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Congressional Record May 23, 2006

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MS. SLAUGHTER

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment offered by Ms. *Slaughter*:

At the end of the bill, insert after the last section (preceding the short title) the following section:

SEC. 753. Of the total amount made available in title VI in the first undesignated paragraph under the heading "` *Food and Drug Administration-SALARIES AND EXPENSES*", \$1,000,000 is available to the Center for Veterinary Medicine for application review activities to assure the safety of animal drugs with respect to antimicrobial resistance, pursuant to section 512 of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, in addition to all other allocations for such purpose made from such total amount.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. *Slaughter*) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Chairman, I shall be very brief.

As a microbiologist as well as a Member of Congress, I have been very concerned for some time about the overuse of antibiotics and the rise of drug-resistant bacteria. So what we are asking today is just a sum of money, \$1 million, to be set aside from the FDA budget to begin to study the overuse of antibiotics in animals and using animals basically as incubators to breed the drug-resistant bacteria.

I think it is a matter of top concern. It has been labeled that by the CDC and the World Health Organization, which says it has become a crisis; so I am pleased to put this amendment forward today.

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Chairman, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

MR. BONILLA. Mr. Chairman, we have worked with the gentlewoman on this amendment, and I am happy to accept the amendment and would move it to a vote if the gentlewoman would agree.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I appreciate that very much, and thank you, sir.

- [Begin Insert]

Mr. Chairman, I rise today to address an issue that concerns me not just as a microbiologist, but as a mother and a grandmother as well.

Americans have a right to trust the safety of the food they eat and feed their families.

Today, that safety has been put in jeopardy by a new threat, one that is the unintended result of our own advancements.

The threat comes from antibiotic resistant bacteria.

We take antibiotics for granted in this country. Just over 60 years ago, a pneumonia diagnosis was a death sentence. A case of bacterial meningitis would have been hopeless.

With the introduction of antibiotics, however, we have been able to treat these, and many other, once fatal diseases.

Unfortunately, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have reported that the most significant human infections are becoming resistant to the antibiotics commonly used to treat them.

In fact, antibiotic resistance has been labeled a "top concern" by the CDC, and the World Health Organization has called the situation a crisis.

Resistant bacterial infections increase health care costs by 4 to 5 billion dollars each year.

Two million Americans acquire a bacterial infection annually during stays at hospitals. Seventy percent of the infections they contract are resistant to the drugs prescribed for treatment.

Salmonella infections, the cause of food poisoning, 1.4 million illnesses, and 500 deaths in America every year are increasingly resistant to the numerous drugs used against them.

And thirty-eight patients in American hospitals die every day as a result of diseases contracted during their stay that no longer respond to antibiotics.

While the overuse and misuse of antibiotics in humans is a factor contributing to this problem, it is not its only cause.

There are currently seven classes of antibiotics used in both animals and humans, including basic drugs like Penicillin.

In fact, 70 percent of all U.S. antibiotics are used by meat producers on their livestock for nontherapeutic purposes.

- [End Insert]

Unwittingly, we are permitting animals to serve as incubators for resistant bacteria.

And as a result, a parent on a trip to the grocery store could end up bringing home meat contaminated with diseases that will put their family's health at risk and prove difficult to treat.

In 2003, a National Academy of Sciences report stated that if we hope to make headway against this danger, we must reduce overuse of antibiotics not just in humans, but in animals and agriculture as well.

This huge and tremendously important task has fallen largely on the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine.

And yet, despite its position on the front lines of this fight, the CVM is ill-equipped to carry out its duties. It needs additional resources to review the drugs currently approved for animal use.

The amendment I am offering here today will give CVM the much needed boost necessary to do its job.

It will make available 1 million dollars from within its budget to make sure we have the drugs we need to treat bacterial infections.

With all of the new challenges modern medicine faces, we cannot allow a resurgence of ailments no longer seen as a source of concern.

Our failure to address this problem will result in a less secure, and less healthy, future for our children and grandchildren.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this common-sense amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. *Slaughter*).

The amendment was agreed to.