



Consumer Federation of America

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FDA Provides 30 Day Extension for Public Comments on Cloning

Yesterday, with no public announcement, the Food and Drug Administration granted a 30-day extension of its public comment period for its risk assessment on animal cloning. The public now has until May 3, 2007 to submit its comments to the FDA.

“It is outrageous that FDA took five years to develop its 700-page risk assessment and will only give the public 30 more days to comment on it,” said Chris Waldrop, Director of the Food Policy Institute at Consumer Federation of America. “This is a complicated issue and the public deserves adequate time to respond. And it is even more outrageous that the FDA is doing as little as possible to let the public know they have extended the comment period.”

On December 28, 2006 the FDA released its draft risk assessment, which concluded that milk and meat from cloned animals was as safe to eat as food from conventional animals. The FDA also stated that it would not require labeling of these products to identify them in the marketplace.

Numerous independent polls have shown that a majority of consumers are uncomfortable with cloning and do not want to consume products from cloned animals even if the FDA says they are safe. Additionally, consumers have a right to know where their food is coming from and what is in it. By allowing these products into the marketplace without any identifying label information, consumers will have no way of knowing if the food they’re purchasing has come from cloned animals or not. And they won’t be able to avoid it if they want to.

Furthermore, many Americans have distinct moral, ethical and religious concerns about the technology of cloning. Neither the agency nor animal scientists are qualified to tell us whether and when it is ethically acceptable for humans to alter the essential nature of animals. We need a national dialogue, including ethicists and religious leaders, to consider the wisdom of creating cloned animals.

“The FDA wants to foist these products on an unwilling American public,” Waldrop said. “Consumers need to make their voices heard.”

Consumers can submit comments to the FDA's docket on cloning at this link:
http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/oc/dockets/comments/getDocketInfo.cfm?EC_DOCUMENT_ID=1369&SORT=START&MAXROWS=15&START=151&CID=&AGENCY=FDA. It is important to include reference to **Docket number 2003N-0573** in the comments. Comments must be submitted by May 3, 2007.

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Consumer Federation of America is a non-profit association of 300 consumer groups, representing more than 50 million Americans. It was established in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through research, education and advocacy. The Food Policy Institute at CFA works to promote a safer, healthier and more affordable food supply.