



The American Association of Avian Pathologists
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POSITION STATEMENT:

Statement on Use of Antibiotic Feed Additives by the Poultry Industry

Submitted by AAAP Drugs & Therapeutics Committee (Jan 2016)
Approved by AAAP Board of Directors (Feb 2016)

The American Association of Avian Pathologists (AAAP) is a professional organization of poultry veterinarians and scientists whose mission is to promote the health and well-being of commercial poultry and the protection of public health. The AAAP fully supports antibiotic stewardship efforts and promotes the responsible use of antibiotics in food-producing animals. Upon graduation, veterinarians take a veterinary oath "to swear to use scientific knowledge and skills for the benefit of society through the protection of animal health and welfare, the prevention and relief of animal suffering"; therefore, animal welfare as well as judicious use of drugs is a priority.

The poultry industry goes to great efforts to control disease through farm management, biosecurity practices, and vaccination; in spite of these efforts, disease events do occur. The AAAP strongly supports the right for a licensed veterinarian to treat a sick animal or flock with an FDA-approved antibiotic to control disease and prevent pain and suffering. We also believe that antibiotic therapy is appropriate when a licensed veterinarian determines in his or her professional judgement that a flock is at imminent risk of preventable bacterial disease. Products from flocks treated under the direction of a licensed veterinarian with FDA-approved antibiotics should not be discriminated against in the marketplace. For further information, please consult the AAAP-AVMA Guidelines for Judicious Therapeutic Use of Antimicrobials in Poultry, which states our policy on use (AVMA n.d.). The AAAP fully supports the numerous efforts of its members involved in antimicrobial use (AMU) reduction initiatives, such as research in the development of antimicrobial alternatives; the improvement of preventive control measures such as vaccines; tools to improve the health, comfort, and immunity of our birds; and educational programs.

The AAAP supports FDA Guidance Documents 209 (FDA 2012) and 213 (FDA 2013a), and the Veterinary Feed Directive (FDA n.d.) to increase antibiotic use decision oversight by veterinarians involved with food-animal production. Veterinary professionals are in the best position to make these decisions to keep animals healthy, which concurrently improves food safety and reduces the carbon footprint, while preventing inappropriate use.

By December 2016 significant changes will occur to FDA approvals of certain drugs administered in feed or drinking water. Affected drugs will be limited to those deemed medically important to human medicine and no longer approved for growth promotion claims; such drugs will only be available for

therapeutic indications either by a veterinary feed directive (VFD) in the feed or prescription via the drinking water. Only bacitracin and flavomycin will be available with growth promotion label indications for poultry as they are not deemed medically important by FDA. Impending changes to FDA drug approvals will insure more veterinary oversight and judicious use of medically important antimicrobials. These and similar products such as the polyether ionophore anticoccidials provide tremendous benefits to the health and welfare of the birds, the efficiency of production, the environmental impact and carbon footprint of production, the wholesomeness of the product, and the cost to the consumer, with no known impact whatsoever on human health or antimicrobial resistance in human medicine. Consequently, products produced with these highly useful, safe, and time-tested technologies should not be discriminated against in the marketplace.

Poultry production is providing a high-quality, readily available and affordable protein source to feed the world. Most cultures in the world consume poultry meat and eggs, and the growing global population will need this resource to help satisfy their nutritional demand. Veterinary access to approved antibiotics with proper oversight will be critically important to meeting this looming demand.