

For the Record

March 2006

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

ANTIBIOTICS AND ANIMAL RIGHTS: WHY THE LINK?

Opposition to farm antibiotics fits the public-advocacy playbook perfected by PETA because it satisfies the first step of the campaign: It allows a vague, anti-modern nostalgia for small-farm agriculture to be translated into a goal that's specific, unambiguous, achievable, and

easily portrayed as unnatural or dehumanizing. Thus, like the animal-rights movement, the campaign to limit efficient farming gains support—and dollars—from people who would normally not subscribe to the underlying fundamental issue. Here's how it works.

Start with a central fundamental issue



○ For the animal rightist: *It's inhumane to use animals for food.*



○ For opponents of industrial farming: *Small farms should be guaranteed survival.*

Step 1
Manufacture a marketable sub-issue

Attack one specific part of the fundamental issue, one that's easily understood.

○ Sow gestation "crates" are cruel.
○ Farm antibiotics threaten public health.

Step 2
Develop a slogan



○ "Vets without hearts"

○ "Keep antibiotics working"



Step 3
Fabricate public debate

○ The American Veterinary Medical Association supports cruelty because it refuses to support a ban on stalls. The public demands action.

○ Antibiotic resistance is at crisis proportions. Large farms are the major contributor. The public demands action.

Step 4
Invent a villain

○ Cowardly and greedy veterinarians kowtowing to greedy corporate farms.
○ Greedy drug manufacturers preying on ignorant or greedy corporate farms.

Step 5
Pitch a panacea

○ Outlaw stalls.
○ Ban most animal antibiotic use.



Step 6
Create a new sub-issue

○ Even sows confined only to group pens fight and suffer.
○ Even when not given antibiotics, animals in large farms are diseased and contribute to risk of food poisoning.

Repeat the process

Each time making incremental progress toward the central fundamental issue.

Presumed cruel?

○ **Stalls.** The overall welfare of gestating sows depends on factors beyond housing. Some studies show group-penned sows actually fare worse than individually housed ones.
○ **Free range.** Free-range dairy cattle can have higher disease risks; organic production can increase disease pathogen levels in chickens and pigs; and free-range animals suffer from heavier burdens of parasites.

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 you facts to help set the record straight. **Comments?** Contact Steve Kopperud at skopperud@poldir.com. **To read past issues:** www.alpharma.com/ahd.