Maryland PIRG
Standing Up To Powerful Interests

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SB 607: Agriculture - Cattle, Swine, and Poultry - Use of Antimicrobial Drugs
Position: FAVORABLE

Maryland PIRG is a state based, citizen funded public interest advocacy organization with grassroots members across the state and a student funded, student directed chapter at the University of Maryland College Park. For forty years we've stood up to powerful interests whenever they threaten our health and safety, our financial security, or our right to fully participate in our democratic society.

Antibiotics are a cornerstone of modern medicine. In order to protect these lifesaving drugs for future generations we must stop the outdated routine use of antibiotics on industrial farms on animals that are not sick which is contributing to the growing threat of antibiotic resistant bacteria.

In 2014, Maryland PIRG released a poll with Consumers Union that found that 9 out of 10 doctors are concerned about the industry practice of using antibiotics on animals for growth promotion and disease prevention.[1]

A 2016 Gonzales Poll, commissioned by NRDC found that statewide, 68% or Marylanders polled favor state legislation to restrict the regular use of medically important antibiotics and reserve them for use on sick animals, including a majority of Democrats, Republicans, and Independent voters.[2]

These numbers were strong regionally too:
- 68% support each on Eastern Shore, Southern Maryland, DC Suburbs, and Baltimore Suburbs;
- 73% support in Baltimore City;
- 61% support in Western Maryland.

For the last year, Maryland PIRG canvass staff have been in communities knocking on tens of thousands of doors to educate the public about antibiotic resistance and collect thousands of signatures to support our campaign to stop antibiotic overuse on animals raised for meat.

Many local and chain restaurant owners have or want to stop the routine use of antibiotics in the meat they serve. For example, chains like Panera Bread, Chipotle, Shake Shack, Elevation Burger and Chick fil A have moved away from routine antibiotics or have committed to do so. Maryland's own Perdue Farms has stopped the use of routine antibiotics in raising chickens.[3]
In the last year Maryland PIRG, along with PIRG organization across the country, helped convince McDonald's to phase out the routine use of medically important antibiotics in their chicken, a few weeks

[1] Prescription for Change: Antibiotics Use in Humans and Animals Amidst Growing Concerns of Doctors, Maryland PIRG and Consumers Union, October 23, 2014, downloaded from http://marylandpirg.org/reports/mdp/prescription-change
[2] NRDC Survey Results, January 2016: http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/mwu/Maryland%20ABX%20Poll%20Results.pdf
[3] Perdue Farms Antibiotics Position Statement, http://perduefarms.com/News_Room/Statements_and_Comments/details.asp?id=545&title=Antibiotics%20Position%20Statement

later their producer, Tyson, followed suit. This fall, we helped convince Subway to commit to phase out routine antibiotics from all their poultry, beef, and pork. This market shift shows that it is economically possible to stop routine antibiotic use. It is time to make this practice mandatory.

FAQ's:

1. **Isn't this redundant considering the FDA guidance #213?** Guidance from the FDA does not stop the routine use of antibiotics. The guidance stops the routine use for "growth promotion," but allows for routine use for "disease prevention." Allowing this routine use is a threat to public health and the future of antibiotics. You can read more about this in reports from NRDC and Maryland PIRG.[4] [5]
2. **Don't we need to give antibiotics to animals to prevent food-borne diseases?** We fully support giving antibiotics to animals that are sick or to a portion of a flock to prevent an outbreak disease is present. This is important for the health of the animals and safety of the meat. We do not support routine "disease prevention" use of antibiotics. Giving routine doses of antibiotics does not make meat safer. Denmark and the Netherlands have stopped this practice which has not led to food safety problems. For more information on meat and food-borne disease see resources from the CDC and Consumer Reports.[6] [7]

BACKGROUND: Antibiotics are a miracle of modern medicine. They are essential to keeping people alive and well, whether it's fighting pneumonia, or dealing with infections that set in from scrapes or after chemotherapy and major surgeries. But fueled by the misuse and overuse of the drugs, bacteria are becoming "superbugs," resistant to antibiotics, and the medical community is warning us that we may return to an era where common infections are again life threatening.

In the United States, 70% of human use antibiotics are sold for use on farms, and not to treat sick animals, but instead they are put in the everyday feed of healthy animals to make them grow fatter faster, and to compensate for unhygienic living conditions. The Who's Who of public health groups have cautioned against using antibiotics in this manner - including the World Health Organization, American Medical Association, American Public Health Association, the Infectious Disease Society of America, and American Academy of Family Physicians, to name a few.

In 2013 and 2014, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) released detailed studies on bacterial resistance. The CDC report found at least two million Americans are sickened by drug-resistant bacteria each year, 23,000 fatally. Additionally, the WHO report cited estimations that 'superbug' infections resulted in eight million additional days in hospitals, which costs between $21 and $34 billion each year alone.

The use of antibiotics in livestock production on this massive scale accelerates the development of drug-resistant bacteria. Once replicated in animals, resistant bacteria can make their way to humans through contaminated food, airborne dust blowing off farms, and water and soil polluted with contaminated feces.

