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KEEP ANTIBIOTICS WORKING COALITION PRAISES RULING UPHOLDING PROPOSED BAN OF CIPRO-LIKE DRUGS FOR POULTRY *Coalition Urges Bayer to Comply with Ban*

Washington, DC – The Keep Antibiotics Working (KAW) coalition praised the decision issued today by a U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Administrative Law Judge upholding the agency’s proposal to ban use of Cipro-like drugs in poultry. The drug in question, trade name “Baytril,” is made by Bayer Corp. and is almost identical to Cipro. Both are members of the fluoroquinolone class of antibiotics.

FDA showed that use of Baytril in poultry reduces the effectiveness of Cipro in treating *Campylobacter*, the most common cause of severe bacterial food poisoning. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that resistance to Cipro in *Campylobacter* in humans has recently risen to 19 percent; when Cipro-like drugs were first approved for use in poultry in 1995, such resistance was negligible. Although Bayer claimed that Baytril is critical for poultry production, that argument was undercut by the fact that six top poultry producers have announced that they no longer use these drugs in chickens produced for human consumption. Major chicken purchasers, including McDonald’s, have instructed their suppliers to stop using fluoroquinolones.

“Bayer should stop fighting the proposed ban, and immediately withdraw Baytril from the market with no further delaying tactics,” said David Wallinga, M.D., with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. “Today, nearly four years after the FDA first proposed to ban use of Cipro-like drugs in poultry, rates of Cipro resistance in bacteria that cause severe food poisoning are disturbingly high, and the science linking use of Baytril in poultry to such disease is stronger than ever,”

Chicago-based Abbott Laboratories, the only other producer of Cipro-like drugs for poultry, complied with the ban when it was first proposed in October 2000. In contrast, Bayer fought the proposed ban, delaying action for three years to date. FDA regulations allow Bayer to appeal the Administrative Law Judge’s decision to the FDA Commissioner, who would then have to review it before affirming or reversing the Administrative Law Judge’s decision. That process could take months or years, during which time Baytril would remain on the market.

“Bayer wanted a hearing and got it,” said Rebecca Goldberg, Ph.D., Senior Scientist with Environmental Defense. “Enough is enough. We call on Bayer to live up its slogan ‘Expertise with Responsibility,’ and voluntarily comply with the ban immediately to protect public health.”

Keep Antibiotics Working (www.KeepAntibioticsWorking.com) is a coalition of health, consumer, agricultural, environmental, humane and other advocacy groups with more than nine million members dedicated to eliminating a major cause of antibiotic resistance – the inappropriate use of antibiotics in farm animals.

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