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Media contact: Zach Goldberg at 202-478-6171, zgoldberg@mrss.com

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**KEEP CEPHALOSPORIN ANTIBIOTICS WORKING:
COALITION URGES FDA TO REISSUE BAN ON
EXTRALABEL USE OF DRUG**

***CEPHALOSPORINS CRITICAL TO TREATING SERIOUS
SALMONELLA INFECTIONS***

A broad coalition of health, consumer, agricultural, and science groups has written Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Margaret Hamburg urging her to immediately prohibit the extralabel use of cephalosporin antibiotics in food producing animals. Since 1994, the FDA has allowed veterinarians to use antibiotics for a number of other purposes in these animals once there is an FDA approved use on the label. For example, most chicken hatcheries in the U.S. inject eggs with extralabel antibiotics, even though these uses are not approved. Science has shown these uses create antibiotic resistant bacteria in the chickens.

The FDA first published a withdrawal order for the extralabel uses of cephalosporins in food producing animals in July 2008. It was a specific response to science showing that livestock use of these critically important drugs was threatening their effectiveness in treating serious *Salmonella* infections, including in children where cephalosporins are the treatment of choice. Unfortunately, the FDA withdrew its ban in November 2008, just weeks before it was to become finalized.

Nearly three years later, despite FDA assurances that it intends to reissue the order, no action has been taken. Cephalosporins continue to be used in eggs and elsewhere. In addition to Keep Antibiotics Working, 21 groups signed the letter, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the American Public Health Association, the Infectious Diseases Society of America, Catholic Healthcare West, and the Pew Charitable Trusts.

As the coalition writes in its letter: "There is clear evidence that the widespread extra-label use of these drugs in food-producing animals contributes to the spread of cephalosporin-resistant organisms that limit the effectiveness of these critically important drugs for both human and animal health."

Calling an extralabel prohibition on the drugs “warranted and past due,” the coalition calls on the FDA “to reject any further delays and to reissue the prohibition on extra-label use of cephalosporins in food-producing animals.”

The past few years have seen outbreaks of beef-borne *Salmonella* caused by microbes resistant to the cephalosporin antibiotics, which continue to be used in an extralabel fashion in animal feed. The FDA’s original order to ban the extralabel use of cephalosporins came after routine surveillance showed that cephalosporin resistance in *Salmonella* had risen rapidly over the last decade, putting at risk the effectiveness of the drugs for treatment of serious infections in humans.

The Keep Antibiotics Working (KAW) coalition worked with the American Academy of Pediatrics and Pew Charitable Trusts to organize the letter to the FDA. Keep Antibiotics Working is a coalition of health, consumer, agricultural, environmental, humane, and other advocacy groups with more than eleven million supporters, dedicated to the preservation of antibiotics for use in human and animal medicine.

In addition to pressuring the FDA on the extralabel ban, KAW is urging Congress to adopt the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA). This legislation would require the FDA to review key antibiotics used in animal agriculture for purposes other than to treat sick animals, and determine whether such use puts public health at risk by contributing to increased resistance. PAMTA would require the agency, in a timely manner, to withdraw approvals for any drugs whose non-therapeutic use cannot be shown to be safe.

The full letter to the FDA is attached.

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