A growing body of evidence documents this phenomenon, including:

- A U.S. study in 2012 linked *E. coli* in poultry and E. coli infections in humans.[8]

[4] Weak Medicine: Why the FDA's Guidelines are Inadequate to Curb Antibiotic Resistance and Protect Public Health, Maryland PIRG Foundation, Sept. 2014 http://www.marylandpirg.org/reports/mdf/weak-medicine

[5] FDA's Efforts Fail to End Misuse of Livestock Antibiotics, NRDC http://www.nrdc.org/food/subway/files/fda-guidance-213.pdf

[6] Making the World Safe From Superbugs, Consumer Reports, http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/health/making-the-world-safe-from-superbugs/index.htm

[7] Antibiotic resistance in foodborne germs is an ongoing threat, CDC http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2015/a0609-antibiotic-resistance.html

[8] Food-borne origins of *Escherichia coli* causing extraintestinal infections. A.R. Manges, J.R. Johnson. *Clinical Infectious Diseases.* 2012. 55(5): 712-719

- A 2007 study in Minnesota and Wisconsin found that antibiotic resistant *E. coli* in people was likely to have come from poultry.[9]
- An April 1999 study by the Government Accountability Office concluded that resistant strains of three microorganisms that cause food-borne illness or disease in humans—*Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, and *E. coli*—are linked to antibiotic use in animals.[10]
- According to documents obtained by the Natural Resources Defense Council, between 2001 and 2010, the FDA reviewed the safety of thirty of its antibiotics approved for use in animal feed. The agency rated 18 of these drugs as posing a 'high risk' to human health because they could lead to exposure of humans to superbugs through the food chain.[11]

Increasing drug resistance is all the more urgent due to a lag in the development of new antibiotics that can work against bacteria resistant to current antibiotics. According to the Pew Charitable Trusts, "Many major pharmaceutical companies have limited their investments in this antibiotic innovation, and only two new classes of these substances have reached the market in 30 years."[12]

WHAT YOU CAN DO: To combat the spread of bacterial drug-resistance, antibiotics for food animal use should be used sparingly, as outlined in **HB829/SB607**.

And this can be done: The U.S. Department of Agriculture acknowledged in a January 2009 report that the presumed economic and production benefits of antibiotics in animal feed can be largely achieved by improved cleanliness of animal houses and improved testing for diseases.

Action to curb unnecessary antibiotic use on industrial farms is growing in Maryland and across the globe. The world's leading pork exporter, Denmark, instituted a process in 1999 that banned the use of antibiotics in animal feed for growth promotion and for many types of disease prevention. Since, antibiotic use in Denmark has dropped by 50% without a loss in productivity.

In 2008 the Netherlands also instituted rules that required a 70% reduction in antibiotic use in livestock production. According to a 2013 report published by the Dutch Central Veterinary Institute, clear indications exist that the occurrence of antimicrobial resistance in animals is decreasing the Netherlands.[13]

On the heels of the release of World Health Organization report, in June 2014, the Drug Controller General and Agriculture Ministry of India also directed state governments across the country to stop the use of antibiotics in animal feed.

CONCLUSION: If antibiotics stop working we could return to an era when a minor scrape or cut might be life threatening and surgery is virtually impossible. We can save antibiotics, but we must act now. It's time to protect public health by stopping the routine use of medically important antibiotics in animal production.

We respectfully request a favorable report on SB607.

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[9] J.R. Johnson et al., June 2007, "Antimicrobial DrugResistant Escherichia coli from Humans and Poultry Products, Minnesota and Wisconsin, 2002-2004," Emerging Infectious Diseases.

[10] United States General Accounting Office, *Food Safety: The Agricultural Use of Antibiotics and its Implications for Human Health*, April 1999: p 1

[11] Natural Resources Defense Council, Playing Chicken with Antibiotics, downloaded from http://www.nrdc.org/food/saving-antibiotics/antibiotic-feed-FDA-documents.asp 6/20/2014

[12] Pew Charitable Trusts, "Antibiotics and Innovation," http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/projects/antibiotics-and-innovation; downloaded 6/27/2014

[13] Central Veterinary Institute et al, MARAN 2013: Monitoring of Antimicrobial Resistance and Antibiotic Usage in Animals in the Netherlands in 2012; June 2013 p 7, downloaded from http://www.nieuweoogst.nu/scripts/edoris/edoris.dll?tem=LTO_PDF_VIEW&doc_id=67602de , downloaded July 7 2014.

Appendix 1

The following fast-casual restaurants have taken action to transition away from serving meat raised with antibiotics.

B7: Beef
B. Good: Chicken, Hamburgers
BGR: Hamburgers
Boloco: Beef, Chicken (dark meat only)
BurgerFi: Hamburgers, Hot Dogs
Cosi: Chicken
Chick-fil-A: Chicken (within 5 years)
Chipotle: Chicken, Beef, Pork
Chop't: Chicken, Beef
Carl's Jr.: The All-Natural Burger
Elevation Burger: Hamburgers, Chicken
EpicBurger: Beef
Farmer Boys: All-Natural line of Hamburgers
Flying Star Cafe: Chicken
GoodTimes: Beef, Chicken
Hannah's Bretzel: All meats
Illegal Pete's: All meats
Jason's Deli: All meats
McDonald's: Chicken (within 2 years)
Noodles & Co.: Pork, Chicken (in CO only)
Panera: Chicken, Roasted Turkey Sausage, Ham (in salads and sandwiches)
Pret-a-Manger: Chicken, Beef, Pork
Protein Bar: Chicken
Red Robin: Hamburgers
Roti: Chicken
Shake Foundation: Hamburgers
Shake Shack: Beef
Shophouse: All meats
Soppraffina Marketcaffe: All meats
Subway: Chicken (2016), Turkey (2017), Beef and Prok (2025)
Sweet Green: All proteins
Tasty Burger: Beef
The Counter: Hamburgers
The Grove Cafe: All meat
UBurger: Hamburgers
Yasmine's Cafe: All meat