

Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-N.Y.) said that Russia's decision to ban imports of American pork and poultry should be a "wake-up call" to U.S. farmers. Slaughter's comments came in the wake of recent announcements that Russia would block imports of U.S. poultry beginning this month because of concerns that poultry here is frequently dunked in chlorine to kill germs before it is sold to consumers. Russia also recently announced plans to block imports of U.S. pork because of a dispute over standards for antibiotic residue.

Slaughter said she would call upon Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to immediately revisit current laws with respect to livestock safety in order to ensure that American farmers are not further harmed by poorly considered rules.

"These decisions by Russia should be a wake-up call that we can no longer continue to count on exporting livestock of dubious safety to other countries," Slaughter said. "The overuse of antibiotics has potentially serious trade implications as other countries decide that the risks are not worth it. And using chlorine to kill bacteria in our food supply is not a sane way to operate. We must move quickly to limit the non-therapeutic use of antibiotics in our farm animals so that our farm industry is not hurt even more."

A December report from the Congressional Research Service confirms Slaughter's worries, "Growing concerns about antimicrobial resistance have caused some U.S. trading partners and competitors including the EU, New Zealand, and South Korea to implement restrictions and prohibitions on the use of certain antimicrobials for subtherapeutic or nontherapeutic purposes in animal production."

Slaughter has long been a leader on food safety issues. Last March, Slaughter introduced the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act, legislation that would phase out seven classes of antibiotics that are currently approved for non-therapeutic use in animal agriculture. This critical legislation is designed to ensure that we preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics for the treatment of human diseases. [Click here for more on Slaughter's work on PAMTA.](#)