

**KEEP  
ANTIBIOTICS  
WORKING.com**

*The Campaign to End Antibiotic Overuse*

**For Immediate  
Release:  
July 28, 2003**

**Contact: Matt Bormet 202-478-6189, 301-537-1093 (c) or  
mbormet@mrss.com**

## **Bipartisan Legislation to Phase Out Use of Antibiotics as Feed Additives Introduced in Senate and House**

### ***Effort to Fight Antibiotic Resistance Applauded by Keep Antibiotics Working Campaign***

**Washington, DC** - The Keep Antibiotics Working (KAW) coalition today praised the introduction of bipartisan legislation to phase out the use of medically important antibiotics as feed additives for farm animals. Senators Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME) introduced S. 1460, along with original cosponsors Jack Reed (D-RI), and Jeff Bingaman (D-NM). Representatives Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD) introduced H.R. 2932 with Henry Waxman (D-CA), Louise Slaughter (D-NY) and Tom Allen (D-ME) as original cosponsors. More than 300 organizations, including the American Medical Association and a wide range of other health, consumer, environmental, agricultural, and humane organizations, have called on Congress to enact legislation to phase out this wasteful use of antibiotics.

"This legislation is essential in the face of mounting scientific evidence that the overuse of antibiotics in animal agriculture promotes the rise of antibiotic-resistant bacteria that can sicken people," said Tamar Barlam, M.D. of the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

"Last month, McDonald's took an important step by telling its chicken suppliers to reduce their antibiotic use and by providing incentives for beef and pork suppliers to adopt similar measures. However, voluntary private sector initiatives to reduce antibiotic use in animal agriculture are limited in number and scope, and often difficult to verify. This legislation will ensure comprehensive reductions of antibiotic use by all livestock and poultry producers," stated Becky Goldberg of Environmental Defense, who worked closely with McDonald's on the company's new policy.

As estimated by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), 70 percent of all antibiotics and related drugs in this country are fed to chickens, cows and pigs to make them grow faster, or to compensate for overcrowded, stressful and unsanitary conditions on industrial-scale farms. According to Margaret Mellon, Ph.D. from UCS, more than half of those drugs are identical or related to antibiotics used in human medicine.

*The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act of 2003* phases out, over two years, the routine feeding to food animals of eight classes of antibiotics, but allows the continued use of antibiotics to treat sick animals and to prevent the spread of disease, when indicated. The legislation also requires producers of agricultural antibiotics to report data in order to help monitor usage and track resistance trends. It authorizes transition payments for farmers and encourages research-and-development to aid them in identifying ways to successfully phase out routine antibiotic use.

"Introduction of these bills on a bipartisan basis in both the Senate and House represents a significant step forward in tackling this problem. By reducing the inappropriate use of antibiotics in animal agriculture, we will help ensure these drugs remain effective for sick people and animals in the future," said David Wallinga, M.D. of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. "The KAW coalition commends the Senators and Representatives for their public health leadership."

The Keep Antibiotics Working campaign ([www.KeepAntibioticsWorking.com](http://www.KeepAntibioticsWorking.com)) is a coalition of health, consumer, agricultural, environmental and other advocacy groups with more than nine million members dedicated to eliminating a major cause of antibiotic resistance-the inappropriate use of antibiotics in farm animals.

###