

Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
H.R. 6432, The Animal Drug User Fee
Amendments of 2008(ADUFA)
July 30, 2008

Today we will consider legislation to reauthorize the Animal Drug User Fee Act—or “ADUFA”—which will enhance and improve FDA’s ability to promptly review new medicines for animals. That is important.

This reauthorization has also given us an opportunity to look at providing FDA with new tools to address a related public health crisis: the problem of antibiotic resistance caused by the industrial farming practice of using human antibiotics for non-therapeutic uses in food-producing animals.

We now have an overwhelming body of evidence showing that the overuse of antibiotics in industrial farm production is threatening to destroy the effectiveness of some of our most important antibiotics for human use. Many of the world’s most prestigious experts—the IOM, the Pew Commission, WHO, and GAO—have warned about the dangers to global public health of such widespread overuse. These drugs are breeding resistant microorganisms that can—and do—get transferred to humans. They also leach into the environment and show up in our

drinking water. The experts have told us that the more antibiotics we consume, the more resistance develops.

The ADUFA bill we are considering today includes a provision to increase the availability and accessibility of data on the amount of animal antibiotics being distributed. This data will help to determine how resistant bugs are developing and inform research on ways to stop those bugs from threatening human health.

That is an important step forward. And I appreciate the cooperation of Chairman Dingell and Chairman Pallone in helping us to get this done.

But let me clear: this provision is only the beginning. We in Congress need to do much more to address the problem of antibiotic resistance.

It is imperative that we look at ways to curtail the practice of using the same antibiotics that are so vitally important for preventing and curing human disease for non-therapeutic uses in food-producing

animals. I look forward to continuing work with my colleagues on this issue.