

FDA withdraws arsenic-based animal drug approvals following study

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(Medical Xpress)—At the request of two drug companies, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has announced that it will withdraw approvals for three of four arsenic-based drugs currently approved for use in food animal production. A fourth arsenic-based drug used to make turkeys and chickens grow faster, among other purposes, will remain on the market.

FDA's move follows a study led by the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (CLF) and published in May 2013 found [clear evidence](#) that using these drugs in chicken production increased levels of inorganic [arsenic](#), a known carcinogen, in chicken breast meat.

Earlier this year, the Center for Food Safety (CFS) and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) sued the FDA after the agency did not respond to a 2009 petition asking it to withdraw the approvals of all four drugs. The lawsuit forced FDA to respond by today.

"Our research found clear evidence that using arsenic-based drugs in poultry production increased people's exposure to a potent carcinogen. The findings made it clear that continuing to use these drugs would increase the risk of cancer and possibly other diseases too," said Keeve Nachman, PhD, MHS, a member of the faculty of the Bloomberg School of Public Health and lead author of the CLF study. "We are glad that FDA and [drug](#) companies have bowed to public health concerns about using arsenic to produce chickens and turkeys, but the agency still has work to do. FDA must withdraw the approvals for nitarsonsone so that

arsenic is no longer used to make food that people eat," added Nachman.

Specifically, the approvals for roxarsone, arsanilic acid, and carbarsone will be withdrawn by FDA at the request of the companies that hold the approvals. Nitarsone, the fourth arsenic-based drug and the only one that has been marketed since 2011, will remain approved and available for use.

The study, "Roxarsone, Inorganic Arsenic, and Other Arsenic Species in Chicken: A U.S.-Based Market Basket Sample," was published in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives* in May 2013.

More information: www.jhsph.edu/news/news-releases/2013/10/fda-withdraws-arsenic-based-animal-drug-approvals ...
[arsenic_chicken.html](http://www.jhsph.edu/news/news-releases/2013/10/fda-withdraws-arsenic-based-animal-drug-approvals)

Provided by Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health

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