FDA Loophole That Allows Farmers To Administer Antibiotics Indefinitely

Antibiotics benefit farmers by speeding up the time it takes livestock to be ready for slaughter. Cows and chickens and other livestock grow faster with antibiotic use than they would otherwise. For cattle, the time from birth to slaughter can be cut in half. But antibiotic resistance is a growing public health concern. Antibiotic-resistant bacteria like e.coli can be pathogenic to humans and even deadly. Farm water runoff and animal waste are damaging our ecosystems in a myriad of ways. Consequently, in 2017 the FDA was compelled to act.

The C.D.C. states that 23,000 Americans die each year due to antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections and they estimate that more than 400,000 United States residents become ill with infections caused by antibiotic-resistant food-borne bacteria every year. They believe that one in five of these antibiotic-resistant infections may be caused by pathogens from food and animals.

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In 2017, the Food and Drug Administration enacted rules that prohibited antibiotics from being used for growth promotion in livestock. Previously these antibiotics could be purchased over the counter but the new rules require a prescription from a veterinarian.

Despite the ban, it’s widely believed that ranchers still use antibiotics to speed growth. The F.D.A. rules have a glaring loophole: farmers can use antibiotics for disease prevention.

You don’t even need a sick animal in the herd to use antibiotics in the feed and water as long as the justification is ‘disease prevention’ not ‘growth promotion,’ ” Avinash Kar, a senior attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council

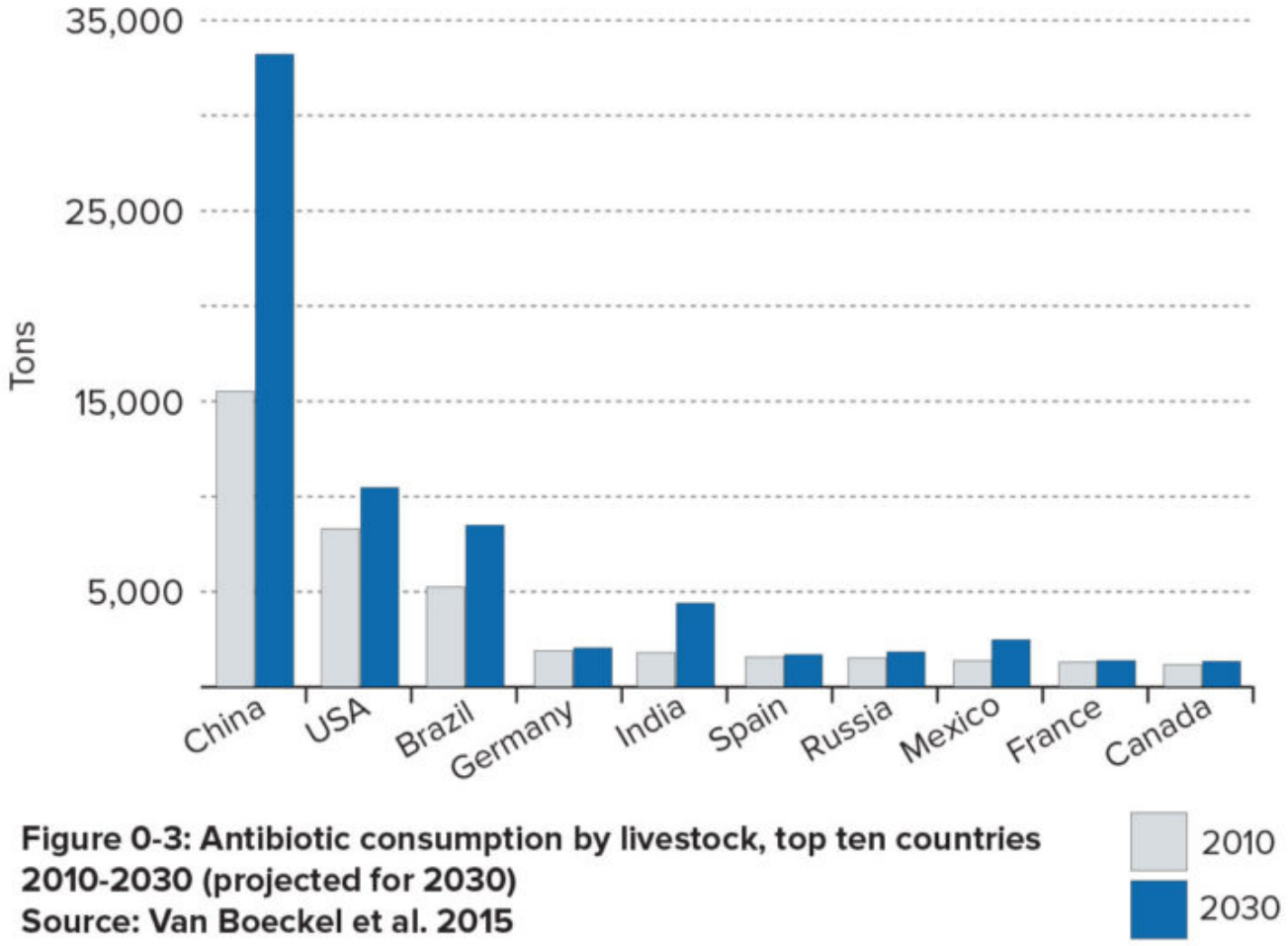

Figure 0-3: Antibiotic consumption by livestock, top ten countries 2010-2030 (projected for 2030)
Source: Van Boeckel et al. 2015

Courtesy of the CDDEP

More in-depth reading: *Antibiotics in Meat Could Be Damaging Our Guts* & *New Report Tracks Rise of Antibiotic Resistance in Humans and Livestock*

Our health depends on our gut’s ecosystem. Antibiotics, vaccinations, glyphosate, and GMOs are known to disrupt the bacteria in our gut. If you eat meat, we recommend careful consideration regarding who your buy meat from.

Related Reading:

- *We Consume Livestock Vaccines When We Ingest Meat*
- *Majority Of Meat Contain Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria*
- *How to Avoid GMOs in 2018 – And Everything Else You Should Know About Genetic Engineering*