



Rep. Louise M. Slaughter

Chairwoman, House Committee on Rules

Representing New York's 28th District

P R E S S R E L E A S E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA CONTACT

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Slaughter Fights to Keep Antibiotics Effective, Reduce Unnecessary Use in Animals

Slaughter Reintroduces the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today said we must take action to limit the overuse of antibiotics in animals so these life-saving drugs remain effective in the treatment of human illnesses.

Today Slaughter is reintroducing H.R. 965 the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act. Her legislation would limit the use of seven classes of antibiotics currently used to treat animals, most of which are already healthy, and preserve their use for humans.

“Antibiotic resistance is a major public health crisis, and yet antibiotics are used regularly and with little oversight in agriculture. As a microbiologist, I cannot stress the urgency of

this problem enough so today I'm proud to reintroduce the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act," said Slaughter. "When we go to the grocery store to pick up dinner, we should be able to buy our food without worrying that eating it will expose our family to potentially deadly bacteria that will no longer respond to our medical treatments. Unless we act now, we will unwittingly be permitting animals to serve as incubators for resistant bacteria."

Last week, [Slaughter was featured on MSNBC](#) where she highlighted the potential public health crisis.

A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE

Many of the antibiotics used in agriculture as animal feed additives are also used to treat humans, including tetracyclines, sulfonamides, penicillins, macrolides, aminoglycosides, chloramphenicols, and streptogramins. These classes of antibiotics are critical to our treatment of potentially fatal human diseases. Tetracyclines, for example, are used to treat people potentially exposed to anthrax. Macrolides and sulfonamides are used to prevent secondary infections in patients with AIDS and to treat pneumonia in HIV-infected patients. Penicillins are used to treat infections ranging from strep throat to meningitis.

Overuse of these classes of antibiotics is contributing to evolving bacteria, like MRSA that leaves its victims untreatable by existing antibiotics.

Kim Madison-Howland of Enid, Oklahoma understands this first hand.

"As a former feed technician at a factory hog farm in Enid, Oklahoma, I have seen the consequences of antibiotics' overuse firsthand," said Madison-Howland. **"In 2008, both my husband and daughter contracted MRSA. It took multiple rounds of antibiotics to save my husband from this bacteria and my daughter was also able to fight the infection. When I approached the farm's management about testing the hogs for antibiotic resistance, they acted as though they were unaware of the connection between the overuse of antibiotics and MRSA. The lack of regulation allows these farms to overuse and misuse life-saving medications and it's making people sick – this practice must be stopped now."**

Every year, two million Americans acquire bacterial infections during their hospital stay, and 90,000 will die from them. Tragically, 70 percent of their infections will be resistant to the drugs commonly used to treat them.

"While we're giving antibiotics to pigs and chickens, we're allowing people to die. If anyone believes that antibiotic resistance isn't a problem, consider the \$16 to \$26 billion that's added into the cost of our health care system each year going to treat bacteria our antibiotics are ill-equipped to fight," said Slaughter.

Every time you use antibiotics, they become less effective -- risking the lives and safety of humans who rely on those same antibiotics.

KEEPING ANIMALS HEALTHY

Last week, Slaughter released an alarming statistic she had confirmed with the Food and Drug Administration: 80 percent of the antibiotics used in the United States are given not to humans, but to animals.

"Make no mistake, this bill would in no way infringe upon the use of these drugs to treat a sick animal. It simply proscribes their non-therapeutic use," said Slaughter. **"If an animal is sick, then by all means we should make them well, but the routine use of antibiotics on healthy animals in order to promote growth is dangerous. It would be like a mother giving their son or daughter antibiotics every morning in their Cheerios. We're wasting our precious antibiotics."**

CREATING A TRADE ADVANTAGE FOR AMERICAN MEAT AND POULTRY

The overuse of antibiotics isn't only a human health issue; it is equally an economic issue. ,

Nations around the world including those of the European Union, New Zealand, Thailand, and Korea all have either banned or will begin banning the use of antibiotics for the purpose of growth promotion in animal feed. Under World Trade Organization rules, trading partners who implement this ban will have the right to refuse imports that do not meet this standard. In essence, if the United States does not conduct similar restrictions, and continues to allow non-therapeutic use of antibiotics in livestock, there may be major trade and economic implications for American farmers.

Denmark banned the use of antibiotics in healthy animals only to see meat quality improve and more global opportunities for their products. Since the peak of antibiotic usage in agriculture in 1992, antimicrobial usage in Denmark per kilogram of pig produced

has dropped by more than 50 percent and Danish swine production has increased 47 percent.

