

SB 920: Protecting Antibiotics

Selected Endorsements of SB 920



And...dozens of family farms from across Oregon including: Cattail Creek Lamb, Kookooloan Farm, Terra Farms, Pono Farm, Wintergreen Farm, Converging Creeks Farm, Siskiyou Alpaca, Ford Farm, and Valley Flora, Moomaw Family Farm and more.

Problem

You, or someone in your family, have probably relied on antibiotics to treat an illness. Maybe it was a simple ear infection or strep throat, or a potentially life-threatening illness like pneumonia or the side-effects of cancer. Unfortunately, these life-saving drugs are losing their effectiveness due to overuse, with grave public health consequences.

Factory farming practices are often a source of the problem. In fact, up to 70 percent of antibiotics sold in the United States are for use on livestock and poultry, and not primarily to treat sick animals. Instead, antibiotics are often put into the daily feed of healthy animals to promote growth and prevent disease due to overcrowded conditions.

These practices can breed powerful antibiotic-resistant bacteria. These germs, sometimes called “superbugs”, can then find their way to the human population through numerous pathways, including contaminated food, airborne dust blowing off farms, and water and soil polluted with contaminated feces. The CDC estimates that 2 million Americans become infected with antibiotic-resistant bacteria and at least 23,000 people die as a direct result of these infections each year.

Solution

To protect antibiotics and combat the spread of drug-resistant bacteria, antibiotics for food animals should be used sparingly and only on sick animals or to contain verified disease outbreaks. Senate Bill 920 would:

- 1. Prohibit giving medically important antibiotics to healthy farm animals in Oregon.** Healthy humans aren't supposed to take antibiotics; neither should healthy farm animals. The measure has exceptions for when there is a significant need to control the spread of disease. To keep the measure focused on the vast majority of farm animals, the bill is limited to cattle, swine and poultry; the state is empowered to add additional animals by rule.
- 2. Require disclosure of how medically important antibiotics are used on factory farms.** Because the bills would still allow for some antibiotic use on healthy animals, it is important to track that use. The bills will require EPA-defined Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) to annually disclose the details of their antibiotic use on their farm animals, and make that information public record. This provision would affect just over 100 Oregon farms.
- 3. Limit the role of the government.** Authorizes the Oregon Health Authority to enact additional rules to enforce the law, but only requires the state to design and collect the aforementioned CAFO annual report. A provision allowing for private right of action will be removed, at the request of the bill's supporters. The bill will also be amended to require OHA to consult with Oregon Department of Agriculture on any rulemaking.

Positions of Medical & Scientific Organizations on Antibiotic Use in Livestock Operations



"The problem arises when drugs used for food production are medically important for human health, as evidence shows that pathogens that have developed resistance to drugs in animals can be transmitted to humans." [Full statement and policy recommendations](#)



"Antibiotics are widely used in food-producing animals, and according to data published by FDA, there are more kilograms of antibiotics sold in the United States for food-producing animals than for people. This use contributes to the emergence of antibiotic-resistant bacteria in food-producing animals. Resistant bacteria in food-producing animals are of particular concern because these animals serve as carriers." [Link](#) (2013 report, pp. 36-37, under "Improving antibiotic use")



"The AMA is opposed to the use of antimicrobials at nontherapeutic levels in agriculture or as pesticides or growth promoters." [Link](#)



"American Nurses Association urges Congress, meat and poultry producers, and bulk purchasers of meat to promptly phase out the non-therapeutic use of medically important antibiotics and the use of fluoroquinolones in poultry." [Link](#) (2004 resolution)



"Clearly, a decrease in the inappropriate use of antimicrobials in human medicine alone is not enough. Substantial efforts must be made to decrease inappropriate overuse of antimicrobials in animals and agriculture as well." [Link](#) (2003 report, p. 207)



"Evidence now exists that these uses of antimicrobial agents in food-producing animals have a direct negative impact on human health and multiple impacts on the selection and dissemination of resistance genes in animals and the environment. Children are at increased risk of acquiring many of these infections with resistant bacteria and are at great risk of severe complications if they become infected." [Link](#) (2004 report)



"The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA) . . . and/or other measures (including FDA regulations) should be adopted to end use of antibiotics for growth promotion, feed efficiency, and routine disease prevention purposes in animal agriculture and to ensure that these precious drugs are being used wisely in all settings." [Link](#) (2011 report)



"Hence a comprehensive approach to control and ultimately reverse antimicrobial resistance must limit the inappropriate and non-judicious use of antimicrobial agents in veterinary medicine and food production." [Link](#) (2012 comments on proposed FDA rules)

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