



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE

LESTER SPELL, JR., D.V.M.
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE – May 1, 2007

For Immediate Release

Contact: Andy Prosser, Director, Market Development and Public Relations
(601)-359-1158 or cell (601)-573-4896
Email: andy@mdac.state.ms.us

Illegal Antibiotics Found In Chinese Catfish

Today, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce, Lester Spell, put a “Stop-Sale Order” on some imported Chinese catfish in Mississippi grocery stores. This action was taken in accordance with the Retail Food Sanitation Law due to adulteration from banned antibiotics. Laboratory tests have confirmed the presence of ciprofloxacin and enrofloxacin. These are in the fluoroquinolones drug family. The catfish were being sold in the following grocery stores: Save-A-Lot in Pontotoc and Houston, Sunflower Food Store in Quitman, and Aultman’s Super Value in Forest.

“Consumers have the right to know if the food they are eating contains illegal drugs. The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce has a “no-tolerance” policy on banned antibiotics in food items,” Spell said. “Currently, all samples of the foreign catfish tested by the Department of Agriculture and Commerce have shown the presence of a banned substance, and similar laboratory findings have recently been reported in Alabama.”

Spell explained, “Our authority is limited to retail grocery stores. We will continue testing for illegal substances and initiate fines for violations that are found. There is the possibility that these same adulterated fish are being offered to customers at hospitals, public schools, nursing homes, and public restaurants.”

Penalties under the Retail Food Sanitation Law include placing the adulterated products off sale and the possible imposition of an administrative fine of up to \$500.00 for the first violation and up to \$1,000.00 for each subsequent violation.

-###-