

House Rules Committee Chairwoman Louise Slaughter issued the following statement, after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration this morning released a proposal for a gradual limiting of antibiotic usage. The FDA proposal will be available for public comment for 60 days.

“I am glad that the FDA is acknowledging the devastating public health implications of antibiotic overuse in agriculture, and plans to take action to reduce this usage. The FDA has proposed good steps, but they have not gone far enough or moved fast enough. We cannot wait any longer,” Slaughter said. “Scientists and public health experts have known for many years that these drugs were being overused by farmers. Testimony in my committee a year ago revealed that the only thing accomplished by pumping antibiotics into healthy animals is to dilute the effectiveness of our medicines.”

Legislation that would place limits on the overuse of antibiotics was introduced by Rep. Slaughter. Her bill, H.R. 1549, the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act, would phase out the non-therapeutic use of specific classes of antibiotics in food-producing animals, while permitting their continued therapeutic use in sick animals. It has been endorsed by more than 350 organizations around the country, including the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Union of Concerned Scientists.