

## Food Animal Production and Antibiotic Resistance

# The Campaign



### The Issue

Doctors routinely warn patients that antibiotics should be used only to treat bacterial infections, at the proper dosage, and for the full course of treatment because failure to follow these rules increases the likelihood that some of the bacteria will survive and mutate to become drug resistant. Yet many large producers of meat and poultry feed antibiotics to their healthy food animals simply to offset the effects of overcrowding and poor sanitation, as well as to promote faster growth.



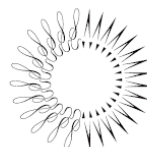
In fact, up to 70 percent of all antibiotics sold in the United States go to healthy food animals. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention all testified before Congress in 2010 that there was a definitive link between 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.

### Key Facts

1. Up to 70 percent of all antibiotics sold in the U.S. are given to food animals, often non-therapeutically to promote growth and to compensate for the effects of unsanitary and overcrowded conditions.
2. Many of the antibiotics used in food animal production - for example, penicillins, tetracyclines, macrolides, and sulfonamides - are identical to, or from the same family as, drugs used in human medicine to cure serious diseases. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, because these classes of antibiotics are similar, bacteria resistant to antibiotics used in animals also will be resistant to antibiotics used in humans.
3. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention testified before Congress in 2010 that there was a definitive link between the routine, non-therapeutic uses of antibiotics on industrial farms and the crisis of antibiotic resistance in humans.

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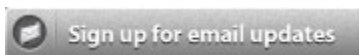
THE PEW CAMPAIGN ON HUMAN HEALTH AND INDUSTRIAL FARMING



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## Our Campaign

The Pew Campaign on Human Health and Industrial Farming is working to save antibiotics by phasing out the routine use of the drugs in food animal production. We work with public health and food industry leaders, veterinarians, agricultural interests, academics, and citizens' groups who share our objective of preserving the integrity of antibiotics as a means of protecting human and animal health.



## Initiatives

### Moms for Antibiotic Awareness



The goal of [Moms for Antibiotic Awareness](#) is to educate individuals across the country on the misuse and overuse of antibiotics in food animal production and to engage moms and those concerned about their family's health to take action for more judicious use of these drugs.

As part of this initiative, in partnership with the American Academy of Pediatrics, we hosted a [Supermoms Against Superbugs Advocacy Day](#) in May in Washington, D.C. to celebrate and unite individuals across America working to preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics for their children and families.

### Food and Drug Administration (FDA)



The FDA is currently considering the more than 219,000 comments from people across the country that have urged the agency to end antibiotic overuse on industrial farms just to make animals grow faster and compensate for overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. Over the past three months, an outpouring of doctors, parents, consumers, business leaders, veterinarians, chefs, and farmers asked the FDA to strengthen draft measures that it released in April 2012.

## Congress



The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA, H.R. 965, S. 1211) would withdraw the routine use of seven classes of antibiotics vitally important to human health from food animal production unless animals or herds are sick with disease or unless drug companies can prove that their use does not harm human health.

Hundreds of groups already support this legislation including the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatricians, Infectious Diseases Society of America, the American Nurses Association, and the World Health Organization. [Please contact your members of Congress and ask them to cosponsor PAMTA.](#)

## Schools



In November 2011, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) announced it had begun serving local chicken raised without antibiotics to students in 473 schools. The district's new program includes about 1.2 million pounds from Amish farms that do not use antibiotics, for a total of about two million pounds of fresh chicken in the 2011-12 school year. The press release on the announcement can be found here: <http://www.pewhealth.org/news-room/press-releases/chicago-public-schools-largest-district-to-serve-chicken-raised-without-antibiotics-85899367477>

To help other districts follow Chicago's lead, the School Food Focus Learning Lab and Pew developed [purchasing guidelines for institutions](#) and a [Request for Proposals \(RFP\) template](#) that any school district can adapt for its own use.

## Chefs



We have recently started working with chefs from across the country who have expressed their support of ending the misuse and overuse of antibiotics in food animal production. [In a letter to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#), more than 300 chefs urged the FDA to work with the industry to clarify how antibiotics are used on farms and to end the overuse of these vitally important drugs.

Celebrity chefs and restaurateurs Suzanne Goin and Mary Sue Milliken, who serve only antibiotic-free meat in their establishments, participated in our Supermoms Against Superbugs event in May and urged the Administration and their representatives in Congress to rein in the overuse and misuse of antibiotics in food animal production.

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## Sample Tweets

Up to 70% of antibiotics sold in the U.S. go to healthy food animals. Learn how this misuse is threatening

our health: [www.SaveAntibiotics.org](http://www.SaveAntibiotics.org)

Meat industry's overuse of antibiotics is a public health crisis waiting to happen. Learn how you can help: [www.SaveAntibiotics.org](http://www.SaveAntibiotics.org)

## Sample Facebook Posts

Doctors routinely warn patients that antibiotics should be used only to treat bacterial infections, at the proper dosage, and for the full course of treatment because failure to follow these rules increases the likelihood that some of the bacteria will survive and mutate to become drug resistant. Yet many large producers of meat and poultry feed antibiotics to their healthy food animals simply to offset the effects of overcrowding and poor sanitation, as well as to promote faster growth. Learn more: [www.SaveAntibiotics.org](http://www.SaveAntibiotics.org)

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## Key Resources

**Fact Sheet:** [Get the Facts on Antibiotic Resistance](#)

**Fact Sheet:** [Food Animal Production and Antibiotic Resistance](#)

**Fact Sheet:** [How Antibiotic Resistance Happens](#)

**Report:** [Meat on Drugs: The Overuse of Antibiotics in Food Animals and What Supermarkets and Consumers Can Do to Stop It](#)

**Report:** [Putting Meat on the Table: Industrial Farm Animal Production in America](#)

**Bibliography:** [Antibiotic Resistance and Food Animal Production](#)