This morning I was honored to join 150 scientists and research physicians, along with 50 meat, poultry and dairy producers to call on the FDA and Congress to end the imprudent use of antibiotics in animal agriculture. Routine use of antibiotics on healthy animals is unnecessary and it endangers human health. In February, the Translational Genomics Research Institute published a study that conclusively links the routine use of antibiotics in food-animal production to deadly, antibiotic-resistant MRSA that can infect humans. This is just the latest piece of evidence that demands our attention. The threat of antibiotic-resistant disease is real, and it is immediate, and we must take action.

The opposition will say that routine antibiotic use is necessary for the "health of the animals." But as many of the farmers I spoke with today will testify, raising animals in a humane and sustainable manner means you don't have to feed those animals antibiotics on a daily basis.

The United States needs a comprehensive strategy to preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics for human use. This is why I introduced PAMTA, The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act. PAMTA would preserve the effecitveness of medically important antibiotics by phasing out the use of these drugs on healthy animals, while allowing for their use to treat sick animals.

To be clear, this bill would in no way infringe upon the use of these drugs to treat a sick animal. If an animal is sick, then by all means we should make it well. But the routine use of antibiotics on healthy animals in order to promote growth is an immediate danger to public health, and it must stop.

Right now, PAMTA has 90 cosponsors in the House. The Senate bill, introduced by my colleague, Senator Feinstein, has 7 cosponsors. As you know, we have a hard time getting anything done in Congress right now, but I'm committed to seeing this through. I spent years upon years to pass the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act, and half a decade to pass the STOCK Act. I'm not giving up.

Today, scientists and agriculture producers called on the FDA and Congress to end the imprudent use of antibiotics in animal agriculture. To read a statment from scientists, click here. To read the statement from meat, poultry and dairy producers, click here.