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**NEW GOVERNMENT REPORT FINDS FAILED OBAMA  
ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE TO ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE  
PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS**

***GAO Report: "Agencies Have Made Limited Progress Addressing Antibiotic  
Use in Animals"***

Washington, D.C. - A new multi-year [report](#) from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) finds that Obama Administration has adopted a voluntary approach to address the spread of antibiotic resistant coming from drug use on farms, but that FDA does not collect necessary data that would be needed to see if their approach actually was working. The report also found that steps taken so far to reduce the risk of antibiotic resistance could not be evaluated because none of the federal agencies involved collected the needed data.

According to Keep Antibiotics Working (KAW), the report underscores the need for strong regulatory and legislative action to combat the overuse of antibiotics in animal agriculture - an important cause of the increase in "superbug" infections coming from food. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) told the investigators that they had adopted the voluntary approach because they did not have sufficient resources to evaluate drugs approved before new standards were put in place in 2003.

"This report unfortunately reveals what we all already know: the federal government is not doing enough to protect our food supply and public health," said Richard Wood, Executive Director of the Food Animal Concerns Trust and Chair of KAW's Executive Committee. "The Obama Administration's voluntary approach to addressing this critical health problem depends on unlikely actions by industry rather than requiring the FDA to honor its mandate to protect public health."

Because of FDA's failure to evaluate the safety of older drugs and remove those found to be unsafe from the market, KAW supports the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA), bipartisan legislation that would address the shortcomings in the federal response. The bill would reduce antibiotic resistance by requiring manufacturers of antibiotics given to food animals to show that their drugs meet current

FDA standards. This legislation has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. Louise Slaughter (NY-28), who requested the GAO study in 2009.

Last week, public health and medical groups sent a letter to Congress documenting the [sound scientific evidence](#) that clearly demonstrates the contribution of animal agriculture to human antibiotic resistance. According to data released by the FDA in December 2010, 80 percent of antibiotic drugs in the United States were sold for use in food animals - most of them not to treat animal illness, but to promote slightly faster growth and to compensate for crowded, stressful, and unhygienic conditions at industrial-scale livestock and poultry facilities. Such use of antibiotics is referred to as “non-therapeutic” use, meaning they are not used for the treatment of illness. Many of the antibiotics fed to animals are the same as those we depend on for human medicine. They are given in low doses virtually every day of the animal's life - a recipe for developing “super bugs” - without so much as a veterinarian's prescription.

Currently, the FDA process for removing animal drugs from the market when they contribute to human antibiotic resistance is far too slow to keep pace with the rapid rate at which resistance is emerging. PAMTA would prohibit giving antibiotics to food animals for reasons other than disease treatment if the same or related drugs are also used in human medicine. If a drug company can show that their product is not creating a human health problem due to resistance, it will be exempt from the prohibition.

The GAO report comes on the heels of the outbreak and recall of Cargill turkey meat, which was contaminated with antibiotic-resistant *Salmonella*. The turkey was found to be resistant to ampicillin and tetracycline, two antibiotics the FDA has failed to protect for 34 years.

“The developments of the last few weeks - including the *Salmonella* outbreak and this new report - cry out for action to keep antibiotics out of animal feed,” said Steven Roach, Public Health Director of FACT and a leading member of KAW. “It is fair to ask exactly what it will take for the Obama Administration and Congress to protect our food supply and our public health.”

*Keep Antibiotics Working (KAW) is a coalition of health, consumer, agricultural, environmental, humane, and other advocacy groups, with more than 11 million supporters, dedicated to reducing the inappropriate use of antibiotics in livestock.*