

For the Record

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

FREE-RANGE, ANTIBIOTIC-FREE...COULD THEY SERVE UP A DAMAGING SURPRISE?

Surveys show almost unanimously that food consumers say they buy free-range, natural and raised-without-antibiotics meat, milk and eggs because they believe they're healthier. But [growing evidence](#) points to the possibility antibiotics actually help keep consumers safe by reducing the risk of food-borne contamination. If so, eliminating their judicious use could be worse than needless; it could be risking your chances of getting caught in a recall scare. The research shows the following:

CHICKEN, TURKEY AND EGGS

■ Several studies have shown organic or antibiotic-free chickens are more likely than conventionally raised birds to be contaminated with bacteria. A University of Bristol study in 2002 found that while only 58 percent of 130 conventional flocks tested were infected with *Campylobacter*, every one of the **60 organic flocks were infected**. A Danish study found likewise: One-third of 79 conventional broiler flocks tested positive; **all of the 22 organic ones did**. A 2006 Belgian study showed the incidence of *Campylobacter* at slaughter for organic flocks was up to quadruple the incidence of conventional ones. And a study of retail organic and conventional chickens in Maryland found the rate of *Salmonella* contamination was **nearly 1.5 times higher** in the organic chickens.

■ Several studies going back to the mid 1970s demonstrate adding antibiotics to chickens' drinking water can control and

reduce both *Salmonella* and *E. coli* infection in chickens. Other studies have shown dosing birds with enrofloxacin, which was banned by FDA in 2005, could actually clear a flock of *Salmonella*.

■ Georgia poultry processing professor and microbiologist Dr. Scott Russell, PhD, tracked the outcome in the processing plant of birds affected by airsacculitis, a common infection caused by *E. coli* and typically controlled by low-level antibiotic use. Dr. Russell found the disease increased the levels of fecal contamination at the plant, led to more processing errors because birds varied in weight, and increased levels of *Campylobacter* contamination. Low levels of disease in chickens obviously affects carcass contamination, he concluded, and that **disease can be reduced** by using antibiotics.

PORK

■ An [Ohio State study](#) found 54 percent of hogs raised on antibiotic-free operations were infected with *Salmonella*, compared to only 39 percent in conventional operations. The antibiotic-free farmed pigs also carried higher rates of the microscopic parasite *Toxoplasma*, and some of the antibiotic free pigs were *Trichinella* positive. Trich, spread by garbage feeding, has been virtually eradicated from conventional pork.

■ Some studies suggest treating *Salmonella*-infected sows with antibiotics **may reduce or prevent infection** of weaned pigs.

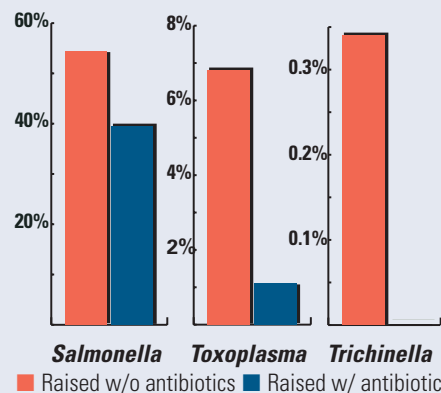
BEEF AND MILK

■ USDA research in 2002 found that cattle fed a particular antibiotic for 48 hours near harvest shed fewer *E. coli* O157:H7 than pen mates not given the antibiotic. Even five days after the drug's use was ended, the dangerous O157:H7 strains did not return.

■ A 2005 study in 129 dairies reported that not feeding an ionophore or an antibiotic to young cows **increased the odds of finding *Salmonella*** by around three times, compared to animals that didn't receive the medications.

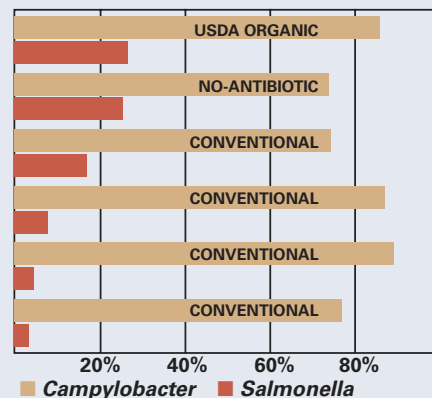


ANTIBIOTIC-FREE NOT SAFER



Researchers from Ohio State, Wisconsin and Iowa State found 54 percent of hogs raised on antibiotic-free operations were infected with *Salmonella*, compared to only 39 percent in conventional operations. Source: Gebreyes WA, Bahnson PB, Funk JA, McKean J, Patchanee P. Foodborne Pathog Dis. 2008 Apr;5(2):199-203.