In short, eliminating non-therapeutic usage of antibiotics helped position Denmark's agricultural industry globally.

“Denmark’s own Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries consider their restrictions on antibiotic use to be a success and their swine production has dramatically increased. I believe American meat and poultry should enjoy that same competitive advantage,” said Slaughter.

A COALITION OF SUPPORT

PAMTA enjoys a broad coalition of support from over 300 organizations in the scientific and medical community. Statements of support are included below.

“It is time for Congress to stand with scientists, the World Health Organization, the American Medical Association, and the National Academy of Sciences and do something to address the spread of resistant bacteria,” said Slaughter. **“We cannot afford for our medicines to become obsolete.”**

In addition to this legislation Slaughter is also continuing ongoing work with the Obama Administration to take all steps possible to end the overuse of antibiotics, and preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics for the treatment of human disease.

Slaughter is a microbiologist with a Masters Degree in public health. For more on her work to protect public health, [click here](#).

INCLUDED BELOW

- **What the Experts Say:** Statements of support from leading public health groups
- **What the Numbers Say:** Key statistics outlining the public health threat of overusing antibiotics
- **What You Can Do:** Actions to take to protect you and your family

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WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

American Academy of Pediatrics



“Our nation needs to battle the rise of microbes resistant to antibiotics on all fronts,” stated O. Marion Burton, MD FAAP, President of the American Academy of Pediatrics. “Pediatricians are working hard to reduce inappropriate prescriptions, but that alone won’t solve the problem of antimicrobial resistance. The use of low levels of important antibiotics in animals to promote growth must be curbed because it contributes to the rise of resistant organisms.”

Union of Concerned Scientists



“The indiscriminant use of antibiotics by livestock producers, veterinarians and physicians is rendering antibiotics, the miracle drugs of the 20th century, ineffective,” said Margaret Mellon, director of the UCS Food and Environment Program. “Rep. Slaughter’s legislation creates necessary safeguards against this public health threat from the livestock industry, and we urge Congress to support it.”

Keep Antibiotics Working Coalition



“Keep Antibiotics Working (KAW) applauds Representative Louise Slaughter (D-NY) for introducing the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act,” said Richard Wood, Keep Antibiotics Working Chair. “This vital legislation is needed to protect Americans from increasingly dangerous bacteria that contaminate our food supply. These “superbugs” have become resistant to more antibiotics, thereby posing an

Center for Science in the Public Interest



longstanding leadership on this issue.”

important step in protecting consumers from dangerous, antibiotic-resistant pathogens in our food, which results from the overuse of antibiotics on the farms,” said Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest. “We applaud Rep. Slaughter for her

The Humane Society of the United States



n-therapeutic purposes – to keep animals from getting sick in overcrowded, stressful, often unsanitary conditions on factory farms and feedlots, and to artificially speed their growth – threatens to ruin the effectiveness of these drugs for treating sick people and sick animals,” said Michael Markarian, chief operating officer for The Humane Society of the United States. “We are grateful to Representative Slaughter for her leadership on this important issue, and we urge Congress and the FDA to act quickly to address this reckless practice that endangers public health and only serves as a crutch to maintain inhumane conditions in industrial agribusiness.”

WHAT THE NUMBERS SAY

- Congresswoman Slaughter has recently confirmed with the US Food and Drug Administration an alarming statistic: 80 percent of all antibacterial drugs used in the United States are used not on humans but on animals, while only 20 percent of antibiotics are used to address human health.
- A *New England Journal of Medicine* study conducted in Washington, DC found that 20 percent of the meat sampled was contaminated with Salmonella and 84 percent of those bacteria were resistant to antibiotics used in human medicine and animal agriculture.
- Every year, two million Americans acquire bacterial infections during their hospital stay, and 90,000 will die from them. 70

percent of their infections will be resistant to the drugs commonly used to treat them.

- The cost of untreatable infections to our health care system is astronomical. Resistant bacterial infections increase health care costs by \$16-26 billion each year.

