



**IN BRIEF**

To help preserve the efficacy of antibiotics important in human medicine, SB 27 ensures their judicious use in the production of livestock and poultry.

**THE PROBLEM**

The overuse and misuse of antibiotics, especially those important in human medicine, contributes to antibiotic resistance as a growing public health threat.

The majority of antibiotics are sold for use in livestock with insufficient veterinary oversight. In fact, current law does not require any veterinary oversight or a prescription to administer antibiotics to livestock. Even though, according to the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA), there is no scientific reason to use antibiotics to promote growth in livestock, nothing in current law prohibits the use of antibiotics for growth promotion.

Also, while antibiotic stewardship programs are required in all California hospitals to help reduce the use of antibiotics and rates of antibiotic resistance in humans, there is no requirement that veterinarians and livestock producers follow antibiotic stewardship principles.

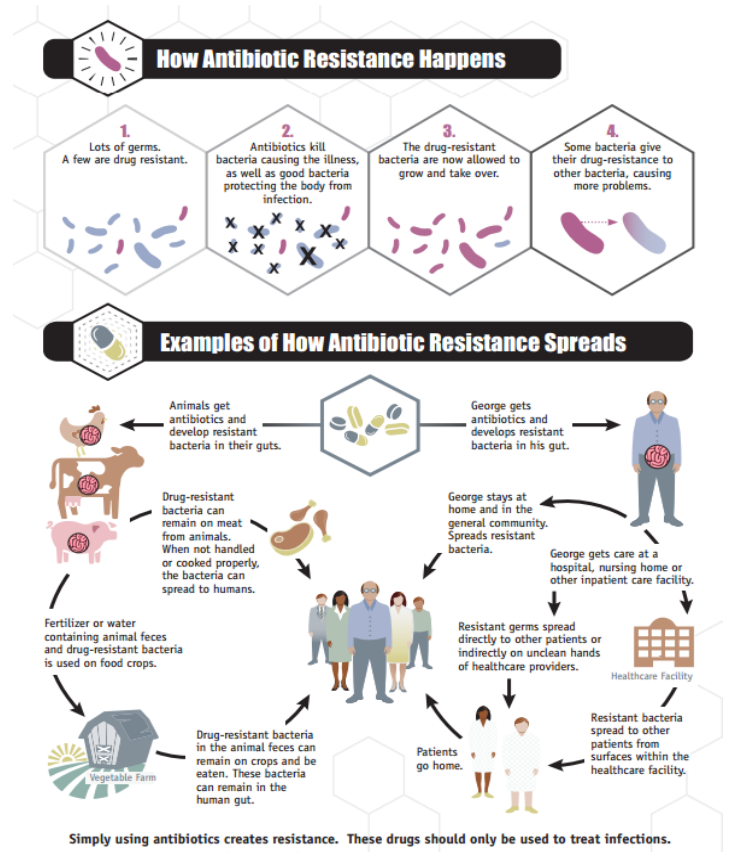
Further, while antibiotic sales data are collected, the actual use of antibiotics in livestock is not monitored and a comprehensive system to monitor emerging trends of antibiotic resistant bacteria on farms does not exist.

**BACKGROUND**

Antibiotic resistance is a known major public health threat. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has deemed antibiotic resistance its top public health threat for 2014. They estimate at least 2 million people are infected with – and at least 23,000 people die from – antibiotic resistant infections every year, resulting in at least \$20 billion in direct health care costs and at least \$35 billion in lost productivity.<sup>1</sup>

Antibiotic resistance means that bacterial infections can no longer be treated with antibiotics. Over what are often short periods of time, bacteria can evolve to resist antibiotics that would otherwise threaten their existence. Resistance accelerates as more antibiotics

