

National

Report says drug residue taints food

WASHINGTON (AP) —The Food and Drug Administration hasn't protected consumers from exposure to dangerous drugs given to animals that could turn up in meat, milk and poultry, a House committee charged Sunday in a new report.

The House Government Operations Committee said the FDA has lost sight of its mission to protect the public from the residues of veterinary drugs.

"FDA has consistently disregarded its responsibility for assuring the safety of drugs used in food-producing animals," said Rep. Ted Weiss, D-N.Y., chair of the panel's subcommittee on human resources, in releasing the report.

"FDA has repeatedly put what it perceives are interests of veterinarians and the livestock industry in the availability of additional animal drugs ahead of its legal obligation to protect consumers from the potentially hazardous residues they may leave in meat, milk and eggs," Weiss said.

The committee's report was based on two days of congressional hearings last summer at which FDA officials conceded that only a small percentage of the estimated 20,000 animal drugs on the market have been approved by the agency.

Dr. Lester Crawford, then head of the FDA's center for

veterinary medicine, told Weiss' subcommittee that the agency has approved only about 2,500 drugs.

"We're not able to monitor for all the (drug) products that might be used," Crawford testified. While federal law requires such monitoring, Crawford said the situation "is not completely under control and never has been. We do the best we can."

However, Crawford also told the panel there was no evidence that consumers have been harmed by meat, cheese or other food contaminated with drug residue.

Nevertheless, the House committee said in its report that testimony before the panel shows:

- Ninety percent or more of the new animal drugs on the market have not been approved by the FDA as safe and effective, although such a finding is required by law.

- Drugs that have been approved by the FDA often were approved years ago using safety standards now considered inadequate. Yet, the committee said, the FDA in 1982 canceled a program to review these drugs under modern safety standards.

- The FDA has failed to move against drugs that have been found to be potentially cancer-causing agents since they were first marketed.

Reports indicate terrorists trained in Syrian territory

WASHINGTON (AP) —Secretary of State George Shultz said Sunday that intelligence reports indicate the terrorists who attacked the Rome and Vienna airports last month were trained in the Syrian-controlled territory of Lebanon.

But "to what extent, of course... that involved the Syrian authorities, we're not able to say," Shultz said.

Appearing on the CBS program "Face the Nation," Shultz acknowledged that U.S. and other intelligence agencies had determined the terrorists had "been in the Bekaa Valley (of eastern Lebanon) and gone through Damascus."

Despite the new intelligence information, "there is no plan or thought about" imposing similar sanctions on Syria, Shultz said.

"I hope Syria will not do things that will make that necessary, and my guess is that they won't," the secretary said.

Shultz said while Syria is on the State Department's list of countries supporting terrorism, "Syria's picture is a rather different one... Syria's behavior toward all these things is rather different from Libya's."

"And beyond that, of course, we are working with Syria on a number of fronts in a constructive way," Shultz added.

Shultz was apparently responding to Syrian officials, quoted in Sunday editions of The New York Times, who expressed irritation over remarks last week by a top U.S. official that sanctions might be imposed against Syria.

Soviet dissident prepares for surgery

BOSTON (AP) —Soviet dissident Yelena Bonner entered a hospital Sunday for heart surgery, worried because she has received no word in more than two weeks from her husband, Nobel Peace Prize winner, Andrei Sakharov, her family said.

Bonner, 62, who suffers severe heart pain, waved to reporters, smiled and said goodbye, but had no comment as she entered Massachusetts General Hospital with her mother, Ruth Bonner, and her son, Alexei Semyonov.

Bonner came to Boston in

December on a three-month medical visa that was granted by Soviet authorities just before a summit meeting between Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and President Reagan and following a series of protests and appeals by her relatives and supporters in this country.

Bonner, a pediatrician, was sentenced to internal exile in the remote Soviet city of Gorky two years ago for slander against the state. Sakharov, 64, a renowned physicist, was sent to Gorky in 1980 without a trial.

Her son-in-law, Efrem

Yankelevich, said the family hopes a telephone call scheduled Tuesday to Sakharov from Bonner's private hospital room will alleviate her fears.

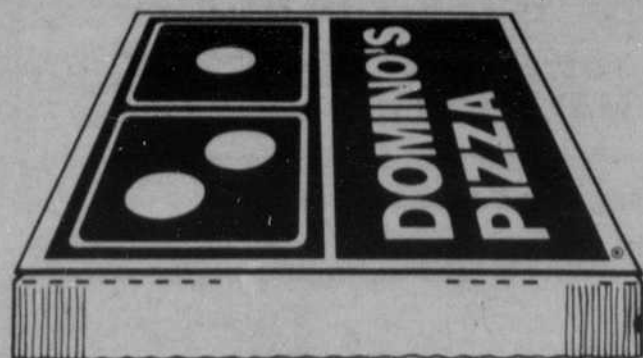
"He was supposed to write at least two postcards and she does not have any since Dec. 28," Yankelevich said.

The call was originally set earlier in the month, but Soviet operators rescheduled it for Tuesday, blaming overbooked circuits, he said.

Two calls to Sakharov in December were cut off by static, which the family blamed on jamming.

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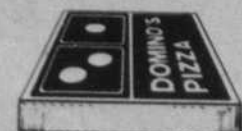
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