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Waterkeeper Alliance

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Contact: Sean Crowley at 202-478-6128-w,
202-550-6524-c or scrowley@mrss.com

Keep Antibiotics Working Campaign Wins National PR Award

Chicago – *Keep Antibiotics Working: The Campaign to End Antibiotic Overuse* and its Washington, DC-based public affairs consulting firm, M+R Strategic Services, have won a 2005 Gold Magellan Award from the League of American Communications Professionals (LACP). Keep Antibiotics Working (KAW) is a coalition of health, consumer, agricultural, environmental, humane and other advocacy groups with more than nine million members whose primary goal is to help combat the antibiotic resistance crisis in human medicine by ending the overuse and misuse of antibiotics in animal agriculture. Current estimates indicate that use of medically important antibiotics as agricultural feed additives accounts for 70 percent of antibiotic use in the U.S. (see www.keepantibioticsworking.com).

KAW and M+R won a 2005 Gold Magellan Award in the Community Relations: Non-Profit/Charity/Foundation category. The 2005 Magellan Awards Competition drew an unprecedented number of submissions representing a broad range of industries and organizational sizes. Four hundred eighty-two entries were received, so competition was exceptionally tough (see www.lacp.com/2005magellan/competition.htm).

“Winners demonstrated a laser focus on communications grounded in creativity and passion, which ultimately helped message recipients understand and appreciate its relevance and importance,” said LACP Principal Tyson Heyn.

“It’s an honor for the Keep Antibiotics Working coalition to receive this award for our work on solving this important public health problem, the massive misuse and overuse of antibiotics in animal agriculture that is accelerating the antibiotics resistance crisis in human medicine,” said Richard Wood, chair of the KAW steering committee and executive director for the Chicago-based Food Animal Concerns Trust. “The League of American Communications Professionals’ recognition of our success with M+R’s help in educating policymakers and the public about this health crisis is a great bonus.”

During 2005, Keep Antibiotics Working helped generate more than 1,500 print, radio and TV stories, editorials, letters to the editor and op-eds, reaching a combined audience of more than 49 million people. Among the topics covered were:

- The Food and Drug Administration’s issuance of a final ban on the use of fluoroquinolone (Cipro-like) antibiotics in poultry, the first time ever that the FDA has banned the use of an agricultural drug because of antibiotic resistance concerns.

- Adoption of a policy by Compass USA, the nation's second-largest food service company, requiring its pork and poultry suppliers to end growth-promotion use of antibiotics that are important in human medicine. KAW member Environmental Defense helped Compass craft their policy.
- Adoption of a policy by Bon Appetit Management Company (BAMCO), a leading food-service corporation, to require its turkey suppliers to produce turkey without using antibiotics that are important in human medicine as feed additives. BAMCO's earlier policy, adopted in 2003, applied to chicken but not turkey.
- Petitioning FDA to ban use of medically important antibiotics as feed additives, on the ground that such use violates the specific safety criteria laid out in the agency's own regulatory Guidance. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association joined the formal Citizen Petition filed by KAW members Environmental Defense, Food Animals Concerns Trust, and the Union of Concerned Scientists.
- Successful implementation by McDonald's Corporation of the policy it adopted in 2003 requiring chicken suppliers to forgo use of medically important antibiotics as growth promoters.

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