

TO: House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources

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FROM: Dr. James M Thompson
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RE: House Bill 2598 / Livestock Antibiotics

I oppose HB 2598 because it is detrimental to the profitability of the Livestock Industry in Oregon. In addition the FDA already requires extensive studies before any antibiotics are approved for use in food-producing animals.

In order for an antibiotic to be approved for use in food animals the safety assessment for food animals is more stringent than that for human antibiotics in three ways:

- 1) If there are risks to humans, FDA will not approve the antibiotic for animals
- 2) FDA requires a food safety assessment to ensure that meat is safe.
- 3) FDA studies the pharmaceutical thoroughly to guarantee it does not increase the risk of antibiotic resistant bacteria in food.

Denmark serves as an example of what happens when the use of nontherapeutic antibiotics is banned. The nontherapeutic ban of antibiotics in the Danish swine industry has not had the intended benefit of reducing antibiotic resistance patterns in humans; it has had the unintended consequence of increasing animal suffering, pain and death. Plus little evidence exists to suggest that antibiotic resistance in humans has declined, which was the purpose of the ban.

If HB 2598 were to become a law in Oregon it would place Oregon Livestock producers at a competitive disadvantage to livestock producers in other states where the use of nontherapeutic antibiotics continue to be allowed. This use of antimicrobials results in animals with a faster growth rate and increased feed efficiency because more of the body resources go toward achieving maximum growth potential.

If HB 2598 is enacted it would also increase costs to the Livestock Producer as well as the budget of the Oregon Department of Agriculture in managing the reports that are required as proposed in this legislation.

A final comment relates to the fact that nearly all animals raised for food production in Oregon are shipped out of Oregon for harvest/slaughter. Thus even if this legislation is passed it would have virtually no effect on the "safety" of meat products that would be sold in the grocery stores and meat markets in the State of Oregon. Since the products offered would be from animals harvested/slaughtered in states where the rules as proposed do not exist. Perhaps some of the Oregon Livestock would make it back home for consumption but the odds of that would be minimal.