

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2023

The Honorable Andy Harris
Chair
Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, Food and Drug
Administration and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop, Jr.
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, Food and Drug
Administration and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Harris and Ranking Member Bishop:

As you begin preparing your Fiscal Year 2024 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Programs appropriations bill, we respectfully request \$20 million in additional funding for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to quickly advance its antibiotic stewardship efforts, particularly with respect to stewardship in meat production.

Nearly two-thirds of the medically important antibiotics sold in the U.S. go to meat production. While the FDA has taken modest steps to restrict antibiotic use in agriculture—including barring the use of medically important antibiotics for growth promotion and putting remaining uses of these drugs under veterinary supervision—sales of medically important antibiotics to meat producers have increased by 8 percent since 2017.

The additional funding must include \$2 million specifically for the agency to prepare a report on appropriate national use reduction targets for U.S. antibiotics sold for use in food-producing animals.

One in three medically important antibiotic products currently sold for use in livestock feed or drinking water in the United States do not carry a meaningful duration limit. That means there is no clear definition on the product label that limits the amount of time they are supposed to be used. Such uses do not comply with the FDA's own definition of antibiotic stewardship. Yet meat producers can and do continue these uses to compensate for poor animal husbandry conditions that fail to promote animal health. Since 2016 FDA has acknowledged this as a priority problem, but the agency has failed to issue a draft or final guidance to put duration limits on all medically important antibiotics.

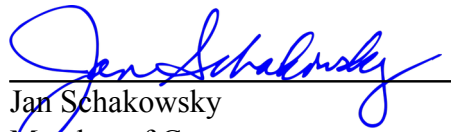
The longer an antibiotic is used, the greater the risk that bacteria will develop resistance to it. As a result, one important way to prevent antibiotics from being overused in veterinary settings is to ensure there are defined limits on the amount of time that feed antibiotics can be given to these animals. In addition to requesting the \$20 million in additional funding from the Committee, the signers urge the FDA to issue a final guidance on duration limits by the end of 2025. This final guidance should prioritize public health and require that any new durations are consistent with the FDA's existing guidance on assessing the risk of using antimicrobial drugs in food-producing animals.

The signers also urge the FDA by the close of FY24 to release an updated five-year plan on veterinary antibiotic stewardship, for 2024-2029. The plan should state that its primary goal is to reduce overall use of medically important antibiotics in meat production over the five-year period. To ensure improved stewardship, the updated


plan should include the FDA's intent that all product labels will carry meaningful and clearly defined duration limits no later than the end of 2028.

Experience in other countries suggests the establishment of national antibiotic reduction targets and tracking and reporting changes in antibiotic use (typically based on changes in weight-adjusted sales) over time can be an effective combination to bring about stronger antibiotic stewardship in meat production. We believe an increase in funding for antibiotic stewardship in veterinary settings will help FDA to implement needed changes without delay. Thank you for your leadership and attention to our request.

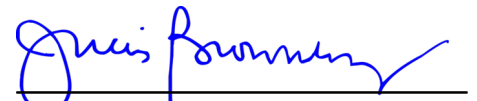
Sincerely,



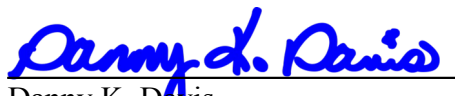
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



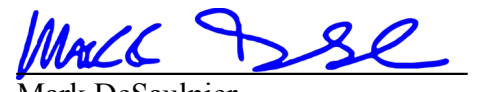
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
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Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



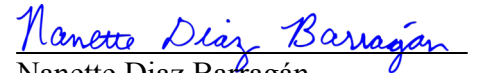
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



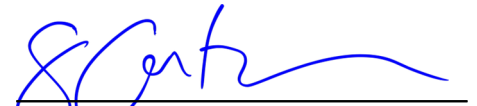
Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress



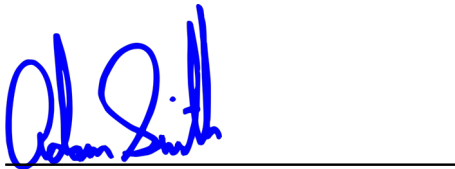
Nanette Diaz Barragán
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