



**OXFAM**

I am writing to request your support for a resolution that would encourage Sanderson Farms to adopt an enterprise-wide policy to phase out the non-therapeutic use of medically important antibiotics in its poultry operations. As the only major US poultry company that publicly denies the scientific link between antibiotic use and growing antibiotic resistance, Sanderson Farms lags behind its competitors and changing consumer tastes, undermines the health of the public and its own workers, and poses an economic risk to shareholders.

Sanderson Farms has stated, "There is not any credible science that leads us to believe we're causing antibiotic resistance in humans." This stance ignores the scientific consensus that antibiotic use breeds resistant bacteria, which is recognized by every major medical authority. Sanderson's position has led to substantial negative press (e.g., "Poultry Producer Sanderson Farms Stands Its Ground: It's Proud to Use Antibiotics," NYT, 8/1/16). By justifying the unnecessary use of antibiotics, the company has created a material risk for shareholders—including reputational damage, loss of market share associated with changing consumer preferences, and potential litigation.

Several major meat producers and restaurant chains have taken action to reduce the use of antibiotics, often directly in response to consumer demand. Many of Sanderson's competitors have much stronger policies in place. Consumers are increasingly concerned about injudicious antibiotic use, and restaurants are taking action. McDonald's recently achieved its commitment to source chicken raised without medically important antibiotics in the U.S., and Wendy's will make this transition by 2017. Panera Bread and Chipotle Mexican Grill prohibit most antibiotic use in their livestock supply chains.

An emerging body of scientific research points directly to the link between antibiotics use in industrialized animal food production and increasing antibiotic resistance in humans. Specifically, research by multiple institutions around the world (including, among others, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine,<sup>i</sup> Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health,<sup>ii</sup> University of Arkansas Fayetteville,<sup>iii</sup> University Hospital Maastricht in the Netherlands,<sup>iv</sup> and Guangdong Pharmaceutical University School of Public Health<sup>v</sup>) have found that the exposure of poultry processing workers to antibiotics in poultry flesh have led to dangerous resistance to antibiotics. One study estimates that poultry processing workers are 32 times more likely to carry antibiotic-resistant E. coli bacteria.

OXFAM AMERICA  
226 CAUSEWAY STREET, 5TH FLOOR  
BOSTON, MA 02114-2206  
USA

TEL +1 (800) 776 9326 FAX +1 (617) 728 2594

[www.oxfamamerica.org](http://www.oxfamamerica.org)

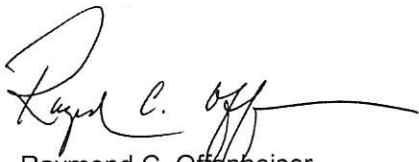
The CDC states that, "Scientists around the world have provided strong evidence that antibiotic use in food animals can lead to resistant infections in humans" and that "simply using antibiotics creates resistance... these drugs should only be used to treat infections."<sup>vi</sup> The United Nations,<sup>vii</sup> the President's Council,<sup>viii</sup> and the scientific community agree that antibiotic use in animal agriculture must be addressed to ensure the continued efficacy of antibiotics.<sup>ix</sup>

Sanderson Farms produces roughly 7 percent of the chicken eaten in the United States. To help protect public health from antibiotic-resistant infections, Sanderson Farms must quickly phase out the use of medically important antibiotics for growth promotion and disease prevention throughout its supply chain. A vote in favor of this proposal would protect the health of consumers and workers, and would position Sanderson Farms as a leader in responding to consumer demand.

We would be happy to address any questions or concerns you may have regarding this proposal. A copy of the proposal is attached to this letter.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Raymond C. Offenheiser  
President, Oxfam America

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<sup>i</sup> Price, Lance B., Graham Jay P., Leila G. Lackey, Amira Roess, Vailes Rocio, and Silbergeld Ellen. "Elevated Risk of Carrying Gentamicin-Resistant Escherichia Coli among U.S. Poultry Workers." *Environmental Health Perspectives* 115, no. 12 (2007): 1738-742. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4540022>.

<sup>ii</sup> Meghan F Davis, Lance B Price, Cindy Meng-Hsin Liu, Ellen K Silbergeld, "An ecological perspective on U.S. industrial poultry production: the role of anthropogenic ecosystems on the emergence of drug-resistant bacteria from agricultural environments," *Current Opinion in Microbiology*, Volume 14, Issue 3, Pages 244-250

<sup>iii</sup> Hanning, Irene, David Gilmore, Sean Pendleton, Scott Fleck, Ashley Clement, Park Si Hong, Erin Scott, and Steven C. Ricke. 2012. "Characterization of Staphylococcus aureus Isolates from Retail Chicken Carcasses and Pet Workers in Northwest

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Arkansas." *Journal Of Food Protection* 75, no. 1: 174-178. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 22, 2016).

<sup>iv</sup> A. E. van den Bogaard, N. London, C. Driessen and E. E. Stobberingh, "Antibiotic resistance of faecal Escherichia coli in poultry, poultry farmers and poultry slaughterers," *Journal of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy*, 2001. <http://jac.oxfordjournals.org/content/47/6/763.full>

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<sup>v</sup> J. Björkroth, Editor, "Genotypic and Phenotypic Markers of Livestock-Associated Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* CC9 in Humans," *Applied and Environmental Microbiology*, 2016. "The most striking finding was that all 19 MRSA CC9 isolates from livestock workers exhibited the characteristics of resistance to several classes of antibiotics and absence of the IEC genes, indicating an overlap between genotypic and phenotypic markers of livestock association." <http://aem.asm.org/content/early/2016/04/18/AEM.00091-16>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/narms/faq.html>

<sup>vii</sup> "AMR is a problem not just in our hospitals, but on our farms and in our food, too. Agriculture must shoulder its share of responsibility, both by using antimicrobials more responsibly and by cutting down on the need to use them, through good farm hygiene," said Dr José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO. <http://www.un.org/pga/71/2016/09/21/press-release-hl-meeting-on-antimicrobial-resistance/>

<sup>viii</sup> "The Advisory Council shall provide advice, information, and recommendations to the Secretary regarding programs and policies intended to... maximize the dissemination of up-to-date information on the appropriate and proper use of antibiotics to the general public and human and animal healthcare providers."

U.S. Federal Government, White House, Office of the Press Secretary. *Executive Order -- Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria*. September 18, 2014. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/18/executive-order-combating-antibiotic-resistant-bacteria>

<sup>ix</sup> For more information, please see this public filing in response to Sanderson's statement of opposition to this board resolution: <https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/812128/000121465917000301/g112170px14a6g.htm>