

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.C.R. 25
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DIGEST

Imports of seafood from countries that use substances in aquaculture such as chloramphenicol, nitrofurans, and other veterinary drugs banned for such use in the United States pose potential threats to United States consumers. The State of Texas is concerned about the use of certain antibiotics and other banned veterinary drugs in shrimp imported from outside of the United States for consumption in the State of Texas. Chloramphenicol, a potent antibiotic, can cause severe toxic effects in humans, including hypoplastic anemia, which is usually irreversible and fatal. Because of such human health impacts, chloramphenicol, nitrofurans, and similar veterinary drugs are not approved for use in food-producing animals in the United States; and

Other countries, including Thailand, Vietnam, and China, have been found to use these drugs in the aquaculture of shrimp and other seafood. The United States imports over 400,000 metric tons of shrimp annually, and Thailand, Vietnam, and China are the largest, second largest, and fifth largest exporter of shrimp to the United States, respectively. On detection of chloramphenicol in certain shipments of seafood from China and other countries through the use of testing protocols that can detect such substances to 0.3 parts per billion, the European Union and Canada severely restricted imports of shrimp and other food from these countries in 2002.

The federal Food and Drug Administration inspects only two percent of all seafood imports into the United States and uses a testing procedure that cannot detect the presence of chloramphenicol below one part per billion. Although the federal Food and Drug Administration tests of imported food did not detect chloramphenicol in shrimp imported from China and other countries in 2002, independent testing performed by or for Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas detected chloramphenicol in samples of imported shrimp from those countries at levels harmful to human health. The denial of entry to the European Union and Canada of contaminated shrimp and other products will likely redirect those contaminated products to the United States.

PURPOSE

S.C.R. 25 submits the following resolutions:

That the 78th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby express concern about the presence of chloramphenicol, nitrofurans, and other banned veterinary drugs in imported shrimp, the potential adverse impact on the safety of the food supply, and the resultant risk to human health.

That the 78th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby call for immediate and focused actions by the United States government to improve the enforcement of food import restrictions on seafood imports containing chloramphenicol, nitrofurans, and other banned veterinary drugs in order to ensure the safety of the food supply, and to protect consumers in the United States and, in particular, in Texas.