

Coalition for Ending the Nontherapeutic Use of Antibiotics in Factory Farms

March 25, 2013

Seattle City Council
600 Fourth Avenue, 2nd Floor
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Members of the Seattle City Council,

We, the undersigned organizations, individuals, and members of the medical community, write to request passage of a resolution in support of federal action to address the overuse of antibiotics on factory farms.

Livestock routinely receive low doses of antibiotics for growth promotion or disease prevention, a practice known as nontherapeutic use, contributing to the development and spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. In the fall of 2013, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a report on the growing threat of antibiotic resistance. According to the report, 2 million people contract antibiotic resistant infections every year, and at least 23,000 people die from them.

As FDA's National Antibiotics Resistance Monitoring System reports, antibiotic-resistant bacteria have become a common fixture in retail meat. In 2011, antibiotic-resistant Salmonella in ground turkey caused illnesses that led to the third largest meat recall in USDA history. Both the World Health Organization and the American Medical Association warn that unless we act soon, these drugs will no longer work when we need them.

The FDA's inconsistent policies, banning nontherapeutic uses of some antibiotics while relying on voluntary measures for others, prevent the necessary restrictions on all improper uses of antibiotics.

Legislation has been introduced in Congress that would address this urgent public health crisis. The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA) in the House and the Prevention of Antibiotic Resistance Act (PARA) in the Senate, address these inconsistencies by restricting the use of essential human antibiotics in food production. Antibiotics used to treat humans will be protected by PARA/PAMTA, which ends their nontherapeutic use in livestock, but would allow farmers to use all available antibiotics to treat sick animals under veterinary supervision. This bill is a necessary step to protect the effectiveness of antibiotics in human health.

We urge you to pass a resolution through the Seattle City Council, calling on our members of Congress to co-sponsor PARA/PAMTA. Antibiotics are simply too important to squander on practices that hasten the development and spread of resistance to them in human pathogens.

Sincerely,

Medical Community

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 Inn at Ship Bay

Alana Nelson
 Fire Mountain Solar LLC

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