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Salmonella and the FDA

Animal feed is not cooked or heated to high temperatures, allowing Salmonella to grow.

Just like people, farm animals get stomach infections when they eat Salmonella-contaminated food.

In 1967 the FDA recognized this and prohibited all types of Salmonella in animal feed.

Food companies overuse antibiotics to treat these infections.

For decades, the animal feed industry lobbied for the elimination of the Salmonella prohibition.

In 2013, the FDA changed its policy and now allows the sale of Salmonella-contaminated animal feed. Only 8 types of Salmonella continue to be banned.

The FDA’s new policy states they will consider prohibiting other types on a case by case basis.

In July, FACT formally asked the FDA for a ban of all Salmonella in animal feed, or to prohibit the types of Salmonella that most often cause illness.

FACT responded that there are too many types of Salmonella causing illness in animals to manage the disease on a “type by type” basis.

FACT reviewed USDA data and found the FDA’s policy does not cover the most common Salmonella types causing animal illness.
Salmonella infects more than a million people annually with diarrhea, stomach cramps, and fever—you may have unknowingly had an infection yourself. For about 20,000 people annually, the disease is severe enough to send them to the hospital.

Salmonella is most often contracted by eating contaminated food—including meat from a Salmonella infected animal, or fruits and vegetables contaminated by manure from infected animals.

Farm animals can also contract stomach infections when they eat food contaminated by Salmonella. The FDA allows most types of Salmonella to be present in animal feed, routinely sickening an unknown portion of the billions of farm animals in our country.

Out of the over 2,000 strains of Salmonella, the FDA under a 2013 policy specifically prohibits only eight. The policy states they will consider prohibiting other types of Salmonella on a case-by-case basis, but provides no explanation for why it selected these eight types and no information on how it will make decisions for the others.

The FDA policy puts both animals and people at risk by ignoring the abundant evidence that numerous Salmonella types cause illness in animals, and ignores the clear potential for animals infected by Salmonella to cause illness in people. There are far too many strains of Salmonella causing human and animal illness to effectively manage on a case-by-case basis.

In July 2017 FACT wrote to the FDA to formally ask for a ban on all Salmonella in animal feed to protect both human and animal health. Short of a complete ban, FACT requested that the FDA ban the Salmonella strains that most often cause illness in animals and humans.

Stop Feeding Salmonella to Animals

Farm Animal Welfare, Human Health, and the FDA

Just like they need sunshine and room to roam, animals need feed free from Salmonella. Good food safety practices go hand-in-hand with humane animal welfare.
Farm animals grazing on open pasture paints an idyllic scene; cows wandering in grassy meadows, sheep lounging under a shade tree, and chickens scratching among natural forage. This approach to farming seems so natural and simple; let animals live outside and all will be well. However, there is much intentional consideration and management behind this “simple” approach. Farmers who use good grazing practices are strategic about where they allow their animals to roam. It takes thoughtful planning and preparation to run a sustainable grazing operation that is healthy for the animals, the land, and the environment.

What is Grazing?
Ruminant animals such as cows, sheep, and goats need a diet that is composed primarily—or even entirely—of nutritious grasses, legumes, and other plants to stay healthy. Depending upon the climate, some farms allow their animals to graze year-round, while others may stockpile forage produced during the growing season and then feed it to their animals during the winter months. Using this “winter management” practice, the land and its forage is not exhausted during the fall and winter dormant seasons—allowing the soil to rest while still having enough healthy plant matter available for their farm animals.

Good Grazing Basics
Successful grazing operations frequently move or rotate their animals to new pasture. Farmers often use fencing to subdivide larger areas of pasture into smaller “paddocks” to have many parcels of fresh forage available. The animals eat the plants in that particular paddock. As animals graze, they distribute their manure across the land, which in turn fertilizes the soil. The animals are moved to the next paddock before the plants are damaged. The used paddocks are then given a chance to rest, recover, and regrow to be ready for later grazing.

Farmers who practice sustainable grazing consider many factors, including which plants to grow for their animals and soil type, how many animals to put in an individual paddock at any given time, how large the paddocks should be, how often the animals need to be moved, and how long the paddocks need to rest between rotations. These variables are unique to each individual farm and can change throughout the season. It can be a complex task to continuously manage these considerations.

Environmental, Animal, and Farmer Benefits
Sustainable grazing offers numerous benefits for people, animals, and the planet. When done correctly, grazing improves soil and water quality, decreases soil erosion, sequesters carbon, and increases biodiversity. Through sustainable grazing, animals are able to eat a nutritious diet and engage in their natural behaviors, thereby substantially reducing stress and disease.
Update on New Organic Animal Welfare Rule

The new and improved welfare rule for organically raised animals was originally scheduled to take effect in March 2017 and would have strengthened animal welfare requirements. However, earlier this spring the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) delayed the rule until November 2017. The USDA also indicated that it may suspend the rule indefinitely, or even withdraw the rule completely. FACT believes that any effort to stymie this rule is unacceptable. When implemented, the rule would level the playing field for farmers, bring the organic standards in line with consumer expectations for animal welfare, and improve the lives of millions of farm animals each year.

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A sincere thank you to those who participated in FACT’s Action Alert and urged the agency to implement the rule without further delay. We are now awaiting the USDA’s final decision, which is expected before November 2017.

