



For Immediate Release:  
August 9, 2011

Contact: Sean Crowley  
202-478-6128

## **T.G.I. Friday's® Restaurants Praised for Serving Antibiotic-Free Beef Burgers**

### ***Decision Supports AMA Resolution to Combat Antibiotic Resistance Health Threat***

(Dallas, TX/Missoula, MT/Washington, DC) -- Public health, consumer, and other advocacy groups sent a [letter](#) to T.G.I. Friday's® congratulating the **Dallas, Texas**-based restaurant chain for its recent decision to serve beef burgers raised without the routine feeding of antibiotics to healthy cattle.

The decision supports a resolution adopted by the American Medical Association in June opposing the use in healthy animals of antibiotics that also are used to treat human disease. In addition, the American Public Health Association and World Health Organization have passed similar resolutions and the European Union has banned routine feeding of most antibiotics to healthy animals.

"We want to congratulate T.G.I. Friday's for taking this important step to protect public health. Other restaurant chains should follow T.G.I. Friday's lead," said David Wallinga, M.D., a physician with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, based in **Minneapolis, Minnesota**. "More and more consumers are looking for meat raised without antibiotics, recognizing that this practice contributes to the spread of antibiotic resistance. With T.G.I. Friday's decision, they'll be able to find antibiotic-free meat more easily when dining out."

Throughout America, infectious diseases are emerging that are increasingly difficult to treat because of antibiotic resistance. The overuse of antibiotics is to blame. While medical use of antibiotics is a major contributor to the emergence of antibiotic resistance, agricultural uses also pose a problem by promoting development of resistant bacteria that can reach humans directly via food or indirectly via environmental contamination.

The majority of beef cattle, pigs, and chickens receive antibiotics throughout most of their lives. Producers feed healthy animals "nontherapeutic" antibiotics to promote animal growth and to prevent disease in the stressful, unsanitary conditions typically found on crowded factory farms.

A recent study by the Union of Concerned Scientists, based in **Cambridge, Massachusetts**, estimates that annually 70% of antibiotics in the U.S. are fed to healthy farm animals.

Earlier this year, a federal task force noted that antibiotic resistance is "a growing menace to all people," cautioning that continued spread of resistance means that treatments for common infections "will become increasingly limited and expensive – and, in some cases, nonexistent."

T.G.I. Friday's sells nearly one million burgers a month. It has just started serving Meyer Natural Angus™ beef burgers and may soon add Meyer Natural Angus steaks. Meyer is a **Missoula, Montana**-based beef company that sustainably raises Angus cattle without the use of antibiotics, hormones or animal

byproducts in their feed and under the American Humane Association's free farmed guidelines.

"Antibiotic resistance is an emerging public health crisis," said Tamar Barlam, M.D., an infectious disease physician with the Center for Science in the Public Interest, based in **Washington, DC**. "Antibiotic resistance could set medicine back six decades, to a time when doctors lacked the medicines to treat infections caused by bacteria."

"The human health consequences of antibiotic resistance are serious," said Cindy Parker MD, a medical consultant for Physicians for Social Responsibility, based in **Washington, DC**. "When people become infected with bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics, they stay sick longer, or don't recover. Children, the elderly, and people with weakened immune systems are especially vulnerable, but everyone is at risk."

For a directory of restaurants and grocers selling meat produced without feeding antibiotics to healthy animals, go to [www.keepantibioticsworking.com](http://www.keepantibioticsworking.com).

Signatories to the letter to T.G.I. Friday's include the CEOs of the Physicians for Social Responsibility; Center for Science in the Public Interest; and Humane Society of the United States, based in **Washington, DC**; Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, based in **Minneapolis, Minnesota**; Environmental Defense and the Global Resource Action Center for the Environment, based in **New York City**; the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, based in **Des Moines, Iowa**; and Union of Concerned Scientists, based in **Cambridge, Massachusetts**. Read the text of the letter by clicking [here](#).