

On February 16, 2012, Rep. 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](#)

. Almost half of the companies replied to Rep. Slaughter's request, giving public health experts, legislators, and members of the American public insight into the use of antibiotics in food animals. The findings from Rep. Slaughter's survey are clear: there is an urgent need to change the practices of American food producers to ensure that antibiotics are used responsibly in the production of food animals.

What follows are top-line survey findings, links to original content, and additional resources. [To view the original letter from Rep. Slaughter to food companies, click here.](#)

Key Findings

1. A small number of companies are leading the effort to provide exclusively antibiotic-free meat and poultry products.

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 to produce the meat and poultry that they sell. According to survey findings, these companies provide a high degree of transparency regarding the food production practices that they or their suppliers employ and do not use antibiotics on healthy animals.

2. An overwhelming majority of companies regularly use antibiotics in food-animals as a preventive health measure and to promote faster animal growth.

Forty-four companies were found to use or purchase meat produced with a "moderate" or

"routine" amount of antibiotics. These companies frequently failed to provide details regarding their antibiotic use, and rely upon the regular use of antibiotics in the meat and poultry that they produce or purchase.

3. The law, as currently written, is failing to address the threat of superbugs

Based upon these findings, and the increasing evidence that ties antibiotic use in healthy animals to the growth of superbugs, it is clear that additional action must be taken by private industry, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Congress. This finding reaffirms the need for legislation such as the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA). Authored by Rep. Slaughter, 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.

About the Survey

Over the course of the survey, Rep. Slaughter was able to gather information regarding the use of antibiotics by 53 major food companies or their suppliers. [31 companies responded directly to Rep. Slaughter](#). Additional web-based research resulted in relevant information for another 22 companies.

Together, these companies were rated based upon two criteria: transparency and antibiotic use policy. With regards to transparency, companies were placed into 1 of 3 categories:

1. Full disclosure- Company provided detailed responses to each [question posed by Rep. Slaughter](#)
2. Some questions answered- Company provided answers to some, but not all, [questions posed by Rep. Slaughter](#)
3. Minimal disclosure- Company provided little, if any detail, to the [questions posed by Rep. Slaughter](#)

Companies were also rated on their policies regarding antibiotic use. They were placed into one of the following three categories:

1. Antibiotic-Free Only- 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- Company uses antibiotics on healthy and sick animals for purposes other than growth promotion
3. Routine Antibiotic Use- Company uses antibiotics on healthy and sick animals for all purposes, including growth promotion

In addition to these ratings, Slaughter noted where companies provide antibiotic-free options for consumers. View the charts below in order to learn more about the practices of specific food industries. [To download a master document of all original responses, 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

"What's in the Beef?" Survey Results

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	

"What's in the Beef?" Survey Results

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	

Below are additional resources regarding antibiotics and the role of the overuse of antibiotics. [Swine Antibiotic Resistance: A National Action Plan](#) (2014) from the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) [Antibiotic Resistance: A National Action Plan](#) (2014) from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) [Antibiotic Resistance: A National Action Plan](#) (2014) from the National Chicken Council (NCC) [Antibiotic Resistance: A National Action Plan](#) (2014) from the National Turkey Federation (NTF) [Antibiotic Resistance: A National Action Plan](#) (2014) from the National Lamb Producers Association (NLPA) [Antibiotic Resistance: A National Action Plan](#) (2014) from the National Sheep Producers Council (NSPC) [Antibiotic Resistance: A National Action Plan](#) (2014) from the National Bison Producers Association (NBPA) [Antibiotic Resistance: A National Action Plan](#) (2014) from the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWF) [Antibiotic Resistance: A National Action Plan](#) (2014) from the National Wild Game Producers Association (NWGPA) [Antibiotic Resistance: A National Action Plan](#) (2014) from the National Wild Game Producers Association (NWGPA) [Antibiotic Resistance: A National Action Plan](#) (2014) from the National Wild Game Producers Association (NWGPA)