

***Issues Statement as Increases in Antibiotic-Resistance Found on Retail Meat***

WASHINGTON – Today, Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-25) reacted to a new report from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration that reveals an increased threat of antibiotic-resistant disease. The newly-released NARMS Retail 2011 Report discovered alarming increases in antibiotic-resistant bacteria found on retail meats such as ground turkey and chicken- the same type of meat that is found in the refrigerators of American families.

**“We are standing on the brink of a public health catastrophe,” said Slaughter. “The threat of antibiotic-resistant disease is real, it is growing and those most at risk are our seniors and children. We can help stop this threat by drastically reducing the overuse of antibiotics in our food supply, and Congress should act swiftly to do so today.”**

On February 23, 2011, Slaughter confirmed with the FDA an alarming statistic: 80 percent of all antibiotics used in the United States are used not on humans but on food-animals, most of which are perfectly healthy. Each year more antibiotics are fed to food-animals in North Carolina than are given to all Americans. Thanks to this kind of misuse, antibiotic-resistant diseases now kill more Americans than HIV/AIDS.

The newly released NARMS Retail 2011 Report found significant increases in antibiotic-resistance among bacteria on retail meat. Fifty-one percent of bacteria found on ground turkey were resistant to ampicillin. Ampicillin is regularly used to illnesses such as such as ear infections, bladder infections, pneumonia, gonorrhea, and E. coli or salmonella infection.

Meanwhile, 49.1 percent of the bacteria *C. coli* found on tested meat samples were antibiotic-resistant, while 48.4 percent of the bacteria *C. jejuni* were resistant to antibiotics.

In some cases, researchers found bacteria resistant to multiple antibiotics. The report found that 50.3 percent of antibiotic-resistant bacteria found on ground turkey were resistant to three or more antibiotic classes.

Interestingly, no bacteria were found to be resistant to *vancomycin* and *linezolid*, which are two antibiotics **not** used in food animal production.

Rep. Slaughter is the author of the [Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act](#), legislation that will 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.

In addition to introducing legislation, Slaughter has called upon the FDA and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to take action to improve regulatory oversight, surveillance, and monitoring of food-animal production and antibiotic resistance. Last year, the Governmental Accounting Agency (GAO) released a report, which found that federal agencies have made limited progress in combating the growing threat of antibiotic resistance.

NARMS is a national public health surveillance system that tracks antimicrobial resistance in foodborne bacteria. NARMS is an ongoing collaboration between FDA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and State public health laboratories.

[To view the full report, click here.](#)