



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

Squadron & Kavanagh Call on NY to Lead Nation with Full Ban on Antibiotics in Farm Animals Following FDA Recommendations

DANIEL L. SQUADRON December 13, 2013

| ISSUE: **AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK**

Squadron-Kavanagh Legislation Would Prohibit Use of Non-Therapeutic Antibiotics in Animals Sold as Food

Squadron, Kavanagh: FDA Moving in Right Direction But Undermined by Reliance on Voluntary Compliance by Drug Companies

NEW YORK – In response to new federal regulations announced this week by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for regulating antibiotics in livestock, State Senator Daniel Squadron and Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh are urging immediate passage of their bill to ban the use of antibiotics in animals sold for food in New York State and calling for mandatory compliance with the improved federal guidelines.

The legislation sponsored by Squadron and Kavanagh (S233/A789) would make New York a leader on food safety by prohibiting the use of antibiotics in all farm animals sold for food in New York, except for the treatment of sick animals.

The routine, non-therapeutic use of antibiotics in animals meant for human consumption poses an unacceptable risk to public health, creating treatment-resistant bacterial infections. For years, the FDA dragged its feet on the issue while elected officials like Senator Squadron and Assemblymember Kavanagh joined concerned advocates and citizens in calling for new regulations.

The FDA's new guidelines are an encouraging move in the right direction but are only voluntary, therefore failing to require that companies comply -- and instead only suggesting that drug companies take action that would reduce the use of antibiotics.

Senator Squadron and Assemblymember Kavanagh stated, "We should all be concerned with the major health risks posed by the amount of antibiotics in our food. It's time to end the excessive use of these 'animal sanitizers' that do consumers more harm than good. The new FDA guidelines are a step in the right direction -- but we need mandatory regulations to protect New Yorkers, rather than relying on voluntary compliance with federal 'suggestions.' New York must once and for all pass our legislation and mandate an end to the harmful use of these drugs in our food."

The guidelines proposed by the FDA, phased in over three years, rely on pharmaceutical companies voluntarily removing "growth" uses from the labels on the antibiotics they produce, which would then remove the option for farmers and producers to use the medicines to help animals grow. If drug producers choose to make the changes to the labels, farmers and veterinarians who use the antibiotics for growth purposes would be committing an illegal activity, in

violation of the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. The new guidelines also require that antibiotics for livestock no longer be sold over-the-counter, instead requiring the veterinary equivalent of a prescription. While these steps are meaningful after so many years of inaction, significant loopholes will remain until there are mandatory requirements for drug companies and food producers

###