

For the Record

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Straight talk about antibiotic use in food animal production presented by ALPHARMA Inc., Animal Health

ACTIVISTS CAN TEACH US TO WIN ON THEIR TERMS

November's passage of an Arizona initiative banning sow and veal crates—despite a \$1 million-plus opposition campaign—shows again animal agriculture isn't safe from today's anti-modern farming activists, most of whom oppose antibiotic use. In the spirit of fire fights fire, here are some tactics they can teach us:



Activists understand consumers relate to people, not statistics. We have to learn to frame the economic impact of losing livestock antibiotics in terms of damage to farm families, communities and working poor.

instance, solicits local citizens to invite GRACE to help them frustrate farm expansions through regulatory hearings, advancing the group's national agenda without appearing to be an outside agitator.

It's a common strategy that can easily be turned against them. Whenever you get the chance to defend agriculture, start with the positive impact you make on your neighbors—and the negative consequences that would occur by following the lead of such outsiders.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

People relate to people, and they relate to symbols. Activists understand this concept when they solicit first-hand horror stories

about food poisoning, when they seek out and provide personal stories to reporters and editors, and when they emphasize the personal toll that can result from antibiotic resistance.

Communicating facts about antibiotics and food production is important. But relying on fact alone won't inspire consumers to our side. Instead, you have to learn to out-symbolize the activists. Think in terms of:

- Keeping high-quality food affordable for working families and the poor.
- Improving the health and well-being of baby pigs, calves and chicks.
- Protecting generations of family farms and the small businesses they support.

MAKE IT ALL LOCAL

Activist groups have mastered the strategy of mustering global expertise via the Internet, but customizing its application to local faces. The [Global Resource Action Center for the Environment](#), for

KEEP FRIENDS CLOSE; FOES, CLOSER

Activist attacks are often seen as focusing on a specific industry or technology. Yet those focused attacks are almost always just one prong of a multiple network. Agriculture needs to adopt the same mind set, says Canadian public relations consultant [Ross Irvine](#). Producers and their organizations must link with *all* fellow producers and suppliers, as well as outdoor sports groups, chambers of commerce, business groups, mining and timber interests, biotechnology concerns—any group interested in protecting science-based decision-making, economic development, consumer freedom and free enterprise.

Then, you must actively stay informed on the stealth incrementalism of activists—lest they catch us flat-footed. “If it works in Arizona,” animal rightist Peter Singer promised *TIME* magazine days before the Arizona ban passed, “then we'll go on to California and other states.”

How they do it: a reading list

- *The One-Hour Activist: The 15 Most Powerful Actions You Can Take to Fight for the Issues and Candidates You Care About*. Christopher Kush. Jossey-Bass Publishing, 2004.
- *MoveOn's 50 Ways to Love Your Country: How to Find Your Political Voice and Become a Catalyst for Change*. MoveOn.org. Inner Ocean Publishing, 2004.
- *Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists*. Kimberley A. Bobo and others. Seven Locks Press, 2001.

Antibiotics prevent animal disease and improve meat, milk and egg production. These important, safe and proven tools remain absolutely necessary to meet the world's growing demand for affordable protein. ALPHARMA Inc., Animal Health sponsors this educational series to provide facts to help set the record straight. Comments or questions? [E-mail Steve Kopperud](mailto:skopperud@poldir.com) at skopperud@poldir.com or [editor Mike Smith](mailto:editor@CustomMedia@Food360.com) at CustomMedia@Food360.com. [To read past issues](http://www.alpharmaah.com), see www.alpharmaah.com.