

Definitive Link Confirms Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria Transmits from Livestock to Humans

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[US Congress. Website of Congresswoman Louise Slaughter](#)

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Slaughter Demands Strong Federal Response

Rochester, NY - Today, Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-25), the only microbiologist in Congress, reacted to a new study that conclusively identified transmission of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) from livestock to humans. Currently, MRSA kills more Americans each year than HIV/AIDS.

The groundbreaking study was conducted by genetics researchers who analyzed the genomes of MRSA bacteria from patients and their farm animals, and found the samples to be genetically identical. Published on Tuesday in *EMBO Molecular Medicine*, the study confirms animal-to-human transmission of MRSA.

In reaction, Slaughter sent a letter to Dr. Margaret Hamburg, the Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration today calling for immediate action to reduce the use of antibiotics in livestock. [Read the text of the letter by clicking here.](#)

In sending the letter, Slaughter said, "This study ends any debate. The extreme overuse of antibiotics in livestock is endangering human health." Slaughter continued, "For decades, the United States Food and Drug Administration has failed to act in the face of a growing threat. These findings make it clearer than ever that their failure is endangering human life. Starting today, the FDA must take strong federal action to reduce antibiotic use in livestock and protect human health."

[To read the results of the study, click here.](#)

These findings come on the heels of public health warnings in the United Kingdom and the United States about the catastrophic threat of antibiotic disease. Earlier this month, Dr. Tom Frieden, director of the US Centers for Disease Control, warned that "our strongest antibiotics don't work and patients are left with potentially untreatable infections."

Slaughter is the author of the HR 1150, the "Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act" (PAMTA). The legislation is designed to stop the overuse of antibiotics on the farm- a practice that is accelerating the growth of antibiotic-resistance disease.

[To view the text of the legislation, click here.](#)

Currently, 80 percent of all antibiotics sold in the United States are sold for agricultural use. Most often, these antibiotics are distributed at sub-therapeutic levels to healthy animals as a way to compensate for crowded and unsanitary living conditions or to promote growth. Any effort to stop the growth of antibiotic-resistant bacteria must address the overuse of antibiotics in food-animals.

PAMTA is supported by 450 organizations, including public health organizations, scientists, the World Health Organization, American Medical Association, National Academy of Sciences and small farmers across the United States.

[To learn more about PAMTA, the threat of antibiotic-resistance disease, and the overuse of antibiotics in agriculture, click here.](#)

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