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Steroids for Animals

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Steroid Use In Chickens

This video clip is taken from the documentary *Food, Inc.* In the documentary, filmmaker Robert Kenner enters the world of food and attempts to expose the food that is eaten all across America. The entire documentary is trying to prove that the current food is controlled by several manufacturers and that their practices of growing and raising food are unhealthy. In this clip, the filmmakers interview a chicken farmer. She explains how the steroids affect the chickens. Before the use of steroids, it took nearly twice as long to raise a chicken to be fully grown. Now, the chickens are given steroids from the beginning of their lives. The steroids come with a price however. The chickens' bones are unable to develop as fast as the muscles. This prevents the chickens from walking very far. The use of steroids also affects the workers. The workers are unable to use certain medicines because of their constant contact with the animal steroids. Although the steroid use in animals allows the animal to grow faster, it is harmful to the worker and also cruel to the chickens.

FDA is in Favor of Steroids in Animals

Those in favor of steroid usage in animals base their claim in the fact that it is completely safe. Food manufacturers use hormone implants and a drug called roxarsone. According to the United States' Food and Drug Administration, meat producers have been using hormone implants in beef cattle and sheep since the 1950s. The drugs used in the animals are testosterone, progesterone, and estrogen and also the synthetic versions of the hormones. These hormone implants are placed in the animal behind their ears. The implant dissolves over time and enters into the animals' bloodstream. When the drugs are given to the animals, the animal grows faster and leaner. This allows the manufacturers to produce more meat in a shortened amount of time. Since the companies can produce more, they are able to make a larger profit. They ensure that the amounts given to the

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animals are small compared to the amount of natural hormones found in humans. In addition, chickens are given a drug of roxarsone from the day they are hatched. The drug is administered through the water supply and aids in the growth of chicken. Although there have been several lawsuits claiming that the drug has been harmful to humans, the FDA concludes that as long as the drug is monitored, it is safe for humans to eat the chickens given the drug. The chemicals, or steroids, used in animals are safe according the FDA and their current standards.

The Effect of Steroids on Animal Growth



This picture shows how the steroids affect animal growth. Before animals were given the drugs, they grew at a much slower rate. However, now animals are able to develop much faster when they are given the drugs. Using the steroids allow the farmers to raise more animals in a shorter amount of time.

Growth Hormones and Dairy Products



This cartoon depicts what cattle are injected with before they are used to make dairy products. They are injected with vaccines, hormones, and antibiotics as a way to get the most out of each cow. However, this does not mean that what is produced by these cattle is necessarily safe for human consumption.

The Negative Effects of Steroids

Steroids are not safe for farm animals, nor the humans who eat them. Out of about 36 million beef cattle raised each year, 99% of the mare given a steroidal implant to make them grow faster. These steroids are also given to pigs and chickens. The steroids used contain three natural steroids (estradiol, testosterone, and progesterone) and three that are synthetic (zeronal, trenbolone acetate, and progestin melengestrol acetate). Because of this there are additional hormones in food products from these animals such as meat, chicken, pork, and milk. However, the problem with these additional hormones is that they should only be ingested by those who need them, not by the general public. The effects of ingesting these hormones is best seen in children. Because their hormone levels are naturally low, the consumption of any meat or dairy product with these

growth hormones can cause a drastic spike in a child's hormone levels. This can cause poor brain development, along with other parts of the body. The effects can also be seen in adults by causing hormonal imbalances, liver and kidney failure, and even cancer. The other problem with these steroids is that they also create bacteria in humans that is immune to treatments for most diseases. However, the FDA still feels that these hormones are fine for human consumption as long as the hormone is injected with low concentration into the animal.

What You Should Be Buying



This picture shows what you should be buying when you go to the store for any meat or dairy product. Look for labels that state there were no antibiotics or additional hormones used when raising the farm animal. Also, look for any sticker on the label that shows the food was inspected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, meaning that it is safe for human consumption and will not affect hormone levels.



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