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AHI Statement on FDA Guidance Documents and Draft Codified Language on Antibiotics

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AHI Statement

FDA Guidance Documents and Draft Codified Language on Antibiotics

April 11, 2012

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released three documents impacting certain uses of [medically important antibiotics in animal agriculture](#). The animal health industry supports the process designed to protect the health of animals and ultimately public health, while preserving animal care tools for veterinarians and producers. AHI and its member companies have supported the stakeholder approach used by FDA to reach this point and we will continue to work collaboratively to implement the policy goals articulated in these documents.

The veterinarian is critically important in animal care decisions and, ultimately, in protecting food safety and human health. We strongly support responsible use of antibiotic medicines and the involvement of a veterinarian whenever antibiotics are administered to food producing animals.

Implementation of this policy means all medically-important antibiotics used in animal agriculture will be used only for therapeutic purposes – disease treatment, control and prevention — under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian. This policy will assure these medically important medicines are used in animal health in much the same way they are used in human health — under the supervision of a licensed professional and only to address disease challenges at various stages.

While we agree with this direction and the collaborative, stakeholder process, there are details that must be addressed to make this approach practical and workable. We will continue to work with FDA through the comment process to address these details.

The responsible use of antibiotics to keep food animals healthy is important to public health because healthy animals are the first link in the food safety chain. Other links in this chain include the reduction of foodborne bacteria at critical steps in processing, and good food hygiene through the safe handling and cooking of meat and poultry. Responsible use of antibiotics by farmers and veterinarians to keep food animals healthy at the beginning of the food safety chain helps the entire chain produce a safer food product.

It is important to note that this guidance and policy by FDA also fulfills the requests by a number of public health advocacy groups in a July, 2009 letter to the Senior Economic Policy Advisor at the White House.

AHI represents the companies that manufacture animal health products – the pharmaceuticals, vaccines and feed additives used in modern food production, and the medicines that keep pets healthy.

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