

"We need to get our head out of the sand and start taking public health advice from scientists rather than industry lobbyists."

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee and the only microbiologist in Congress, today responded to the announcement by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that it is withdrawing proposals to remove approvals for two antibiotics used in livestock feed. The announcement comes a week after the U.S. Department of Agriculture recalled meat contaminated with antibiotic-resistant Salmonella.

"Every year, 100,000 Americans die from bacterial infections acquired in the hospital and this is just the tip of the iceberg," said Slaughter. "Seventy percent of these infections are resistant to drugs commonly used to treat them. I wonder how many lives could have been saved if these proposals were adopted in 1977 as they should have been. We need to get our head out of the sand and start taking public health advice from scientists rather than industry lobbyists."

The FDA initially proposed withdrawing approval for penicillins and tetracyclines used in livestock feed in 1977 due to the scientific evidence indicating that feeding these antibiotics to animals for purposes other than disease treatment creates an unacceptable risk to the public. According to the World Health Organization, scientific studies have shown that antibiotic use in animals results in "infections that would not have otherwise occurred, increased frequency of treatment failures (in some cases death) and increased severity of infections."

Since 2007, Congresswoman Slaughter has been the author of legislation titled The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA), designed to ensure that we preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics for the treatment of human disease. More information on PAMTA, including a list of the more than 300 organizations who have endorsed Slaughter's legislation [is available here](#).

This week, Slaughter authored an Op-Ed in the Huffington Post titled "What's in Your Christmas Ham?," which [is available here](#).

Last week, [Slaughter hosted a briefing](#) where farmers and successful businesses extolled the benefits of tapping into the growing domestic and international demand for antibiotic-free meat. She was joined by an impressive panel made up of Chipotle CEO Steve Ells, Chairman of one of the nation's fastest growing restaurant companies, along with Stephen McDonnell, CEO of award-winning Applegate Farms, and Paul Willis, President of Niman Ranch, a network of over 676 independent sustainable farms.