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*The Campaign to End Antibiotic Overuse*

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## **Bayer Appeal Hearing on FDA's Proposed Ban on Cipro-like Drugs for Poultry Begins Today**

### ***Advocacy Group Cites Rise in Cipro Resistance and Industry Pledges as Grounds for FDA to Reject Appeal***

**Washington, DC** - As a U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Administrative Law Judge opens a hearing today on Bayer Corporation's appeal of FDA's proposal to ban use of Cipro-like drugs in poultry, *Keep Antibiotics Working* called on the FDA to reject the appeal and impose the ban. (Bayer's trade name for the drug in question is Baytril; Baytril is almost identical to the human-use antibiotic Cipro, and both are members of the fluoroquinolone class of antibiotics.)

"Bayer is acting irresponsibly by fighting FDA's proposed ban on using Cipro-like drugs in poultry," said Rebecca Goldberg, Ph.D., Senior Scientist with Environmental Defense. "Based on the scientific evidence that resistance to Cipro is worsening in bacteria that cause serious food poisoning, we urge the FDA to dismiss the Bayer appeal and implement the ban immediately."

"While numerous poultry producers and restaurant chains have declared that they will no longer use or buy poultry treated with Cipro-like drugs, Bayer refuses to live up to its own company slogan of 'Expertise with Responsibility,'" Goldberg added. In contrast to Bayer, Chicago-based Abbott Laboratories, the only other producer of Cipro-like drugs for poultry, immediately complied with the ban when it was first proposed in October 2000.

Materials already developed by FDA show that use of Baytril in poultry is reducing the effectiveness of Cipro in treating *Campylobacter*, the most common cause of severe bacterial food poisoning. Last November, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released statistics that show that resistance to Cipro in *Campylobacter* in humans has risen to 19 percent. Although Bayer is expected to claim that Baytril is critical for poultry production, that argument is undercut by the fact that six top poultry producers no longer use these drugs in chickens produced for human consumption. Those producers include Tyson Foods, Perdue Farms, ConAgra Poultry, Gold Kist, Wayne Farms, Foster Farms and Claxton. In addition, major restaurant chains, such as Dairy Queen, Dominoe's, Hardee's, McDonald's, Popeye's and Wendy's refuse to buy chicken treated with Cipro-like antibiotics.

"In October 2000, the FDA wisely proposed to ban use of Cipro-like drugs in poultry, an action supported by the American Medical Association and numerous other medical groups," said Tamar Barlam, MD, Director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest's Project on Antibiotic Resistance. "If Bayer is allowed to continue to market its Cipro-like drug for use in poultry, the effectiveness of Cipro for treating serious illness in humans may be compromised."

*Keep Antibiotics Working: The Campaign to End Antibiotics Overuse, is a coalition of health, consumer, agricultural, environmental and other advocacy groups, with over 9 million members, dedicated to*

*eliminating an important cause of antibiotic resistance—the inappropriate use of antibiotics in farm animals. For more information, visit [www.KeepAntibioticsWorking.com](http://www.KeepAntibioticsWorking.com).*