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Keep Antibiotics Working Coalition: Final Antibiotics National Plan from the White House a Missed Opportunity
Report Fails to Recommend FDA Take Immediate Action to Address Crisis of Antibiotic Resistance or Collect Much-Needed Data on Use

(Washington, DC) -- This morning, the White House is unveiling its long-awaited report addressing the growing crisis of antibiotic resistance. The “National Action Plan for Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria” was developed in response to an Executive Order issued by President Obama on September 18, and builds on policy recommendations issued at that time by the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST).

Steven Roach, senior analyst for Keep Antibiotics Working (KAW), a coalition of health, consumer, agricultural, environmental, animal welfare, and other advocacy groups, issued the following statement in response:

“Once again the Obama Administration has missed an opportunity to strengthen its response to the urgent public health crisis of antibiotic resistance. Instead of addressing gaps in existing efforts, the plan’s drafters adopt wholeheartedly the pharmaceutical industry line that removing growth promotion claims under FDA’s Guidance for Industry #213 will solve all problems with overuse on farms. This stance ignores clear evidence that the use of medically important antibiotics for routine disease prevention creates a public health risk that is identical to those posed by routine use for growth promotion. Drug makers [regularly exploit](#) this loophole by advertising the growth benefits that can result from using antibiotics for disease prevention and FDA has failed to crack down on this practice.

The plan also fails to set any targets for reductions in antibiotic use in food animals. This means that the only measure of success will be whether or not companies remove growth claims from the labels – even if on-farm antibiotic use continues to rise.

All the other actions in the National Action Plan – including research, outreach to producers and veterinarians, and improved monitoring – will be wasted as long as the target to be reached falls so short of what needs to be done. We have been waiting for FDA to take decisive action for over 40 years, and during this time the threat of resistance has grown so great that the World Health

Organization has declared the onset of ‘[a post-antibiotic era.](#)’ How much worse must things get before they get better?”

In the absence of more effective leadership on the part of FDA, KAW believes stronger Congressional action is essential. Therefore, the organization has been advocating for swift action on the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA), a House bill which was recently reintroduced by Rep. Louise Slaughter. The bill would help curb routine antibiotic misuse on the farm by requiring the FDA to phase out the use of medically important antibiotics in food animals that are not sick unless such use is shown to be safe.

Another important bill that is expected to be reintroduced later this year, the Delivering Antimicrobial Transparency in Animals (DATA) Act, would direct FDA to enhance its collection and reporting on antibiotic use in food animals. These pieces of legislation all face an uphill battle against the deep pockets of the agricultural and pharmaceutical lobbies.

If you’d like to connect with members of the Keep Antibiotics Working coalition for further comment, please contact Katie Andriulli at kandriulli@mrss.com or **(917) 438-4605**.

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Keep Antibiotics Working (KAW) is a coalition of health, consumer, agricultural, environmental, humane, and other advocacy groups with more than 11 million supporters. Learn more at www.keepantibioticsworking.com.