

Slaughter has confirmed with the US Food and Drug Administration troubling numbers about antibiotic use

Rochester, NY – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) has confirmed with the US Food and Drug Administration an alarming statistic: 80 percent of all antibacterial drugs used in the United States are used not on humans but on animals, many of whom are already healthy, while only 20 percent of antibiotics are used to address human health. This is an increase from the previous estimates provided by the Union of Concerned Scientists, and the first time the FDA has provided these data.

"Today I confirmed an alarming number that should shock all of us: 4 out of 5 antibiotics sold in this country were for use on animals, many of whom are not even sick, and that is dangerous to all of us," said Slaughter. "We already knew that 13.1 million kilograms of antibacterial drugs were sold for use on animals in 2009. Recently, I was able to confirm with the FDA that only 3.3 million kilograms were sold each year for human use in 2009. Using these figures, I have determined that 80 percent of all antibacterial drugs are dedicated to use on animals."

"We know that the widespread use of antibiotics on healthy animals is contributing to the growth of bacteria resistance to the drugs we use to treat humans. This poses particular risk to seniors and children. These new numbers make it clear that we need to take common sense steps to reduce the needless use of antibiotics in healthy animals, and protect human beings. In this Congress, I will once again introduce legislation to reduce the use of antibacterial drugs on healthy animals. I hope members of both parties will join me in this effort because protecting human health should not be a partisan issue."

Since 2009, 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. Once again this year, Slaughter will introduce PAMTA for consideration by Congress. She is also continuing ongoing work with the Obama Administration to take all steps possible to end the overuse of antibiotics, and preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics for the treatment of human disease.

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