



November 23, 2009

**Statement of Dr. Keeve Nachman
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My name is Dr. Keeve Nachman and I am the Science Director for the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. I'm here today to talk to you about a public health concern that I and many other health scientists have about what we might be consuming when we eat chicken, pork, or even our Thanksgiving turkey.

Roxarsone is an arsenic-containing antimicrobial drug that is widely used in poultry production and to a lesser extent in swine production to make food animals grow faster, improve their pigmentation, and to combat intestinal parasites.

Studies have shown that some of the arsenic fed to chickens remains in the edible portions of the birds. Arsenic has also been found in poultry waste, where it poses environmental and human health risks when the waste is managed, often by spreading on agricultural fields as fertilizer for food crops.

Researchers have yet to test turkey meat for arsenic residues, but the Food and Drug Administration has approved roxarsone for use in turkey feed, and multiple studies of turkey waste have indeed found recoverable levels of arsenic.

Over two decades ago, the Environmental Protection Agency classified inorganic arsenic as a human carcinogen, which means that no exposure to arsenic, no matter how small, is without some increase in cancer risk. In addition, long-term exposures to arsenic have been associated with a variety of other health consequences, including cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

There are concerns that even very low-level arsenic exposures can increase the risk of developing these conditions.

Based on EPA estimates of American dietary patterns, the average American adult consumer of poultry eats more than sixty pounds per year.

Given the current situation that allows the poultry and pork industries to include arsenic-containing drugs in animal feed, people who eat poultry should be made aware of potential risks that may result from long-term dietary exposures to arsenic through the consumption of meat produced using roxarsone.

I'd like to make it clear that I am not recommending consumers avoid turkey this Thanksgiving. However, I am saying that consumers should make informed choices about what they eat. Without changes in how we raise chickens, turkeys and pigs for food, these potential arsenic exposures will persist, and we, as Americans, will continue to bear the burden of the consequences of roxarsone use in terms of threats to our health and to the environment.

Thankfully, there are ways that you can avoid meat-based arsenic exposures this Thanksgiving. Meat products labeled "USDA Organic" are produced without antimicrobial drugs, including roxarsone, and serve as one limited means of reducing dietary arsenic exposure.

This is a problem that will require action and change by both the government and meat industry, and should be addressed before the arsenic is added to feed. The responsibility for addressing this problem should not fall on consumers' shoulders. A longer-term solution is needed to address this problem in our food supply, and you can help.

Americans can write the Food and Drug Administration to communicate concerns over arsenic in meat. FDA tolerance levels for residual arsenic in meat are decades old and predate our current understanding of the human health effects of exposure to arsenic. Consumers should demand that FDA re-evaluate roxarsone, based on the improved understanding of arsenic

toxicology, the presence of arsenic in meat and in animal waste, and the potential for people to be exposed.

The public health bottom line is this: roxarsone is an unnecessary additive to poultry and swine feed. Eating poultry and pork produced using roxarsone can lead to otherwise avoidable arsenic exposures. Removal of roxarsone from animal feed will prevent these exposures and limit arsenic-based human health and environmental risks associated with managing animal waste.

I'd like to conclude by urging support for U. S. Representative Israel's bill (HR 3624), known as the Poison-Free Poultry Act of 2009. The passage of the bill will eliminate these unnecessary meat-based arsenic exposures, and will give consumers peace of mind that their food does not contain this arsenic-containing compound as a result of allowable feeding practices.

Thank you.