

2016 Data Shows Drop in Sales of Antibiotics for Use in Food Animals with Most Sales for Pigs and Cattle

Keep Antibiotics Working calls on cattle and swine industry to do more to reduce antibiotic use

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Keep Antibiotics Working (KAW) applauds the drop in antibiotic sales to U.S. food producers and calls on pork and beef sectors, in particular, to do more to reduce antibiotic overuse. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) today released data on antibiotic sales for use in food animals and for the first time included estimates of sales broken down by major food animal species.

These data show a drop of 14 percent in medically important antibiotics sold between 2015 and 2016. This is the first time since data collection began in 2009 that there has been a year-over-year decrease in sales, but the amount of antibiotic sales in 2016 is still nine percent higher than sales in 2009. The FDA report does not include information on why sales may have changed, but it is likely the result of both consumer and market pressure, as well as the FDA's efforts to reduce antibiotic overuse.

For the first time, the FDA also provided sales estimates of medically important antibiotics by animal species with sales for cattle (43 percent) and swine (37 percent) higher than for chicken (six percent) and turkey (nine percent) with four percent reported as "unknown." While these are data estimates and do not consider the number or weight of animals produced, they are consistent with the chicken industry's recent efforts to produce birds with fewer antibiotics.

"Keep Antibiotics Working is happy to see that the rise of sales may have finally topped out, and we hope that there will be even more reductions as the implementation of the FDA's Guidance for Industry 213 goes into effect in 2017," said Keep Antibiotics Working Senior Analyst and Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT) Food Safety Program Director Steven Roach. "The species data confirm that more work needs to be done particularly in beef and pork".