

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

President Barack Obama  
Office of Management and Budget  
Eisenhower Executive Office Building, Room 251  
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

December 9, 2013

Dear President Obama,

We are writing to urge the Administration to move swiftly to assess and finalize regulations concerning the use of antibiotics in agricultural livestock production. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), United States Department of Agriculture, and countless scientific studies, current practices of administering low level doses of antibiotics to farm animals to optimize weight gain and prevent disease due to filthy, overcrowded conditions contribute directly to the emergence of antibiotic resistant “superbugs” that then make their way into the public food supply. This poses a very serious threat to public health that grows with every additional unnecessary antibiotic dose.

In 2012 there were more outbreaks of antibiotic resistant *Salmonella* than any previous year, and the most recent outbreak involving Foster Farms chicken has sickened a known 340 people across 20 states and Puerto Rico, according to the CDC. Forty percent have been hospitalized—double the typical rate—most likely due to the outbreak of several strains that are resistant to commonly prescribed antibiotics.

In a NY Times opinion piece from March 2013, former FDA Commissioner David Kessler, M.D., stated, “In 2011, drugmakers sold nearly 30 million pounds of antibiotics for livestock — the largest amount yet recorded and about 80 percent of all reported antibiotic sales that year...rather than healing sick animals, these drugs are often fed to animals at low levels to make them grow faster and to suppress diseases that arise because they live in dangerously close quarters on top of one another’s waste.”

There is a growing sense of urgency among lawmakers, the medical and scientific communities, conservation groups, members of the agricultural industry, and the public that federal action is critical. We must put a regulatory framework in place that encourages the industry to take bold, important steps to reduce the overuse of antibiotics in livestock that is raised for human consumption, especially use to increase growth, which FDA deemed an unnecessary risk in 1977. We are deeply concerned that the necessary adjustments to antibiotic use in animal production outlined in Guidance #213 are only voluntary. Furthermore, the lack of mandatory reporting and baseline monitoring prevent any reasonable assessment of the effects of this voluntary guidance. We need to see stronger regulation than the current proposed rules, but

we also have a responsibility to the public to move forward quickly. We urge the administration to recommend mandatory compliance, reporting, and baseline monitoring and to work quickly to finalize such rules.

FDA Guidance #213, even though anemic and deficient in authority, has been drafted and available for comment since April, 2012, with little movement towards finalization. We strongly urge you to direct the Food and Drug Administration's Administrator to assess and complete this rulemaking with no further delay.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,



Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



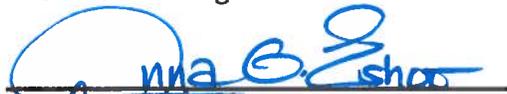
Louise McIntosh Slaughter  
Member of Congress



Rosa DeLauro  
Member of Congress



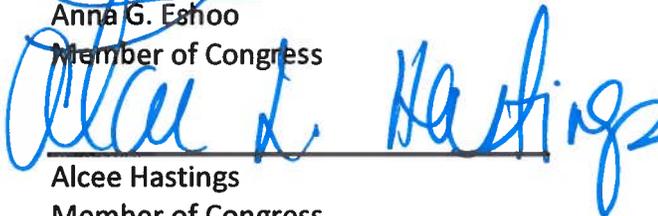
Sam Farr  
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress



Raul Grijalva  
Member of Congress



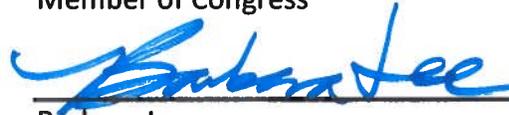
Alcee Hastings  
Member of Congress



Rush Holt  
Member of Congress



James Langevin  
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



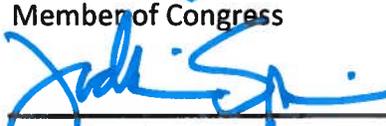
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