



PAMTA Background and FAQs

Many important human medicines are losing effectiveness against disease organisms, resulting in increased human suffering and illnesses that are more costly and difficult to treat. Micro-organisms exposed to low doses of antibiotics over long periods can develop resistance to the antibiotic. Both human

medicine and animal agriculture can contribute to the rise of antibiotic-resistant infections, but an estimated 70 percent of antibiotics



produced in this country are used on livestock for these non-therapeutic purposes.

While many doctors are curtailing unnecessary use of antibiotics in human medicine, industrial scale livestock producers use these life-saving medicines not to treat disease, but to accelerate growth. To address this problem, Congress is now considering the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA), a bill that will begin the process of weaning the livestock industry away from human medicines.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF PAMTA?

This bill, introduced by Rep. Louise Slaughter, already has twenty-four sponsors. With about 2000 industrial scale livestock operations, Indiana should be at the forefront of progressive agricultural practices and policies! However, the only Indiana representative

who has signed on to PAMTA is Andre Carson. We need concerned citizens like you to contact Congress.

HOW DOES THE REGULAR MISUSE OF ANTIBIOTICS ON ANIMALS HARM PEOPLE?

The burden of antibiotic resistance is borne by the most vulnerable in our society: children, the elderly, and those with already weakened immune systems, such as people undergoing chemotherapy or persons with HIV/AIDS. Individuals can come into contact with antibiotic resistance disease organisms in a

variety of ways, including contact with raw meat, infected animals or people, or contaminated soil, water or air.



Air emissions and soil runoff from animal agricultural operations can introduce antibiotic resistant disease organisms into waterways. Infected individuals may or may not display symptoms. New studies indicate that hog farms are a source of a new strain (ST398) of MRSA (Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus), a disease responsible for more deaths per year in the United States than AIDS!

HOW DO CAFO OPERATORS USE ANTIBIOTICS?

In spite of public health implications, operators of CAFOs (confined or concentrated animal feeding operations) continue to use these priceless drugs

every day on animals that are not even sick. In order to protect our health and safeguard the efficiency of our necessary medications, federal action is needed to achieve comprehensive reductions and create a level playing field for all producers and retailers. Animal feeds routinely include low doses of antibiotics. While some producers and retailers of meat products are publicly making an effort to curb antibiotic use, these initiatives to reduce antibiotics in animal agriculture are rare, limited in scope, and difficult to verify. Depending on which antibiotics are included in this list, anywhere from 13-25 million pounds of human medicines are fed to livestock every year!

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Because of the public health risks and the detrimental impact of these livestock operations on the environment, we must improve the conditions on CFOs and CAFOs! There are many ways to discourage the routine overuse of antibiotics on livestock.

You can:

1. Write or call to your legislators and ask them to support and/or sponsor PAMTA.
2. Ask your healthcare provider to sign the Hoosier Environmental Council's letter to our legislators.
3. Join the Wabash Riverkeeper Volunteers and help document sources of agricultural pollution.
4. Show your dissatisfaction with the overuse of antibiotics by purchasing meat with the following labels:
 - a. No Antibiotics
 - b. Free-Range
 - c. Grass-fed
 - d. Cage-free
5. Ask your favorite grocers and restaurants to do the same.



For more info, go to www.hecweb.org and www.saveantibiotics.org. Or call 317-685-8800 and ask for Rae Schnapp.