



# Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

*An organization of farmers, gardeners, and consumers working to promote an economically viable and ecologically sound Vermont food system*

## **Action Advisory** **Tell Senator Leahy to Co-Sponsor the** **Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act of 2009**

For decades low levels of antibiotics have been added to animal feeds and fed to healthy animals to boost growth rates, mostly on large-scale, confinement livestock operations. In fact, an estimated 70 percent of the antibiotics and other antimicrobial drugs used in the United States are fed to farm animals for non-therapeutic purposes.

It has long been recognized by public health organizations and agencies around the world that such uses are producing resistance to these drugs by a growing number of human disease-causing bacteria. Many of these antibiotics are identical or closely related to some of the most important antibiotics used to fight serious illness in humans. As a result, an estimated 90,000 Americans die each year from infections that were previously treatable with these drugs – and this threat to human health continues to grow.

The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act of 2009 (S.619) was introduced in the US Senate on March 17<sup>th</sup> by Senator Kennedy and others. It would require that the FDA, prior to approval of a new animal drug, determine that it presents “no harm to human health due to the development of antimicrobial resistance attributable to the nontherapeutic use of the drug”. It would withdraw approvals for drugs that continue to pose such risks. S.619 does not prevent or interfere with the use of these drugs in animals that are sick or injured and require treatment.

S.619 has been endorsed by the American Medical Association, the World Health Organization, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations and hundreds of other medical, scientific and family farm organizations, including NOFA Vermont. It has attracted a growing number of Senate co-sponsors, including Senator Sanders.

To date, Senator Leahy has not joined his colleagues in agreeing to co-sponsor this critical legislation. We are asking our members and all Vermonters to contact Senator Leahy’s office and urge him to lend his support and his prestige to this important effort to address this serious and growing public health issue.

More information about the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act of 2009 and related issues is available from the Pew Campaign on Human Health and Industrial Farming --  
<http://www.saveantibiotics.org/>

### **Contact Senator Leahy:**

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<http://leahy.senate.gov/>



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