petition for reconsideration and ban or restrict ractopamine in meat production. Ractopamine is a dangerous drug used to rapidly grow muscle in cows, pigs, and turkeys that also causes animals' bodies to suffer tremors, lesions, and deterioration, elevates meat consumers' heart rates, and harms the environment.

Ractopamine is banned or restricted in meat production in at least 160 countries, including China and all countries in the European Union. Nonetheless, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved ractopamine for use in cows, pigs, and turkeys raised for meat in the U.S. and continues to allow ractopamine residue levels in meat that exceed those adopted by the United Nations' food standards body, the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The FDA's approval for ractopamine relied primarily on safety studies conducted by the drugmaker itself.

Animals given beta-agonists such as ractopamine face increased likelihood of experiencing painful injury, inhumane treatment, and extreme stress. Evidence, including that contained within the FDA's own files, also links ractopamine to human heart and respiratory issues in meat consumers and farm workers, increased risk of pathogen contagion, and intensified environmental pollution through seepage and runoff to ground and surface waters. Still, ractopamine usage has been estimated in 60–80 percent of all pigs raised for food in the U.S.

To better protect human health, animals and the environment, we urge FDA to respond to the petition and immediately reduce or eliminate allowable levels of ractopamine in farmed animals.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your staff to discuss this issue further. Please reply to Molly Armus (marmus@foe.org) who can help coordinate a meeting.

Signed,

Friends of the Earth
AEL Advocacy
Alliance for Natural Health USA
Animal Partisan
Animal Wellness Action

Animals Aotearoa
Arba
Associated Humane Societies
Berkeley Organization for Animal Advocacy
Blackberry Creek Farm Animal Sanctuary
Center for a Humane Economy
Chilis on Wheels
Compassion in World Farming
Compassionate Action for Animals
Connect For Animals
DC Voters for Animals
Direct Action Everywhere
Earthjustice
Ensure Viable Environment
Family Farm Defenders
Farm Forward
FarmSTAND
Fauna Films
Food & Water Watch
Food Revolution Network
Global Wellness Forum
Glyphosate Facts
Godspeed Horse Hostel Inc
Green America
HEAL (Health, Environment, Agriculture, Labor) Food Alliance
Humane Action Pennsylvania
International Vegan Film Festival
Kewaunee CARES
LEAP (Leaders for Ethics, Animals, and the Planet)
Leave It Better Media
Maine Animal Coalition
Mercy For Animals
National Co+op Grocers
NC Animal Advocates United
NC Environmental Justice Network
Organic Consumers Association
Our Hen House
Plant Powered Delaware
Pro-Animal Future
Public Interest Research Group
Social Compassion in Legislation
Strategic Action For Animals
The Humane League
Tindakan
United We Eat
Voters For Animal Rights