

National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA)
National Chicken Council (NCC)
National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF)
National Pork Producers Council (NPPC)
National Turkey Federation (NTF)
American Meat Institute (AMI)
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Congressional Members, Livestock Groups Hold Educational Briefings on Antibiotics

WASHINGTON (Feb. 23, 2010) – Today, livestock and poultry groups hosted educational briefings on Capitol Hill to share the facts about the importance of tools like antibiotics in raising healthy food animals. The informational sessions were co-hosted by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association through beef checkoff funding, the National Chicken Council, National Pork Producers Council, National Milk Producers Federation, National Turkey Federation, American Meat Institute and National Meat Association.

Today's briefings were held in cooperation with U.S. Reps. David Scott (D-GA), Randy Neugebauer (R-TX), Zack Space (D-OH) and Roy Blunt (R-MO) and by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA). Top livestock and poultry health experts from across the country presented information to attendees.

"Prompt and judicious use of efficacious antibiotics is critical for the successful treatment and, at times, control of specific bacterial diseases in cattle. Certain FDA-approved antibiotics also enable us to significantly improve the efficiency of beef production," said Dr. Guy Loneragan, an epidemiologist and associate professor at West Texas A&M University, and presenter at today's briefings. "Maintaining access to FDA-approved safe and effective technologies, including animal health products, helps ensure both the health and resource efficiency of U.S. herds and flocks."

In addition to stringent federal regulations, responsible-use programs have been developed specific to feed, livestock and poultry organizations to give feed companies and producers specific guidelines and assistance on the safe and proper use of antibiotics in health management systems.

"We use antibiotics judiciously and responsibly to protect the health of our herds and to produce safe pork," said Craig Rowles, DVM. "We know that a ban on antibiotics, like the one in Denmark, will have adverse affects on our pigs, will raise the cost of production and will *not* provide a benefit to public health."

Despite the unsubstantiated allegations by activist groups, there is no conclusive scientific evidence that shows the use of antibiotics on farms contributes significantly to an increase in antibiotic resistance in humans. In fact, a growing body of evidence shows just the opposite; namely, the responsible, professional use of these products keeps animals healthy and enhances animal welfare while not contributing to resistance.

"Taking FDA-approved animal drugs off the market would leave farmers and veterinarians with very limited options for preventing and controlling disease in livestock and poultry, which would have serious repercussions for animal health and preventing foodborne disease, with the strong likelihood that there would be no improvement in human health," said Dr. Timothy Cummings, clinical poultry professor for the Department of Pathobiology and Population Medicine at Mississippi State University. "It's absolutely vital

that any decisions about the care of animals and the safety of our food be based on sound science rather than unsubstantiated concerns.”

According to Dr. Leon Weaver, a veterinarian and dairy farmer from Montpelier, Ohio: “The U.S. dairy industry conducts more than 3.3 million tests each year on all milk entering dairy plants to ensure that antibiotics are kept out of the milk supply. According to the most recent U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) data, less than one tanker in 3,800 tests positive for any animal drug residues, including antibiotics. In those rare cases, any milk that tests positive is disposed of immediately and does not get into the food supply.

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