



Would you feed animal waste to your dog or cat?

Probably not. It's dirty, disgusting and intuitively just seems wrong. Unfortunately, not all animals are so lucky. In areas of the United States where large cattle and poultry operations coexist, poultry waste (or, more accurately, "poultry litter") is routinely fed to cows. It can contain disease-causing bacteria, antibiotics, toxic heavy metals, feed ingredients normally prohibited for cattle, and even foreign objects such as dead rodents, rocks, nails and glass. Surprisingly, this unhealthy and inhumane practice is legal and poorly monitored — creating unacceptable risks to human and animal health. The chart below illustrates the different health problems that this dangerous practice may cause. In addition, due to their direct exposure to poultry litter, cattle are at additional risk from unexpected drug interactions and toxicity from heavy metals. Please visit www.filthyfeed.org to learn about how you can take action and make a difference in the lives of these farm animals.

CATTLE

HUMANS

Mad Cow Disease: Poultry litter contains brain and spinal cord tissue from dead cows, which is added to the feed as a protein source for the birds. Prions, the infective agents for Mad Cow Disease, can be found in this tissue which is ultimately fed back to cattle.

Fatal Neurological Diseases

Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD): Litter feeding can potentially spread the human form of Mad Cow disease (vCJD) as humans eat contaminated meat. Both diseases are slowly progressive, fatal, and affect the central nervous system.

Botulism and other diseases: Outbreaks of botulism have been reported in cattle fed poultry litter. Botulism is caused by a very toxic bacterium and leads to severe cases of paralysis and even death. There are numerous other types of disease-causing bacteria present in poultry litter, as well as fungi and viruses.

Microbial Illness

Foodborne illnesses: The manure in poultry litter contains disease-causing bacteria, including highly virulent strains of Salmonella. These bacteria pose risks to the humans who consume contaminated meat. Seventy-six million Americans contract a foodborne illness each year, according to Centers for Disease Control estimates.

Antibiotic resistant bacteria can cause serious infections in animals. Antibiotic use on livestock farms leads to increased resistance in bacteria in farm environments, farm animals, and in food. These resistant 'super bugs' make it more difficult for veterinarians to treat sick cows.

Antibiotic Resistance

Antibiotic resistance is a major public health concern. Antibiotic resistant bacteria from the farm can be transferred to humans through contaminated food, water, and infected farm workers. Resistant infections are harder to treat and increasingly lethal.