

# CONSUMER FEDERATION OF AMERICA

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## **FDA DISDAINS PUBLIC OPPOSITION; PROMOTES ANIMAL CLONING STATEMENT OF CONSUMER FEDERATION'S CAROL TUCKER FOREMAN**

The Food and Drug Administration today announced it intends to allow cloned milk and meat in the food supply, imposing these products on a public that opposes cloning technology and does not want to consume cloned foods.

The Gallup Research Organization reports that over 60 percent of Americans think animal cloning is immoral. Other respected independent polls report consumers declare they will not knowingly eat the products even after FDA approves them. Both FDA and the cloning industry are aware that consumers won't knowingly buy cloned foods. The FDA therefore has okayed selling the products without identifying labels, preventing consumers from choosing not to purchase and use cloned foods.

CFA urges consumers who oppose production and sale of milk and meat from cloned animals to make their views known. Write to the FDA and tell them to reverse this anti-consumer action. Write to your members of Congress urging them to put a stop to FDA's efforts to sell cloned animals. Tell your supermarket manager that you don't want to eat cloned milk and meat and ask them not to sell these products.

The FDA has been criticized in recent years for making political decisions about drug safety. The agency and cloners insist that today's decision is based solely on science and if cloned foods are safe they must be accepted. This convenient fiction does not serve the public interest.

The decision to take a drug is entirely voluntary and is made because an individual believes he or she will benefit and the benefit will outweigh any risk involved. Prescription drugs require approval of a license physician. The physician and package inserts provide detailed information on side effects.

While the FDA must insist that food companies sell only products that are safe for human consumption surely Congress never intended that the FDA insist that consumers eat a food just because it is safe. Putting cloned milk and meat on the market with no identifying label information eliminates the option to avoid the products.

The FDA has strained to encourage cloning animals. Three years ago, the Agency declared they were safe for humans and animals but published no data to support their position. Recently the Agency published its risk assessment. The risk assessment acknowledges that cloning results in larger numbers of miscarriages and deformed fetuses than other assisted reproductive technologies. The Agency, however, has chosen to ignore such defects as Large Offspring Syndrome because it is not unique to cloning. The government ignores the fact that more animals suffer pain, deformity and disease. Our government, in effect, says it is okay to increase the number of suffering animals as long as they don't suffer in new ways.

There are no consumer benefits from this questionable technology. Cloning will not produce safer or cheaper milk and meat. Having cloned cows produce more milk won't reduce milk prices. U.S. farmers produce more milk than we drink and the government is required to buy the surplus. Since 1999, dairy support programs have cost taxpayers over \$5 billion.

The FDA's efforts to help a few cloning companies enables those who aspire to clone humans. The laboratory techniques used to clone animals will advance the ability to clone humans. This first decision to advance animal biotechnology raises ethical issues beyond the FDA's expertise. 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 discussion, including ethicists and religious leaders, to consider the wisdom of creating cloned and transgenic animals. The President should halt further FDA action on cloning and set in motion a process for beginning this broader discussion.

Consumer Federation of America, founded in 1968, is an organization representing over 320 consumer interest organizations including local state and national consumer advocacy groups, consumer cooperatives and trade unions. The combined membership of CFA's organizations is over 50 million Americans.