KEEP ANTIBIOTICS WORKING

The Campaign to End Antibiotic Overuse

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House Passes Animal Drug Bill after Drug Industry Blocks Efforts to Preserve Effectiveness of Antibiotics

KAW Urges Senate to Include Provisions to Protect Public Health

Washington, D.C. – Today the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Animal Drug User Fee Act (ADUFA) with weak public health provisions requiring the collection of sales data on antibiotics. The animal drug industry and a number of livestock groups were successful in blocking stronger public health provisions urged by Keep Antibiotics Working (KAW) — a national coalition of health, consumer, progressive agricultural, environmental, humane, and other advocacy groups with more than ten million supporters.

"While we welcome the inclusion of antimicrobial data collection provisions in the House version of ADUFA and applaud Representatives Henry Waxman (D-CA), Frank Pallone (D-NJ), and Jim Matheson (D-UT) for their leadership on this issue, the House bill fails to curb the overuse of antibiotics that poses an urgent threat to public health and the future of medicine," said Margaret Mellon, Senior Scientist at the Union of Concerned Scientists.

The Senate, which is expected to take up ADUFA soon, must include stronger public health provisions that require the FDA to reevaluate the safety of antibiotics that were approved years ago as feed additives for farm animals that are not sick - before anyone was thinking about the problem of antibiotic resistance. Such provisions would direct the FDA to pay attention to what happens *after* animal drugs are on the market, just as Congress did last year in the user fee legislation for human pharmaceuticals.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization have identified antibiotic resistance as the most urgent public health risk we face. Antibiotics lose their effectiveness when they are overused and bacteria develop resistance to them. Many essential antibiotics are routinely laced into feed at industrial farms in order to keep animals in overcrowded, highly stressful, and unsanitary conditions. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has done little to address this problem.

"The Senate should not pass ADUFA without drug reevaluation provisions" said Dr. David Wallinga, Director of the Food and Health Program at the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. "It is time for our legislators to ensure that FDA puts our public health first."