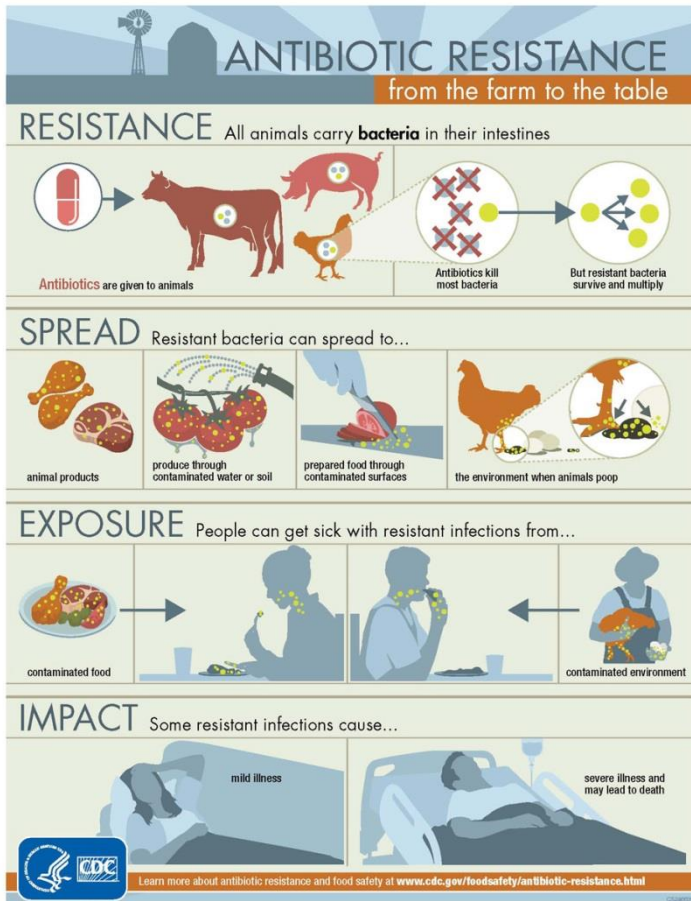
are used. The resistant bacteria can transfer from livestock to humans by entering the food supply or through the environment.



According to FDA data, at least 70 percent of all medically important antibiotics are sold for use in livestock.<sup>2</sup> Medically important antibiotics are antibiotics critical for therapeutic use in humans, such as tetracycline and penicillin, both of which are used to treat common infections in humans such as pneumonia and urinary tract infections. Additionally, the use of medically important antibiotics has grown in the past few years. Between 2009 and 2012, the FDA reports that sales of medically important antibiotics for use in livestock increased by 16%.

Medically important antibiotics are often administered to livestock and poultry without veterinarian oversight. While many livestock producers do consult with a veterinarian, a livestock producer in many cases can simply obtain an antibiotic over the counter. According to the FDA, in 2012, 97% of the medically important antibiotics sold for use in livestock were sold over-the-counter. At least 94% are administered through feed

and water, while the rest are either administered via injection or orally.



## THE SOLUTION

A first-in-the-nation law, SB 27 will:

1. **Require prescriptions for antibiotics administered to livestock.** A medically important antibiotic (antibiotics used in human medicine) cannot be used except under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian. This means a prescription is required and these antibiotics cannot be obtained over the counter.

2. **Prohibit growth promotion.** A medically important antibiotic cannot be used to promote growth or improve feed efficiency. The drugs can only be used to prevent, control, or treat disease.

3. **Track antibiotic use and antibiotic resistance.** The Department of Food and Agriculture must develop a program to track the use of medically important antibiotics and to track emerging patterns of resistance. The tracking of antibiotics used must include the type of drug used, the number of livestock on which the drug was used, the species of livestock, the duration of the administration of the drug, the purpose for which the drug was administered, and the type of disease being treated. The department must report annually to the Legislature on this data. This data can help lead to a better understanding of the issue, can help inform policy decisions, and can better elucidate antibiotic use patterns on farms.

4. **Promote the judicious use of antibiotics.** The Department of Food and Agriculture must develop regulations to promote the judicious use of medically important antibiotics in livestock. The regulations will include stewardship guidelines on the proper use of medically important antibiotics for disease prevention. This ensures that medically important antibiotics are used only when necessary and so veterinarians and producers always choose the correct antibiotic.

## SUPPORT

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about the CDC’s work on antibiotic resistance, please see their “Antibiotic Resistance Threats in the United States 2013” <http://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/threat-report-2013/pdf/ar-threats-2013-508.pdf> and the “CDC’s Top Ten: 5 Health Achievements in 2013 and 5 Health Threats in 2014” <http://blogs.cdc.gov/cdcworksforyou24-7/2013/12/cdc%E2%80%99s-top-ten-5-health-achievements-in-2013-and-5-health-threats-in-2014/>.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on antibiotics used in livestock please see the “2012 Summary Report on Antimicrobials Sold or Distributed for Use in Food-Producing Animals” by the Food and Drug Administration: <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/ForIndustry/UserFees/AnimalDrugUserFeeActADUFA/UCM416983.pdf>.