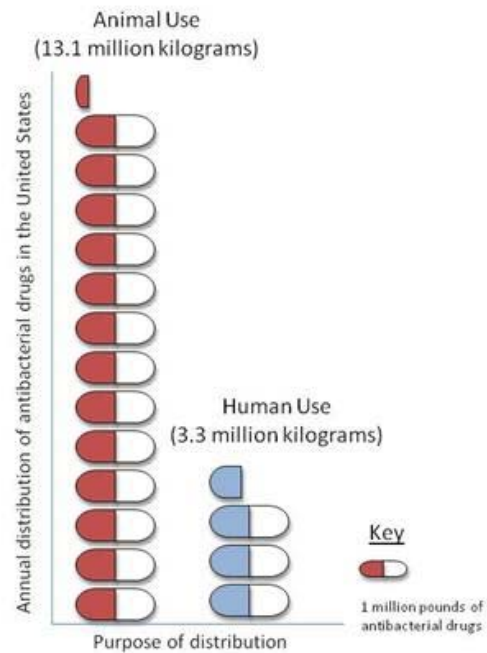
Antibacterial Drug Use in the United States

Rep. Louise Slaughter has confirmed new findings with the US Food and Drug Administration regarding the use of antibacterial drugs in the United States.

It was previously known that 13.1 million kilograms of antibacterial drugs were distributed in 2009 for use on animals.

Now Rep. Slaughter has confirmed that 3.3 million kilograms of antibacterial drugs were distributed in 2009 for human use.

That means 80% of all antibacterial drugs in the United States are being distributed for use on animals, not to protect human health.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Most importantly, we need this legislation to become law. Ineffective antibiotics are a threat to us all. Call you member of Congress at (202) 224-3121 and encourage them to support H.R. 965

Until all of our meat is antibiotic-free, the threat of antibiotic-resistant bacteria and superbugs remain a threat to all of us. There are, however, some meats and poultry available in many local grocery stores that, according to their labels, contain limited antibiotics. Congresswoman Slaughter has compiled the following list.*

This list is based upon self-reported data, and claims by each company have not been independently verified. However, we hope it serves as a starting point for finding antibiotic-free options for you and your family. We encourage you to print this guide and bring it with you the next time you go shopping. Enjoy!

Wegmans	Wegmans' Says	More Information
"Feel Good About Your Food" Brand	"Food You Feel Good About products taste great—naturally! The easy-to-spot bright yellow banner on the package signals a great-tasting item that is also part of a natural lifestyle. Specifically, Food You Feel Good About means... fresh meats are from animals not given antibiotics, hormones or animal by-products."	http://www.wegmans.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/CategoryDisplay?storeId=10052&identifier=CATEGORY_2121
Tops Markets	Tops Markets Says	More Information
"All Natural Antibiotic-Free" brand	"No added hormones or antibiotics"	http://www.topsmarkets.com/departments/pages/Meat_Slas?token.S=8FET9R7F98D0778P7f727DE5jGhN6L530A21F2 249141 1103071633
New Seasons	New Seasons Says	More Information
"Home Grown" Brand	"...all of our fresh meat products are vegetarian fed and grown without the use of sub-therapeutic antibiotics or growth hormones."	http://www.newseasonsmarket.com/dynamicContent.aspx?loc=49&subloc=1&menuId=826&mc=491
Safeway/Vons	Safeway/Vons Says	More Information
"O-Organic" Brand	"USDA-Certified Organic"*	http://www.safeway.com/IFL/Grocery/TopCategoriesDisplay?identifier=OOOOrganics
Vons	Vons Says	More Information
"Open Nature" Brand	"Raised without antibiotics"	http://www.vons.com/IFL/Grocery/Open-Nature#iframeTop
Whole Foods	Whole Foods Says	More Information
All Meat Available at Meat Counter	"...our standards prohibit animal byproducts in the animal's feed and both antibiotics and added hormones."	http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/meat/index.php

Giant	Giant Says	More Information
Natures Promise Produce	“Nature’s Promise™ Natural beef, chicken and pork are all natural, contain no growth hormones or antibiotics, and the animals are fed a vegetarian diet. There’s nothing artificial about them . . . just lots of great flavor!”	http://www.giantfoodstores.com/shareddev/sharedcontent/OurStores/Departments/Meat/natprommeats.cfm
Kroger’s	Kroger’s Says	More Information
“Private Selection Organic” Brand	“Looking for healthier ideas for your family’s dinner? Try Private Selection® Organic Chicken – it contains no preservatives or antibiotics.”	http://www.kroger.com/in_store/corporate_brands/Pages/private_selection_organics.aspx

* This list is based upon self-reported data, and claims by each company have not been independently verified. The only certified products that don’t use antibiotics in the production of livestock are USDA certified organic products. All **USDA Certified Organic products** “come from animals that are given no antibiotics or growth hormones.” If we have missed a product, please feel free to call our office at (202) 225 – 3615.

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