Tri-State Coalition for Responsible Investment

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1

18 NOVEMBER 2009

Meat Sustainability

Beef- and antibiotics, water and air pollution, and drug resistant pathogens,– are what's for dinner. That is, if you purchase your meat from large companies utilizing factory farming methods. Not what you had in mind? Our everyday dinners have many hidden costs.

Overview:
It is the basic need of civilization to have access to food. However, many of our practices today that allow us to feed our families are not viable. In order to provide nourishing, and sustainable food, we must consider the following hurdles.

Current State of Farming:
In conjuring an image of a farm, many might think of families in the bread basket region. However, a significant portion of our meat comes from large companies operations, mostly using confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs). Here, livestock are raised in cages, manually fed grain, and given antibiotics to lower the risk of disease. From CAFOs, incredible amounts of manure are produced, which can leach into water supplies.

Medicines for all:
Seven antibiotics that are used in farm animals are used for humans. It is estimated that 70% of antibiotics used in the US are for non-therapeutic usage in animals, according to a recent study by the Union of Concerned Scientists. The large market share is derived from our demand for meat, as well as the practice of providing these medicines for even healthy animals. Antibiotic resistance in both humans and animals is of grave concern.
In the summer of 2009, the Obama Administration announced that it would consider a ban on common antibiotic practices on healthy farm animals. In response to consumer concern, some companies now specially label their food when it is free of these drugs. In addition, large retailers, such as Walmart, have stated that their own store branded products will be devoid of antibiotics.

Pollution:
In addition to worries of the universal usage of these medications in animals, there are concerns surrounding antibiotics leeching into groundwater supplies. Trace amounts have been found in areas near CAFOs. Pollution, however, is not restricted to antibiotics. In addition, waste products from the livestock can contaminate the water and soil.

Court Cases:

In 2001, Tulsa, Oklahoma, officials sued six companies claiming that they were responsible for 170 million pounds of phosphorus- and nitrogen-rich chicken litter ending up in the watershed and harming the quality of Tulsa's drinking water. The defendants paid $7.3 million to settle the case in 2004.

In 2003, Tyson admitted to illegally discharging untreated wastewater from its Sedalia, Missouri, poultry processing plant into a tributary of the Lamine River. Tyson pled guilty to over 20 felony violations of the federal Clean Water Act and agreed to pay $7.5 million in fines to the United States and the state of Missouri.

Lastly, proponents in an ongoing trial in Oklahoma are seeking to restore the Illinois River Watershed that suffered polluted surface water, groundwater and drinking water supplies due to run-off poultry litter.

Possible Actions Steps: What we can do as investors:

1. **Vote your proxies** Support resolutions calling for sustainability

2. **Let your $$ be your voice** Demonstrate your concerns by purchasing antibiotic free as well as, sustainable meat

3. **Let your voice be heard** Write to Congress about your concern of antibiotic usage in meat

https://secure3.convio.net/ucs/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=1924 and http://www.makeourfoodsafe.org/

4. **Raise awareness** whether at your workplace or letting friends know about the actions you've taken in regards these issues

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