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Keep Antibiotics Working Applauds Administration for Maintaining Strong Rules for Veterinarians, but Sees Summit as Missed Opportunity

Coalition concerned that consumer and public health voices underrepresented

Washington, DC –Today the White House announced [final changes to FDA’s Veterinary Feed Directive \(VFD\)](#) regulation governing how veterinarians may administer medically important drugs to food animals. Notably, the final VFD maintains a strong provision requiring that VFD drugs only be used in the context of a valid veterinarian-client-patient-relationship (VCPR).

The final VFD was announced on the same day as the White House’s first-ever Forum on Antibiotic Stewardship, the latest in a line of increased efforts by the President to address the public health crisis of antibiotic resistance, which include its “[National Action Plan for Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria](#),” developed in response to an Executive Order issued by the President last September, and the convening of an [interagency Task Force](#) earlier this year.

While Keep Antibiotics Working commends the White House for issuing strong rules for veterinarians, the coalition feels that the Administration’s summit would have benefitted from the inclusion of a robust roster of consumer and public health groups alongside the many industry, corporate and other advocacy organizations who participated.

“KAW appreciates the attention that the White House is bringing to the problem of antibiotic resistance through this meeting and other recent actions and applaud the administration and FDA for maintaining a federal requirement that veterinarians have knowledge of the animals to be treated before issuing an order for an antibiotic,” said Keep Antibiotics Working senior analyst Steven Roach. “The FDA also recently addressed another of KAW’s concerns when it asked a drug maker to remove advertisements that attempted to blur the lines between growth promotion and disease prevention.”

“These are good steps, but we are troubled by the fact that most of the consumer advocacy organizations that have been working to combat antibiotic resistance related to animal agriculture, some for decades now, were not invited to participate in today’s White House summit.”

“It is telling that today’s Forum is highlighting policies from Tyson Foods and Perdue (which are responding to consumer demand that food animals be raised without the use of routine antibiotics) to validate the agency’s much weaker guidance, which continues to allow medically-important antibiotics to be used on a routine basis,” added KAW policy analyst Susan Vaughn Grooters. “While a handful of chicken producers have taken significant steps to reduce antibiotic use, beef, pork, and turkey producers have not. KAW remains concerned that the White House’s efforts may provide cover for these sectors as they resist real change.”

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.