

The Asheville Citizen-Times reported that Barker met Tuesday with Principal Chief Michell Hicks and five members of the Tribal Council. He called the bears' conditions inhumane and asked that they be turned over to a sanctuary in California.

"To think that with as advanced as our civilization is now that there is any place in the United States where bears are kept in pits is just unbelievable," said Barker, who is part American Indian and grew up on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota. "Just picture yourself, if your life, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, month after month, was in a pit."

The bears are displayed in walled enclosures set into the ground at three local attractions that bill themselves as zoos and theme parks.

Barker will discuss the meeting at a news conference Wednesday morning in Asheville.

Hicks told the Asheville Citizen-Times that the tribe follows federal regulations in caring for the bears.

Collette Coggins, who owns one of the attractions, the Cherokee Bear Zoo, with her husband, Barry, said the bears don't stay in the pits all day, every day. "We love our animals," she said. "They are like our pets."

FOOD SAFETY ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 2009

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, the use of massive amounts of human antibiotics for non-therapeutic purposes in industrial food animal production is seriously jeopardizing the health of Americans. This practice is contributing to the emergence and spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, often rendering ineffective human life-savings drugs.

I am submitting for the record a letter to the White House, signed by twenty reputable organizations such as the Infectious Diseases Society of America, American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Pew Charitable Trusts, which supports the Food and Drug Administration's early steps to phase out the use of antibiotics for growth promotion and feed efficiency in food animals, and calls on the Administration to go further.

JULY 24, 2009.

Ms. MELODY BARNES,
Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy,
The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR MS. BARNES: As organizations committed to protecting patients, public health, animal health, and food safety, the undersigned groups are writing to express our grave concern about the misuse of antibiotics in agriculture and our strong support for the Administration's new "public health approach to antimicrobial use in animals," which was articulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in its July 13th statement before the Rules Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. The Obama Administration's leadership in providing a clear path forward on this highly politically charged issue is very much welcomed after decades of inertia.

Our combined memberships include the country's foremost scientific and medical experts and represent more than eleven million concerned Americans and health professionals. Our position is based on objective health interests and concerns that dangerous

drug resistant infections are rapidly increasing in hospitals and community settings adding to the economic burden of the U.S. healthcare costs.

Specifically, we support the FDA's calls for phasing out the use of antimicrobial drugs for growth promotion and feed efficiency, and for requiring that all other uses of these drugs be carried out under the supervision of a veterinarian and within the boundaries of a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship—which we expect will end over-the-counter sales of tons of antimicrobial drugs annually. We also support the agency's expressed intent to clearly define the limited instances where antimicrobials may be used judiciously in food animals for purposes of disease prevention and control and are eager to work with FDA to ensure that the policy developed is the most protective of public health. We also urge the agency to make the new antimicrobial policy mandatory, retroactive to already-approved drugs, and enforceable, in order to best guarantee a significant reduction in antimicrobial use. The Administration's statement clearly demonstrates a commitment to sound and science-based policies that are backed up by scores of scientific and medical publications and will protect the health of every American.

The development of antimicrobial agents to treat life-threatening infections has been one of the most notable medical achievements of the past century. Physicians, healthcare professionals, and public health and food safety advocates are greatly concerned about the growing body of scientific evidence demonstrating that antimicrobial drug use in livestock and poultry contributes to the spread of drug-resistant bacteria to people. Drug-resistant organisms are plaguing Americans, including otherwise healthy individuals, in healthcare settings and communities across the country. We are pleased that these concerns finally are being recognized and addressed by the federal government to forestall epidemics of untreatable infections.

Fundamental to FDA's new approach—and our support for it—are the principles that: "protecting public health requires the judicious use in animal agriculture of those antimicrobials of importance in human medicine" and that "purposes other than for the advancement of animal and human health should not be considered judicious use."—Dr. Joshua Sharfstein, FDA's Principal Deputy Commissioner, July 13, 2009.

The Administration's vision to eliminate non-judicious uses of antimicrobial drugs, including for purposes of growth promotion and feed efficiency and non-judicious disease prevention which have been practiced in animal agriculture for several decades, demonstrates a critical public policy shift that will better protect the public against resistant infections and preserve the power of existing antibiotics. In addition, we urge FDA to formalize its position on veterinary supervision of all antimicrobial uses and ending the over-the-counter sale of antibiotics for animal agricultural uses, which are long-overdue. The sale of antimicrobials for use in human medicine requires a prescription; there is no reason to permit a lower standard for agricultural purposes where considerably more antimicrobial drugs are used annually.

The Administration's new policy direction appears intended to reflect the concerns of a broad consensus of the scientific, medical, public health and international health communities. Such consensus is buttressed by the actions of expert bodies and governments. For example:

Since 2002, the World Health Organization (WHO) has called upon all nations to shift from use of antimicrobials in non-human medicine.

In 2003, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies of Science called on the FDA to ban the use of antimicrobials for growth promotion in animals, if those drugs were also used in human medicine.

In 2006, the European Union banned non-therapeutic use of antimicrobials, because such use was found to raise food safety concerns, and the ban was instituted to protect against further development of antimicrobial resistance.

We recognize that phasing out of antimicrobials for non-judicious uses in animals will require changes in the agricultural industry. But protection of the public's health must come first, and the phase out can be conducted in a way that that minimizes costs to the agriculture industry. Farmers in Europe have adapted to such a policy without undue disruption of production or increased consumer costs; the United States can learn from that experience while also protecting American lives. In addition, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has recognized that various production methods used in the United States today are viable alternatives to non judicious antimicrobial uses and such alternatives are employed with little negative—or even with somewhat positive—economic impact to producers.

We urge you to maintain the scientifically sound positions the Administration already has taken in support of phasing out growth promotion and feed efficiency uses, and to finalize a policy that will strictly manage a narrow set of prophylactic uses while mandating veterinary-patient relationships and eliminating the over-the-counter sale of antibiotics for use in animals.

We remain committed to working with the Administration to implement these new approaches in ways that will best protect the lives and health of both humans and animals.

Sincerely,

Alliance for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics.

American Academy of Pediatrics.

American Association of Critical-Care Nurses.

American Medical Association.

American Pharmacists Association.

American Public Health Association.

American Society of Health-System Pharmacists.

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology.

Food Animal Concerns Trust.

Humane Society of the United States.

Infectious Diseases Society of America.

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.

Keep Antibiotics Working.

Michigan Antibiotic Resistance Reduction Coalition.

National Association of County and City Health Officials.

Pew Campaign on Human Health and Industrial Farming.

Premier, a healthcare alliance serving 2,100 nonprofit hospitals and 58,000 healthcare sites.

Society of Infectious Diseases Pharmacists.

Trust for America's Health.

Union of Concerned Scientists.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. J. GRESHAM BARRETT

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 30, 2009

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, unfortunately I missed recorded