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NCBA Statement on the Merck Animal Health Five-Step Plan to Ensure Responsible Beef

DENVER (Aug. 13, 2013) The [National Cattlemen's Beef Association](#) (NCBA) commends Merck Animal Health for taking meaningful action to address questions about the impact of Zilmax on animal welfare. Americas farmers and ranchers take animal care very seriously and support Merck's efforts to ensure that Zilmax can be used responsibly to raise beef without compromising the health and well-being of cattle.

Beta-agonists, like Zilmax, are FDA-approved feed additives that, when added to feed in small amounts at a specific time in their lives, help cattle make the most of the food they eat resulting in more lean muscle instead of fat. Extensive research shows that beta-agonists are metabolized quickly by cattle so they are not stored in the body and therefore are not present in the meat. Beta-agonists are approved for use in the United States, Canada, Australia and two dozen other countries across the developed world.

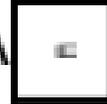
Cattlemen and women believe in making decisions about the use of animal health products like beta-agonists based on science, not speculation. At this time, there is no scientific basis for saying the use of beta-agonists caused the animal welfare concerns cited by Tyson in their decision to stop buying cattle fed Zilmax.

However, when concerns about the use of beta-agonists and cattle well-being surfaced in sporadic anecdotal reports, NCBA convened the world's top animal welfare experts, including Dr. Temple Grandin, to review the science and compare it to real-life observations. Over the past several months we have reviewed numerous scientific studies, gathered input from cattle feeders using the products, and sought to understand any possible correlation between the use of beta-agonists and reported animal welfare issues.

Our goal is to fully understand how the use of these products impacts animal welfare in real-life conditions. If this process determines the current use of beta-agonists is compromising animal welfare, we will take appropriate action to ensure that every animal raised for food receives the proper care it deserves.

The five-step plan announced by Merck today will accelerate this process while ensuring that every feedyard worker handling Zilmax is properly trained and certified to use the product. In committing to retrain and recertify every customer using Zilmax they are going above and beyond what is required to ensure their product is used responsibly.

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The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) has represented America's cattle producers since 1898, preserving the heritage and strength of the industry through education and public policy. As the largest association of cattle producers, NCBA works to create new markets and increase demand for beef. Efforts are made possible through membership contributions. To join, contact NCBA at 1-866-BEEF-USA  or membership@beef.org.

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