

Minister of Health and the Minister
for the Federal Economic Development
Initiative for Northern Ontario
Ottawa, Canada KIA 0K9

Ministre de la Santé et Ministre de
l'initiative fédérale du développement
économique dans le Nord de l'Ontario
Ottawa, Canada KIA 0K9

Ms. Cathy Holtslander
Community Organizer
Beyond Factory Farming Coalition
501 -230 22nd Street East
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 0E9

Dear Ms. Holtslander:

This is in response to your environmental petition no. 203 of May 28, 2007, addressed to Mr. Ronald Thompson, Interim Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development.

In your petition, you raised concerns about the potential impact of hormone use in livestock production on human health and the environment.

I am pleased to provide you with the enclosed response to your petition from Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada. I understand that the Ministers of the Environment, Agriculture and Agri-Food, and Fisheries and Oceans will be responding separately to questions which come under the purview of their respective departments.

I appreciate your interest in this important matter, and I hope you will find the information useful.

Yours sincerely,

(signed)

Tony Clement

Enclosure

c.c. Mr. Ronald C. Thompson, Interim Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development

The Honourable John Baird, P.C., M.P.

The Honourable Gerry Ritz, P.C., M.P.

The Honourable Loyola Hearn, P.C., M.P.

**Health Canada (HC) and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)
Response to Environmental Petition No. 203:**

Ecological and Human Health Effects of Hormones Released into the Environment as a Result of Intensive Livestock Production in Canada

Question 3 (HC and PHAC response)

What are the health implications of the environmental presence of these hormones for human embryonic, fetal and childhood development as well as the health of Canadian adults?

Neither HC nor P.HAC has conducted any studies on this matter.

Questions 4 and 6 (P.HAC response)

4) What are the health implications of the environmental presence of these hormones for hormone-linked cancers, such as prostate cancer and breast cancer? and

6) What kind of research is the government doing to assess the health and ecological impacts of the hormones used in and/or resulting from intensive livestock production?

After consultation with our specialists in the Infectious Disease and Emergency Preparedness Branch and the Public Health Practice Branch at PHAC, it was concluded that, currently, no one is working on the topic area of the petition at the Laboratory for Foodborne Zoonoses, and in fact, we were unable to identify any university colleagues working in this specific area.

PHAC's focus has been on infectious diseases of animals (including antimicrobial resistance) that are transmitted to humans. In the past, PHAC specialists have done some work with university colleagues on chemicals/toxins in watersheds and illness in humans downstream. PHAC has not yet looked at the issue of hormone use on farms and the potential links with human illness.

Environment Canada (EC) has identified some research in this area in their response to question 6 of your petition.

Question 7 (HC response)

What resources are being devoted to monitoring, surveillance and research regarding natural and synthetic hormones use in and/or resulting from intensive livestock production?

EC will provide an answer to this question in its response to your petition.

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Question 8 (HC response)

What Canadian laws and regulations exist to control the release of hormones originating from intensive livestock operations into the environment?

Using the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* (CEPA) and CEPA regulations such as the *New Substances Notification Regulations (Chemicals and Polymers)* and the *New Substances Notification Regulations (Organisms)*, HC and Environment Canada can assess new substances before they are allowed to be manufactured or imported into Canada. These regulations specify information and data requirements that must be submitted to the Government before the quantity manufactured in, or imported into, Canada exceeds a specified amount. The Environmental Assessment Unit of HC conducts environmental risk assessments under these regulations. With regard to veterinary drugs, the assessments determine the potential impact to the environment and human health resulting from environmental exposure to these substances. Substances already found on the market are equally being assessed to determine whether they are toxic as defined in CEPA. Recommendations for mitigation measures are proposed, when required.

Question 9 (HC response)

What methods and resources are used to enforce these laws and regulations?

The enforcement of the *New Substances Notification Regulations* is the responsibility of Environment Canada.