

Drug Residue Found in Empire Kosher Meat



NEWS RELEASE BY JEWISH INITIATIVE FOR ANIMALS

Portland, OR | April 13, 2022 12:37 PM Pacific Daylight Time

Nonprofit Jewish Initiative for Animals (JIFA) found drug residue in Empire kosher chicken by testing samples of meat purchased from supermarket shelves. The drug, fenbendazole, is widely used in conventional animal agriculture to treat or prevent parasites that are common in crowded conditions on factory farms.

"Many shoppers, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, might perceive Empire's products to be higher quality and more ethically produced because they're kosher," said Melissa Hoffman, JIFA Director.

"However, our testing found drug residue in Empire chicken. This reinforces what we already know: virtually all kosher chicken found in grocery stores comes from factory farms which pose an enormous risk to public health and where animals suffer tremendously."

Health Motivates Kosher Purchases

According to Mintel, more than 40 percent of all the food on U.S. store shelves is kosher. Why? Americans perceive kosher foods as more health-conscious. A **recent survey by JIFA** found that **more than half of all adult shoppers of kosher food say they purchase kosher out of concern for public health (65 percent)**. Yet, kosher-certified animal products often fall short of consumer expectations.

Pandemics and Superbugs On The Rise

The widespread use of antibiotics and other drugs to treat animals has been known for years, but concerns are growing around the use contributing to the rise of superbugs or infections resistant to standard antibiotics. Farmed animals raised in confinement with no access to pasture provide a breeding ground for superbugs and pandemics. The current avian flu outbreak sweeping the globe shows how easily pandemics that originate in animals can spread.

Kosher Humanewashing Continues

Adding to shoppers' misconception that kosher certification equates to better conditions for animals, retailers and producers continue to deceive consumers with labels designed to mislead shoppers into buying products they think are healthier or more humane than they really are. Like Empire, kosher companies use claims such as "raised without antibiotics" and "humanely raised" to

imply that the meat comes from animals who are treated with compassion and have access to the outdoors. The reality is that most meat purchased in the U.S., including virtually all kosher meat, comes from factory farms where drugs are needed to keep animals alive in conditions that may otherwise kill them.

"More than 250 rabbis and Jewish leaders have already called upon Jewish communities to serve food that better aligns with their values, such as reducing meat consumption and serving plant-based foods by default," said Hoffman. "Drugs are used abundantly in kosher poultry, and shoppers have been misinformed. This is yet another reason why our communities must take action to adopt ethical food policies."

To learn more, visit jewishinitiativeforanimals.org.

About JIFA

The Jewish Initiative for Animals (JIFA) supports innovative programs to turn the Jewish value of compassion for animals into action while building ethical and sustainable Jewish American communities in the process. JIFA is an initiative of Farm Forward.

Contact Details

SUSAN PETERS

+1 708-759-7175

susan@farmforward.com

Tags

JIFA

JEWSH INITIATIVE FOR ANIMALS

KOSHER

MELISSA HOFFMAN