

*Slaughter Requested Study in 2009 as Part of Her Effort to Limit Looming Public Health Threat; Study released just days after second recall in a month of turkey meat containing antibiotic-resistant bacteria*

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today reiterated her call to limit the overuse of antibiotics in farm animals after the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a study acknowledging that federal agencies are not doing enough to combat the growing threat of antibiotic resistant bacteria to public health.

[The study, released today by Slaughter's office, is titled, "Agencies Have Made Limited Progress Addressing Antibiotic Use in Animals,"](#) and was commissioned at Slaughter's urging in 2009.

In it, the GAO found that the federal agencies responsible for addressing the overuse of antibiotics in food animal production "lack crucial details" in data to do their job. The study also found significant holes in the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) voluntary guideline system for antibiotic use on farms that could allow industry to skirt around responsible use.

"This study reveals how unprepared we are to deal with the growing threat of antibiotic resistant bacteria and the American public should be outraged," said Slaughter. "We have had two massive meat recalls just in the last month showing salmonella strains resistant to antibiotics. Clearly there is an increasing public health threat here and we need more than 'limited progress' – we need concrete solutions like those proposed in my bill. I very much appreciate the GAO for conducting this multi-year-long study and think it is necessary that their findings be looked at carefully."

On Sunday, Cargill announced a second recall of ground turkey on the heels of an August recall, due to antibiotic resistant turkey products that have killed one and infected at least 107 people nationwide.

A 2001 interagency plan detailed the data necessary to address antibiotic resistance. Ten years

later, however, the GAO says that although some data is being collected, "these data lack crucial details identified by the 2001 interagency plan as essential for agencies to examine trends and understand" antibiotic resistance.

The GAO also found that the FDA's response to the increasing overuse of antibiotic in food animals was far from adequate. "Instead, FDA has proposed a voluntary strategy to mitigate this risk but has neither developed a plan nor collected the 'purpose of use' data necessary to measure the effectiveness of its strategy," stated the report.

Earlier this year, Slaughter confirmed with the FDA that 80 percent of all antibacterial drugs used in the United States are used not on humans but on animals.

Slaughter is a long-time leader in food safety and the only microbiologist in Congress. She is the author of the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA), legislation that would ensure that we preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics for the treatment of human disease.

[For more on PAMTA and her work to protect public health, click here.](#)

[For a copy of the GAO report requested by Slaughter, click here.](#)