

Minnesota Public Health Association Policy Resolution
Encouraging Foodstuffs Produced Without the Use of Medically Important Antibiotics, May 2015

WHEREAS, recent reports from the White House and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirm the public health threat from growing antibiotic resistance;^{1,2}

WHEREAS the CDC, World Health Organization and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) all acknowledge that antibiotic use and overuse in food animal production contributes to the human threat from antibiotic resistance;^{3,4,5}

WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association passed a Policy Statement “Addressing the Problem of Bacterial Resistance to Antimicrobial Agents and the Need for Surveillance” in 1999, which acknowledged the unnecessary and harmful usage of antibiotics in animals;⁶

WHEREAS, it is fundamental to microbiology that use of antibiotics provides the selection pressure that tends to select for the emergence and propagation of antibiotic resistant strains of bacteria;

WHEREAS, data collected from the pharmaceutical industry by the FDA since 2009 indicate that sales of antimicrobials for use in food animals are more than 4-fold higher, by volume, than sales for human usage, and increased by 16% from 2009 to 2012.⁷

WHEREAS, classes of antibiotics that are “medically important”, including cephalosporins, tetracyclines, penicillins, macrolides, aminoglycosides and sulfa drugs accounted for 61% of total antibiotic sales for use in food animals in 2012;⁸

WHEREAS, current FDA proposals to the pharmaceutical industry to voluntarily restrict the sale of medically important antibiotics for use in food animals apply only to the use of antibiotic products in animal feed or water for so-called “production uses”, i.e. growth promotion, feed efficiency and weight gain, but would not address ongoing and routine use of many of these same products in animal feed at similar or identical dosages for disease prevention and/or control, so long as they were ordered via a veterinary feed directive (VFD) or veterinary prescription;^{7,8}

WHEREAS, FDA’s voluntary proposals in any case, do not take effect until December 2016 or, in the case of its to-be-revised VFD, is not yet final;

WHEREAS, recognizing the limitations in the FDA approach, a bipartisan bill called the Prevention of Antibiotic Resistance Act has been re-introduced in the U.S. Senate that would require FDA to withdraw its approval for uses of medically important antibiotics for disease prevention or control that are at high risk of abuse, unless the producer of the drug can demonstrate that its use in agriculture does not pose a risk to human health.⁹

WHEREAS, McDonald’s USA announced March 4, 2015 that it would no longer allow use of medically important antibiotics by its chicken suppliers, and would seek to discourage similar uses in beef, pork and egg supplies in the future.¹⁰

Therefore, be it resolved that the Minnesota Public Health Association:

Encourages bulk purchasers of foodstuffs, including restaurant chains, school and hospitals, to adopt policies encouraging and, where feasible, requiring procurement of foodstuffs from animals raised with no medically important antibiotics or, alternatively, from animals only given such antibiotics on a non-routine basis and for a diagnosed disease.

References

- ¹ President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, Report to the President on Combating Antibiotic Resistance, September 2014, Available from http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/PCAST/pcast_carb_report_sept2014.pdf
- ² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Antibiotic resistance threats in the United States, 2013. Atlanta: CDC; 2013. Available from: <http://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/threat-report-2013/pdf/ar-threats-2013-508.pdf>
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ World Health Organization website, "Antimicrobial Resistance", Available from <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs194/en/>.
- ⁵ Food and Drug Administration (FDA). 2012. Guidance #209: the Judicious Use of Medically Important Antimicrobial Drugs in Food-Producing Animals. Available at: <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/animalveterinary/guidancecomplianceenforcement/guidanceforindustry/ucm216936.pdf>.
- ⁶ American Public Health Association (APHA). 1999. Policy Statement #9908: Addressing the Problem of Bacterial Resistance to Antimicrobial Agents and the Need for Surveillance. Available from <http://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2014/07/29/11/51/addressing-the-problem-of-bacterial-resistance-to-antimicrobial-agents-and-the-need-for-surveillance>
- ⁷ Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Antimicrobial Animal Drug Distribution Summary Reports on Antimicrobials Sold or Distributed for Use in Food-Producing Animals, 2009,2010,2011,2012. Available from <http://www.fda.gov/ForIndustry/UserFees/AnimalDrugUserFeeActADUFA/>
- ⁸ Ibid, page 26, Table 3 of 2012 Summary Report.
- ⁸ The PEW Charitable Trusts, "Gaps in FDA's Antibiotics Policy: Many drugs may still be available for food animals at growth-promotion levels," Nove 30, 2014. Available at <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2014/11/gaps-in-fdas-antibiotics-policy>.
- ⁹ Food Safety News, "Senators Reintroduce Bill to Combat Antibiotic Overuse," March 3, 2015, Available at http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2015/03/senators-reintroduce-bill-to-reduce-antibiotic-overuse-in-food-animals/#.VPz_IWTF8tI.
- ¹⁰ McDonald's Corporation website, Press release, dated March 4, 2015, "McDonald's USA Announces New Antibiotics Policy and Menu Sourcing Initiatives", Available at <http://news.mcdonalds.com/US/releases/McDonald%E2%80%99s-USA-Announces-New-Antibiotics-Policy-an>.