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**KEEP ANTIBIOTICS WORKING APPLAUDS SENATOR ELIZABETH WARREN
FOR TAKING FDA TO TASK OVER ITS FAILURE TO ADEQUATELY ADDRESS
CONCERNS ABOUT ANTIBIOTIC OVERUSE ON THE FARM**

Coalition Calls on FDA to Abandon Rule Making Process for the Veterinary Feed Directive rule (VFD) or Significantly Modify it to Take Into Consideration Public and Animal Health

Washington, D.C. – At today's Senate HELP Committee Hearing “Examining the FDA's Initiatives and Priorities,” Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) asked FDA Commissioner Dr. Margaret Hamburg to comment on the increasing evidence showing that “the overuse of antibiotics in animal agriculture is contributing to the rise in antibiotic resistance,” and specifically asked how the agency plans to help reduce the amount of antibiotics used for disease prevention in livestock, a major antibiotic use inadequately addressed under current FDA policy.

Keep Antibiotics Working, a coalition of health, consumer, agricultural, environmental, animal welfare, and other advocacy groups, issued the following statement in response to today's hearing:

“Keep Antibiotics Working thanks Senator Warren for holding FDA accountable for its policy. Commissioner Hamburg's statement that increased veterinary oversight through the use of veterinary feed directives will address concerns about overuse in animal feeding operations is troubling. First, many veterinarians do not accept that antibiotic use in food animals contributes to a human health risk, so they cannot be relied upon to reign in overuse. Second, FDA is proposing to remove the bulk of protections built into existing rules for how drugs requiring veterinary oversight in feed can be used.”

As KAW [emphasized in comments](#) submitted yesterday on proposed revisions to FDA's veterinary feed directive rule (VFD) these changes seemed aimed at allowing for the unabated continuous use of antibiotics in most animals for disease prevention. This type of continuous use in group after group of animals is a significant factor contributing to antibiotic overuse and the rise of dangerous resistant bacteria. FDA is proposing other changes that will make it harder for FDA to know when and where these drugs are used.

KAW is concerned that rather than strengthen the VFD program, FDA's proposed changes weaken it. Specifically, the proposed changes:

- 1) Remove veterinary supervision requirements in the existing rule that allow VFD drugs only be used in the context of a valid veterinarian-client-patient-relationship (VCPR);
- 2) Remove requirements that these drugs be first handled in licensed feed mills and make other changes that to exclude the majority of feed mixing facilities in the US from notification and record keeping provisions in the law, and
- 3) Shorten existing record keeping requirements from two years to one year.

“If these proposed changes are adopted, FDA will have less ability to know where VFD drugs are used and less authority to provide oversight of their use. FDA’s justification for removing public and animal health protections in the existing rule is that ‘[industry] stakeholders informed FDA that the VFD process is overly burdensome.’ However, FDA has not provided any evidence that this burden on the industry is undue or outweighs the public health benefits provided by the existing rules.

The proposed VFD falls far short of what is required to protect public health. KAW strongly urges the FDA to either abandon this rule making process, or significantly modify it to seriously take into consideration public and animal health.”

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

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.