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**Keep Antibiotics Working Applauds Bon Appétit's New Policy to Require
Meat Suppliers to Reduce Routine Antibiotic Use**

Policy Stronger than that Adopted by McDonald's in June

Washington, DC – The Keep Antibiotics Working (KAW) coalition commended Bon Appétit's announcement today of a new ground-breaking purchasing policy that will help protect human health by reducing the use of key antibiotics in food animal production. By June 2004, Bon Appétit will only purchase chicken that has been produced without the routine use of medically important antibiotics. Bon Appétit will also apply a purchasing preference for meat, dairy products and seafood that have been produced with reduced amounts of antibiotics. Bon Appétit provides food services to 148 clients in 21 states, including major corporations and prominent universities.

"Antibiotic resistance is making it harder and harder – and sometimes impossible – to treat serious bacterial illnesses," said Tamar Barlam, MD, Director, Project on Antibiotic Resistance, Center for Science in the Public Interest. "We applaud Bon Appétit for recognizing that the inappropriate agricultural use of antibiotics contributes to antibiotic resistance, and for adopting a purchasing policy to help combat this emerging health crisis."

One of KAW's charter members, Environmental Defense, helped Bon Appétit develop the new policy. In June of 2003, McDonald's – the world's largest restaurant chain – announced a similar but less extensive policy, also developed in conjunction with Environmental Defense. The McDonald's policy targets use of medically important antibiotics as growth promoters, while Bon Appétit is also targeting use of such antibiotics for routine disease prevention in healthy animals since there are better ways to prevent disease, such as improving husbandry.

The Union of Concerned Scientists estimates that 70 percent of all antibiotics used in U.S. – nearly 25 million pounds annually – are fed to beef cattle, poultry and swine to make them grow slightly faster, and to prevent disease that would otherwise result from overcrowded, stressful and unsanitary conditions. Approximately half of those antibiotics are identical or similar to human drugs. This inappropriate use of antibiotics in farm animals breeds antibiotic-resistant bacteria that cause hard-to-treat infections in people.

"While Bon Appétit's poultry policy is definitely an important step forward, the purchasing preference for other meats and fish raised with fewer antibiotics is only a first step toward reducing antibiotic use in these sectors," said David Wallinga, MD, Antibiotic Resistance Project Director, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. "Congress still needs to pass legislation to make standards uniform across the meat and poultry industry, to address this needless squandering of antibiotics."

KAW has endorsed bipartisan bills (S.1460/H.R. 2932), introduced by Senators Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and Reps. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD), to phase out routine use of medically important antibiotics as feed additives for livestock and poultry. More than 300 groups, including the American Medical Association, have endorsed the bills.

KAW (www.KeepAntibioticsWorking.com) is a coalition of health, consumer, agricultural, environmental, humane and other advocacy groups with over 9 million members dedicated to phasing out the overuse of medically important antibiotics in livestock and poultry.

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