ORGANIC CHICKEN ADVANTAGE?



Consumer Reports found retail chicken most likely to be contaminated with *Salmonella* were the brands grown either organically or without use of antibiotics. Source: Dirty Birds. Consumer Reports. 2007 Jan;72(1):21-23.



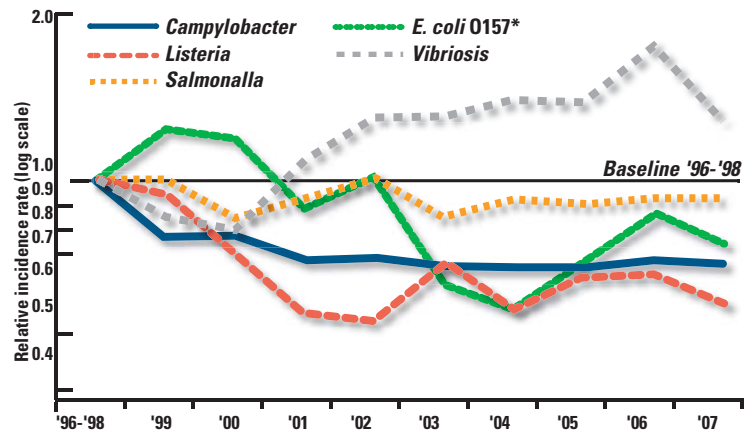
THE (SURPRISINGLY) GOOD NEWS ABOUT FOOD

Media-driven scares over food contamination mask an important reality. The U.S. food supply is safer today than it's ever been, and it's arguably the safest in the world. Here's one example of food safety news that may surprise you in today's climate: The food chain [has made remarkable progress](#) over the last decade and a half in reducing the incidence of food poisoning related to several of the bacteria common in food animals. With one exception, all are below the population incidence levels from ten years ago.

That success owes credit to campaigns—both compulsory and voluntary—that reduce the incidence of contamination on farms, in processing plants, at retail and in animals. USDA's anti-*Salmonella* initiative launched in 2006, for instance, helped drive down the percentage of sampled broiler carcasses that yielded *Salmonella* from 16.3 percent in 2005 to 8.5 percent in 2007.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control continues to remind consumers they share responsibility for their own health and must ensure proper cooking of food and handling of other potential sources.

PROGRESS IN REDUCING FOOD POISONING INCIDENCE



* Includes only Shiga-toxin producing *E. coli*.

Source: MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep. 2008 Apr 11;57(14):366-70.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Why farm antibiotics are more than just a convenience for animal producers:

- Several research studies demonstrate organic and “no-antibiotic” meat tends to carry higher — not lower — burdens of disease-causing organisms.
- Careful use of antibiotics in animals and birds may reduce the risk of food-borne disease scares that can result in high profile grocery and restaurant product recalls.

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For the Record is a regular publication designed to present facts to balance today's debate over the safe, effective, economical methods farmers use to produce your milk, meat and eggs.

Read past issues or link to more information on this issue at www.AntibioticTruths.com

For the Record

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For the Record

retailer FAQs about any real safety benefits of 'raised without antibiotics' foods

Q Demand for food raised without antibiotics has grown during the past few years, as consumers appear willing to absorb higher cost to appease growing concern over the safety of their food. How can you argue there's no safety advantage to food grown in this manner?

A As researchers like Harvey Hartman have accurately observed, organic, all-natural, and antibiotic-free foods are [about many things](#) in the consumer's mind. Their higher price buys a “rich” experience, tapping into diverse concepts of authenticity, nostalgia and trust. But there simply are [no credible scientific studies](#) showing they are in any way safer than food grown using medications.

Q So you're saying that despite their higher price, meat, milk and eggs branded as raised without antibiotics are only equal in safety to conventionally raised ones?

A No. It could actually be worse than that. More than [three decades of scientific research](#) suggests those antibiotics consumers are paying to avoid can actually help prevent the risk of food-borne contamination. Their prudent use can lower the burden of bacteria in animals entering the processing chain, reducing the chance food can become contaminated and infect humans. See inside for an explanation of how farm antibiotics help reduce the risk to consumers.

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