Healthy turkeys living on open pasture display their colorful feathers at Root Down Farm.

Through our grants, scholarships, webinars, and other educational opportunities for farmers, FACT is committed to improving pasture quality and increasing access to pasture for farm animals—thereby improving the lives of thousands of farm animals and the environment around them. Good grazing is humane farming.

A young heritage breed calf plays and naps in the clover at Walker Farm on Whortleberry Hill.

Farmers find that their feed costs are lower, their animals are healthier and need fewer antibiotics, and that their customers are interested in purchasing their products due to the health benefits of grass-fed meat and milk. Although sustainable grazing isn’t as simple or easy as it may initially seem, the benefits are worth the effort.
Why do federal regulations matter for farms?

Federal agencies provide essential protections for the safety of life-saving drugs, food, workers, and the environment. Before Congress created federal agencies and directed them to protect consumers, unscrupulous companies were free to sell fake drugs and contaminated food, pollute the environment, and mistreat their workers.

While there is still much work to be done, agency actions have led to safer food and drugs, better working conditions, and a cleaner environment. Agencies do this by creating rules that companies must follow. It is for this important reason that FACT opposes the Regulatory Accountability Act (S. 95), which will make it much harder for agencies to do their jobs when it comes to protecting public health.

Rulemaking already takes too long and is highly influenced by big business. Several issues that FACT has worked on over the years—including the rules on mad cow disease, dangerous bacteria in shell eggs, or the recent actions on antibiotics in food animals—have taken more than five years to enact, and sometimes over a decade.

This proposed legislation adds 53 additional steps to the existing requirements for rule-making, and makes it much easier for a company to get a court to overturn rules they disagree with—despite potentially negative impact on consumers.

The Regulatory Accountability Act would make these problems even worse and seriously undermine the ability of agencies to take needed actions to protect public health and the safety of our food.

FACT appreciates our supporters who have written to their Senators to tell them to oppose the Regulatory Accountability Act (S. 95), and we will keep you updated on our efforts to protect consumers, farm animals, and our food through appropriate and important regulations.

Our commitment to our donors’ privacy

FACT will not sell or trade our donors’ names or personal information with any other entity, nor send mailings to our donors on behalf of other organizations.

This policy applies to all information received by FACT, both online and offline, on any FACT platform including our organizational website or pass-through vehicles such as PayPal, JustGive, or eBay, as well as any electronic, written, or oral communications.

To the extent any donations are processed through a third-party service provider, our donors’ information will only be used for purposes necessary to process the donation.

Out of transparency, FACT publishes an annual donor roster in our Annual Report that includes the donor’s name as provided to FACT as well as attribution to a general giving level. Our Annual Report is available on FACT’s organizational website and by request.

Any donor may request to be listed as anonymous, and those wishes will be strictly adhered to.

For more information regarding FACT’s donor privacy policies, please contact Sidney Freitag-Fey, Director of Marketing and Development, at sfey@foodanimalconcerns.org or at 773-525-4952 x. 23.
You’ve likely noticed that FACT is looking a bit different.

We’ve been making changes to the way that we look, communicate, and engage with our supporters like you. While we may seem to be changing, rest assured that the programs you have loved and supported for years remain the same. Our Humane Farming and Food Safety Programs are working just as tirelessly to improve the welfare of tens of thousands of farm animals, expand humane farming nationwide by empowering independent farmers, making the food we all eat safer and healthier, and providing resources to the many conscientious consumers who rely on us.

Why have we been making changes to our appearance? Good question. The changes in how we present ourselves and share our work with you is based on our beliefs:

Being Transparent and Accountable: FACT is committed to providing each of our supporters with a documented impact of our programs, a complete accounting of our financials, and copies of our operational policies that all guide the work that we do—and that you generously support.

Operating in a responsible and cost-effective approach: The changes that we have made have actually decreased our expenses by reconfiguring our internal structure and basically “doing more with less.” Our budget for the current year is $620,800—though our programmatic impact may make it seem that we are much larger! We are proud to be lean and effective.

Engaging our supporters through meaningful outreach: We know that you are busy, and that you receive much mail from the many organizations that you support. So every time you receive a piece of mail from FACT, we want it to count. We want you to enjoy hearing from us, so please tell us what you would like to see:

- Do you want to hear from us once a year? We’d be happy to send you one letter in December during the holiday season.
- Do you want to hear from us only electronically? Please let us know your preferred email address.
- Do you like the materials we have on the website, and would like a print copy mailed to you? We’d be happy to do it!
- Want some extra copies of our newsletters (like this one!) to share with friends? We’ll send you several as soon as we hear from you!

Have an idea about what FACT could do to better serve our supporters? Please contact us! Sid and Chelsea are available to chat with you at 773-525-4952, or via email at sfey@foodanimalconcerns.org or cparraga@foodanimalconcerns.org at any time.

FACT would not exist without our loyal donors. Please stay in touch with us, and please accept our gratitude for your generosity that helps us achieve our vision of humane and healthy farms.
Staff Roster

As always, please never hesitate reaching out to FACT’s staff if you have any questions, we are always happy to hear from you! FACT’s main office phone is 773-525-4952, or you may email us.

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