



The Shrimp e-Advocate

The Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA) is a non-profit alliance of members of the U.S. shrimp industry in eight states committed to preventing the continued deterioration of America's shrimp industry and to ensuring the industry's future viability. SSA serves as the national voice for the shrimp fishermen and processors in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas.

Farmers' remedies pose risk to human health

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Farmers' remedies pose risk to human health

By Li Li (China Daily)
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BEIJING - Zheng Lin was not looking forward to filing the results of his quality survey this month. As a researcher for Dongying's ocean and fisheries department, he discovered two of nine sample sea cucumbers had excessive levels of antibiotics.

"It is common for fish farmers to use antibiotics to keep their fish healthy," said the 26-year-old, "but if the amount surpasses the national standard it can harm humans (who eat the fish)."

Among the antibiotics most commonly found in fisheries in northern Shandong province are chloromycetin, nitrofurantoin and malachite green.

Although many farmers use the drugs knowingly, others are totally unaware that some supplements contain antibiotics, said Zheng at Dongying's fisheries research institute.

"To increase the effects, fish drug producers add antibiotic agents to their products but don't print it in the list of ingredients on the cover," he explained. The livestock sector shares a similar problem. Experts

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say there are numerous regulations on the use of antibiotics in feeds and animal drugs but little enforcement.

The abuse of antibiotics is serious among small farms and private breeders, said Bai Aiquan, a veterinary and teacher at the Science and Technology College in Foshan, Guangdong province.

"When pigs get sick, many farmers simply experiment with various kinds of drugs. Some even use drugs for pigs on cows," he said.

"The misleading information given by drugs company representatives and unqualified veterinaries is also making the problem worse."

According to the Chinese Veterinary Medical Association, the national qualification test only began last year. "Some dairy farmers even add antibiotics like penicillin directly into milk in summer when temperatures are high to prevent the milk from going sour," said a Beijing vet who did not want to be identified.

To curb antibiotic abuse, the China Animal Agriculture Association is cooperating with large farms nationwide to improve education on scientific breeding.

"We educate farmers that bacteria control starts with a clean environment, not antibiotics," said Ma Chuang, deputy secretary-general of the association.

"If farmers have a good command of antibiotics, there will be a smaller chance of being misled by salespeople." Shen Jianzhong, deputy dean of China University of Agriculture's college of veterinary medicine, said the government must emphasize on basic research like how antimicrobial-resistant bacteria in animal affects humans.

"There are still lots of questions about how antimicrobial-resistant bacteria started and how it spreads," he said, "Many countries are doing this research and China needs to catch up."

However, Chen Junshi, a food expert with the Chinese Academy of Engineering insists it is not the time now to panic.

He added: "The amount of antibiotics you get from your daily food intake can never compare with the amount prescribed by your doctor."

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