

March 18, 2013

The Honorable Patty Murray  
U.S. Senate  
154 Russell Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

On behalf of the undersigned chefs, farmers and sustainable agriculture advocates in Washington, we are writing to request your help in improving the information that is collected and shared about antibiotic use in food animal production. We hope you will play a leadership role in supporting enhanced data collection measures when the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee works on Animal Drug User Fee Act (ADUFA) reauthorization this year, so that the public can better understand how antibiotic use in food animals —especially non-therapeutic use—threatens human, animal and environmental health, and how best to respond.

As individuals concerned with how industrial agriculture's misuse of antibiotics contributes to the development of dangerous superbugs, we were alarmed to see new data from the FDA showing that *nearly 30 million pounds* of antibiotics were sold for use in food animals in 2011—almost four times the amount sold for human use. Most of these antibiotics are important in human and animal medicine and many are losing their effectiveness in treating disease. The FDA, USDA, and CDC have all testified before Congress that there is a definitive link between the routine, non-therapeutic uses of antibiotics in food animal production and the crisis of antibiotic resistance in humans. This position is supported by the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and other leading medical groups who all warn that the injudicious use of antibiotics in food animals presents a serious and growing threat to human health because the practice creates new strains of dangerous antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

Many chefs and restaurants are sourcing foods from organic or antibiotic-free farmers in order to lessen the burden of antibiotic resistance in the food supply and the environment. Similarly, sustainable agriculture advocates are working to educate and activate consumers on this issue. In the process, we are doing our part to be part of the solution. But we cannot do this alone.

We need your help to improve the data collected on antibiotic use for food animal production so that we can truly understand the scope of the problem. Given the urgency of the antibiotic resistance problem, FDA should, at minimum, be specifically required to share information at a regular time every year that includes route of drug administration and sales by species and marketing category. The public data should also show whether the "Not Independently Reported" drugs (i.e., the ones with fewer than three sponsors who are reported together for confidentiality reasons) are medically important. Further, FDA should seek to establish a mechanism to collect some data from the largest feed mills and should make ADUFA data compatible with other systems such as from the National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System in order to better analyze resistance trends.

These suggested enhancements would enable public and environmental health officials to make more informed decisions, to understand the extent of veterinary involvement in food animal care and to utilize the data to respond to disease threats. Furthermore, the public needs to know whether FDA's voluntary approach to reducing injudicious uses is working to curb unnecessary use of our life-saving miracle drugs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Seattle, WA

Mark Canlis  
Owner, Canlis Restaurant  
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