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McDonald's Corporation and the Danish Veterinary Institute Awarded for Efforts to Preserve Power of Antibiotics

CHICAGO, IL -- The Alliance for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics (APUA) honored McDonald's Corporation and scientists at the Danish Veterinary Institute at its 2003 Annual Leadership Award Reception, held today at the 43rd International Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy in Chicago. Each year, APUA recognizes outstanding global contributions and commitment to preserve the power of antibiotics. APUA has affiliated chapters in 43 countries with scientists and clinicians working to contain antimicrobial resistance. This year, APUA honored recipients for their leadership to reduce the overuse of antibiotics in food animals for the protection of human health.

An award was presented to McDonald's Corporation in recognition of its new *Global Policy on Antibiotics* instituted in June of this year that requires its meat suppliers to phase-out use of antibiotics for animal growth promotion by the end of 2004 if they are also approved for use in human medicine. The McDonald's policy also encourages suppliers to comply with its new detailed "Guiding Principles for Sustainable Use."

McDonald's developed its *Global Policy* in collaboration with a coalition of organizations and individuals interested in improving antibiotic usage within food animal agriculture. Environmental Defense, an environmental advocacy group, and Elanco Animal Health, an animal pharmaceutical company, initially partnered with McDonald's to form the coalition, which included meat suppliers Tyson Foods and Cargill. Also participating were Dr. Thomas O'Brien of Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, Dr. Marian Dawkins of Oxford University, England and Bon Appétit Management Company.

"McDonald's corporation has immense influence on meat production practices," said Dr. Stuart Levy, APUA President. "By asking producers that supply over 2.5 billion pounds of chicken, beef and pork each year to eliminate growth-promoting antibiotics, McDonald's is leveraging its multinational strength to help protect global public health."

Dr. Frank M. Aarestrup, Dr. Henrik C. Wegener, and colleagues at the Danish Veterinary Institute were honored by APUA "in recognition of their research on the feasibility of food animal production without the use of antimicrobial growth promoters."

In 2000, Dr. Wegener helped to organize the World Health Organization (WHO) Consultation that produced the *WHO Global Principles for the Containment of Antimicrobial Resistance in Animals Intended for Food*. Similarly, in 2002, he was instrumental in facilitating a panel review of the effects of the 1998 Danish ban on antibiotic growth promoters by a WHO panel of international experts. This year, the results of the review were published in a WHO report in which the panel concluded, "Under conditions similar to those found in Denmark, the use of antimicrobials for the sole purpose of growth promotion can be discontinued."

Dr. Aarestrup led several surveillance and research projects at the Danish Veterinary Institute that were critical in the WHO Panel's assessment of the Danish ban. His numerous publications have contributed significantly to greater understanding of the human, animal, and environmental health effects of antimicrobial use in food animal production.

"The collaborative scientific research and public policy initiatives championed by Professors Aarestrup and Wegener and their colleagues at the Danish Veterinary Institute contribute to the significant effort towards global improvement of antibiotic use in food animal production and support APUA's overall goals to improve human health, food safety, and animal health." said Dr. Levy.

APUA has addressed these areas of mutual concern through its Facts about Antibiotics in Animals and the Impact on Resistance (FAAIR) Project, which sought to evaluate the scientific evidence for potential human health consequences of antimicrobial use in food animal production. The APUA "FAAIR Report," written by a multidisciplinary panel of scientists and physicians, was published as a Supplement to the June 1, 2002 issue of *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. The experts concluded that the elimination of nontherapeutic use of antimicrobials in food animals would lower the burden of antimicrobial resistance in the environment, with consequent benefits to human and animal health. At present, APUA is engaged in dialog with an expert committee representing a broad spectrum of stakeholder opinions with respect to the importance of antimicrobial usage data. The committee and APUA are identifying priorities, potential sources and methods for collecting such data that can be used to guide future research efforts and regulatory policy in US food animal production. The results of the evaluation by the interdisciplinary panel will be published in 2004.

More information about these and other APUA projects is available online at www.apua.org.

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Founded in 1981, the mission of the Alliance for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics is to improve antibiotic use and contain antibiotic resistance through research and education worldwide. APUA is a non-profit organization with chapters in 46 countries. To help promote its ambitious public health goals, APUA relies on leadership from a broad range of influential stakeholders from academia, industry, government and philanthropy.