Food Industry Survey Educates Consumers and Confirms the Urgent Need for Reform

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) today released findings from a survey regarding the routine use of antibiotics in food animals. In February, Slaughter sent a letter to over 60 fast food companies, meat producers, meat processors, and grocery store chains asking them to disclose their policies on antibiotic use in meat and poultry production. Today's findings reveal to consumers the extent to which antibiotics are used in the food they eat.

 "As Americans fire up their grills for the Fourth of July, my findings finally provide consumers with valuable information about the food they eat, and answer the question, 'what's in the beef?'" Slaughter said. "Through my survey, the food industry has provided us valuable information, and with that knowledge we must act. I urge consumers to consider today's findings when shopping, and I urge the FDA and my colleagues in Congress to strengthen our laws in order to fight the growing threat of superbugs. Until we do, the routine use of antibiotics will continue to breed antibiotic-resistant bacteria that threaten human health."

Rep. Slaughter analyzed responses to questions about antibiotic use in meat and poultry production. The survey found that while a small number of industry leaders provide antibiotic-free meat and poultry products, an overwhelming majority of food production companies routinely feed low-doses of antibiotics to healthy food-animals. Decades of research have shown that this kind of misuse leads to an increase in superbugs.

To view full survey results, and information about the survey, click here.

Companies such as Whole Foods, Chipotle Mexican Grill, Niman Ranch, Bell & Evans, Coleman Natural Foods, Ozark Mountain Pork, Applegate Farms, and Sweetgreen are leading examples of businesses that have succeeded without relying upon the routine use of antibiotics. According to survey findings, these companies provide a high degree of transparency into their food production processes, and do not use antibiotics on healthy animals.

Meanwhile, the majority of surveyed companies were found to routinely use antibiotics in food animals, both as a preventive health measure and to promote faster animal growth.

Specific company findings are listed below, and can be found here. More information, including responses from companies and the Congresswoman's original survey can be found here.

Rep. Slaughter is the author of the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA), which would end the routine use of antibiotics on healthy animals and curb the growing threat of superbugs. PAMTA would preserve the effectiveness of medically important antibiotics by phasing out the use of these drugs in healthy food-producing animals, while allowing their use for treatment of sick animals.

"Consumers want more information about whether antibiotics were used in producing the meat they buy," said Jean Halloran, Director of Food Policy Initiatives at Consumers Union, the policy arm of Consumer Reports, which recently published the report "Meat On Drugs." Halloran further remarked, "In our national survey, 86 percent of consumers said meat raised without antibiotics should be available in their local supermarket. Our secret shoppers visited 136 supermarkets in 23 states, and found wide differences among supermarkets as to whether they stocked meat and poultry raised without antibiotics. We need Congress to pass PAMTA to curb the overuse of antibiotics in animal feed and stop the spread of superbugs."

"Now more than ever consumers want to know how their food is produced and where it comes from," said Robert Kenner, who directed the 2009 documentary *Food, Inc.* and is now the Executive Director at FixFood, a nonprofit partner of the Meat Without Drugs campaign. "It's imperative that Congress pass PAMTA to keep factory farms from making us vulnerable to diseases that were once treatable. In the meantime, these companies have an important role to play in responding to consumer demand while looking out for the public health."

Based on Rep. Slaughter's survey, there are still large gaps in the information available to consumers. Today's survey findings add to consumer's ability to buy antibiotic-free food and use the power of their pocketbook to stop the growing threat of superbugs.

For more on PAMTA and Slaughter's work to address superbugs, click here.

Survey Key
Transparency
3 = Full Disclosure
2 - Some Questions Answered
1 = Minimal Disclosure
Policy
3 = Antibiotic-Free (Company provides only antibiotic-free meat and poultry products. Antibiotics are not used on healthy animals. Antibiotics are used ONLY for treatment of sick animals.)
2 = Moderate Antibiotic Use (Antibiotics used on healthy and sick animals for purposes other than growth promotion)
1 = Routine Antibiotic Use (Antibiotics used on healthy and sick animals for all purposes, including growth promotion)
Antibiotic-Free Options Available
*Information obtained from company website

Food Providers	Transparency	Policy	Options
Chipotle Mexican Grill	3	3	Y
Sweetgreen*	3	3	Y
Compass Group	3	2	Y
Panera	3	2	Y
Burger King	3	2	
Jack In the Box	3	1	
Chick-Fil-A	2	2	
CKE (Hardee's and Carl's Jr.)	2	2	
In-N-Out Burger	2	2	
McDonald's	2	2	
Wendy's*	2	2	
YUM! (KFC, Pizza Hut, Taco Bell)	2	2	
Applebees	2	1	
Arby's	2	1	
Au Bon Pain	2	1	Y
Starbucks	2	1	
Subway	2	1	
A&W Restaurants*	1	1	
Blimpie*	1	1	
Bojangles'*	1	1	
Domino's*	1	1	
Dunkin' Donuts*	1	1	
Five Guys*	1	1	
Panda Express*	1	1	
Popeyes*	1	1	
Roy Rogers*	1	1	
Sonic*	1	1	
Tim Hortons*	1	1	
White Castle*	1	1	
Z Burger*	1	1	

Grocery Stores & Supermarkets	Transparency	Policy	Options
Whole Foods*	3	3	Y
Safeway	3	1	Y
Wegmans	3	1	Y
Costco*	2	1	Y
Dean & Deluca*	2	1	Y
Kroger*	2	1	Y
Sam's Club*	2	1	Y
Stop & Shop	2	1	Y
Target	2	1	Y
Trader Joe's*	2	1	Y
Walmart*	2	1	Y

Producers & Processors	Transparency	Policy	Options
Applegate Farms	3	3	Y
Bell & Evans	3	3	Y
Coleman Natural Foods*	3	3	Y
Murray's Chicken	3	3	Y
Niman Ranch*	3	3	Y
Ozark Mountain Pork*	3	3	Y
National Beef	2	2	Y
Perdue*	2	2	
Smithfield	2	2	Y
Cargill	2	1	
Hormel	2	1	
Kraft Foods (Oscar Mayer)	2	1	
Pilgrims Pride	2	1	
Tyson	2	1	