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## KEEP ANTIBIOTICS WORKING APPLAUDS REP. SLAUGHTER FOR INTRODUCING VITAL ANTIBIOTICS LEGISLATION

### *Needed Legislation Would Improve Food Safety and Protect Public Health*

Washington, D.C. - Keep Antibiotics Working (KAW) applauds Representative Louise Slaughter (D-NY) for introducing the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act. 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 ever-rising threat to public health.

The bill also helps American farmers’ ability to export and ensure the leadership of the United States in world food production. Trade partners are increasingly questioning America’s overuse of routine antibiotics in raising pigs, beef cattle and poultry for meat.

America’s security is threatened as never before by antibiotic resistant “superbugs,” as these bacteria have become increasingly impervious to our dwindling supply of antibiotics. Health and agriculture officials across the federal government agree that the enormous use of antibiotics in agriculture – much of it for unnecessary purposes – is an important contributor to the rise of antibiotic resistance.

The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act requires that antibiotics given in feed or water to animals meet current Food and Drug Administration safety standards related to the spread of dangerous resistant pathogens through food. The legislation is needed because these drugs, which are often fed to healthy animals to speed growth, were approved before the problem of antibiotic resistance was understood and before FDA created new safety standards in 2003 for drugs given to animals. The FDA has long held concerns about the use of antibiotics in livestock, but has found its own procedures too onerous for timely action. The current legislation is designed to make it easier for FDA to withdraw from the market drugs they find to be creating a public health problem.

The legislation is limited in that it only covers drugs that are used in humans as well as animals. It also does not affect the ability of veterinarians to use drugs to treat sick animals.

Many of our competitors in global markets have already taken steps to reduce antibiotic use in their production systems. The US may soon be restricted from certain global markets because of our failure to live up to internationally accepted food safety standards with respect to dangerous resistant bugs in the food we export.

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