

STEERING COMMITTEE

Center for Science in the
Public Interest

Environmental Defense

Food Animal Concerns
Trust

Global Resource Action
Center for the Environment

Humane Society of the
United States

Institute for Agriculture
and Trade Policy

National Catholic Rural Life
Conference

Natural Resources Defense
Council

Physicians for Social
Responsibility

Safe Tables Our Priority
(S.T.O.P.)

Sierra Club

Union of Concerned
Scientists

Waterkeeper Alliance

For Immediate Release:
March 20, 2007

Contact: Toby Fallsgraff, 202.478.6184-w,
202.374.9769-c, tfallsgraff@mrss.com

Hold the Pickles and the Penicillin: Leading Food-Service Company to Serve Antibiotic-Free Hamburgers Nationwide

Groundbreaking Policy Helps Combat Antibiotic Resistance Crisis

Washington DC — The Keep Antibiotics Working Coalition commended today's announcement by Bon Appétit Management Company (BAMCO) of a new groundbreaking purchasing policy for hamburgers to help combat the antibiotic resistance crisis in human medicine. The new policy requires BAMCO's suppliers to provide hamburgers without using human antibiotics as feed additives.

"Bon Appétit's leadership shows that you don't have to endanger our antibiotic arsenal just to enjoy a cheeseburger," said Rebecca Goldberg, Ph.D., senior scientist at Environmental Defense. "Serving safe food is not just economically feasible, it also provides a competitive edge. Bon Appétit now serves more than 80 million meals a year."

Palo Alto, CA-based Bon Appétit (www.Bamco.com) serves almost 300,000 pounds of hamburger every year in 400 restaurants and cafés in 28 states, including Nordstrom and Yahoo!, Northwestern University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Getty Museum in Los Angeles.

The company now also joins the American Medical Association, the Infectious Diseases Society of America, and other health organizations in opposing the pending approval by the Food and Drug Administration of cefquinome, an antibiotic proposed for use in beef cattle. Widespread use of this antibiotic in cows would likely cause disease-causing bacteria to become resistant to antibiotics critical to human medicine. Even though the FDA's own advisory committee recommended against this approval six months ago, the agency has yet to make a decision.

The Union of Concerned Scientists estimates 70 percent of all antibiotics use in the U.S.—about 25 million pounds annually—are routinely fed to beef cattle, swine, and chicken. These additives are not used to treat illness; instead, they are used to promote slightly faster growth and to compensate for overcrowded and unsanitary conditions at industrial-scale farms. More than half of these drugs are identical or similar to antibiotics that are important in human medicine. This practice increases the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria in our food supply and the environment.

Proposed federal legislation, The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act, (H.R. 962/S. 549), sponsored by Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Chair Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA), Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME), Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI) and House Rules Committee Chair Louise Slaughter (D-NY), would phase out the use of antibiotics that are important in human medicine as animal feed additives within two years. The American Medical Association, the Infectious Diseases Society of America, and the American Academy of Pediatrics are among the more than 350 health, agriculture and other groups nationwide that have endorsed this bill.