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The Campaign to End Antibiotic Overuse

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New CDC Data on Antibiotic Resistance to Cipro Reinforces FDA's Proposed Ban on Bayer's Cipro-like Drug for Poultry

Advocacy Group Delivers 16,000 Letters to Bayer Urging New CEO to End Two-Year Battle Against FDA

Pittsburgh, PA - Citing new scientific data, the Keep Antibiotics Working campaign today hand delivered 16,000 letters from concerned citizens to the Bayer Corp. urging its new CEO, Dr. Attila Molnar, to end the company's two-year battle with the Food and Drug Administration over its proposed ban on Cipro-like drugs for use in poultry.

New preliminary data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) bolster the FDA's case that continued use of Bayer's Cipro-like fluoroquinolone antibiotic, Baytril, in poultry flocks is undercutting the effectiveness of Cipro against the most common cause of severe food poisoning, *Campylobacter* bacteria. FDA believes that people eating poultry treated with Baytril are at greater risk for contracting Cipro-resistant *Campylobacter*, which is a common contaminant on store-bought chicken. Cipro is a key drug in treating *Campylobacter* food poisoning, which causes an estimated 2 million illnesses and 100 deaths a year.

"This new CDC data show that antibiotic resistance to Cipro in treating the most common cause of severe food poisoning jumped from 14 to 19 percent last year and has increased four of the last five years," said Rebecca Goldberg, Ph.D., a Senior Scientist for Environmental Defense, as she delivered the 16,000 letters at Bayer's headquarters. "This new data give even greater urgency to the American Medical Association's recommendation that Bayer should stop fighting the FDA's proposed ban, and stop playing chicken with the public's health."

The new CDC data on *Campylobacter* resistance will be presented tomorrow at the National Antimicrobial [Antibiotic] Resistance Monitoring Systems 2002 Annual Scientific Meeting in Hilton Head Island, SC. Six of the top 19 U.S. poultry producers say they no longer use fluoroquinolones in chickens produced for human consumption. They include Tyson Foods (#1), Gold Kist (#2), ConAgra Poultry (#4), Perdue Farms (#5), Foster Farms (#9), and Claxton (#19).

"We call on Bayer to practice what it preaches in its slogan, 'Expertise With Responsibility,'" said Richard H. Michaels, MD, the former chief of Infectious Disease at the University of Pittsburgh's Children's Hospital. Michaels, also a member of the steering committee for the Pittsburgh area chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility, noted that the only other maker of fluoroquinolones for poultry, Abbott Laboratories, has respected the FDA proposed ban since it was issued in October 2000. "Bayer should follow Abbott's lead, drop its two-year challenge to the FDA's proposed ban and immediately pull Baytril from the poultry market."

Keep Antibiotics Working: The Campaign to End Antibiotic Overuse is a coalition of health, consumer,

agricultural, environmental, humane and other advocacy groups with over 9 million members dedicated to eliminating a major cause of antibiotic resistance: the inappropriate use of antibiotics in food animals.

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