

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, FDA, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, FDA, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairwoman Mikulski, Chairman Moran, and Ranking Member Merkley:

As organizations committed to making sure that the next generation of Americans have antibiotics that will work when needed, we strongly support the Administration's request for an additional \$35 million for the Department of Agriculture to support activities related to combatting antibiotic resistance. Furthermore, we urge you to appropriate an additional \$10 million beyond the President's request to compensate for the shortfall in these critical funds in the 2016 budget, and to allocate an additional \$5 million to support the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) planned data collection efforts.

Already, the crisis in bacteria resistant to antibiotics leaves at least 2 million Americans falling ill each year with resistant infections, and more than 23,000 of them die. The science is clear; antibiotic use and overuse, whether in medicine or in agriculture, has driven the current crisis in resistance.

The additional funds would support the Department of Agriculture's plans to collect better data on how and why antibiotics are being used on farms, as well as support research to identify ways to produce food with fewer antibiotics.

Livestock and poultry producers need this information to adapt more quickly to the rapidly changing marketplace where both consumers and large purchasers of meat and poultry are demanding that that these products be from animals raised without the routine use of antibiotics, especially those important to human medicine.

While Congress provided an additional \$380 million to fight the spread of antibiotic resistance in its 2016 Omnibus Spending Bill, we are alarmed that none of these funds were allocated for agriculture. Given the gravity of the crisis, and the fact that 70% of all medically important antibiotics are currently sold for use in agriculture, it is clear that all livestock production must also be a part of the solution.

As you undertake your work on agriculture appropriations for Fiscal Year 2017, we strongly urge you to go beyond the President's request by providing an additional \$45 million for USDA and \$5 million FDA to fund this vital national priority. We ask that you ensure that these additional funds are devoted to collecting better data on farm use of antibiotics and to identify alternatives to antibiotic use in livestock. Without additional funding, there will be a huge gap in the effort to combat antibiotic resistant bacteria and the overall effort will suffer.

Sincerely,

Antibiotic Resistance Action Center, Milken Institute School of Public Health at the George Washington University

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology

Center for Food Safety

Consumer Federation of America

Consumers Union

Food Animal Concerns Trust

Food and Water Watch

The Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

Keep Antibiotics Working

Stephen A. Lerner, M.D. Professor of Medicine, Wayne State University School of Medicine

National Consumers League

Natural Resources Defense Council

School Food Focus