Dear Chairmen Frelinghuysen & Aderholt, and Ranking Members Lowey & Bishop,

We are writing to express our continuing strong support for an additional $35 million for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for research, monitoring and surveillance under the Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria (CARB) strategy.

Efforts in both human health and animal health are leading to more judicious use of antibiotics. A key development in animal health is the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) Judicious Use policy, which has eliminated production uses of medically important antibiotics and put all remaining therapeutic uses of antibiotics administered in feed or water under the supervision of a veterinarian. Under this policy that was fully implemented on January 1, 2017, medically important antibiotics used in food animals are used only to fight disease under the supervision of a veterinarian.

A stronger Federal system of data collection, monitoring and enhanced surveillance will greatly assist in understanding the impacts of these changes. We urge $10 million for the USDA’s National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS). The USDA has worked with the FDA’s Center for Veterinary Medicine to plan activities that will add to our understanding of how antibiotics are used in veterinary medicine and animal agriculture and how those uses affect antibiotic resistance levels. This information will not only assist policymakers but will assist veterinarians and producers as they make management decisions about the use of antibiotics on their farms.

Agriculture groups are working on a voluntary basis to make this effort a success. Each of the major species groups – cattle, dairy, swine and poultry – are working with university scientists to gather sector data that will be transmitted to and used by the USDA in assessing the use of antibiotics nationally. It is critical that Congress provide this funding to ensure USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) can be a full partner in this effort.

In the FY16 Omnibus funding bill, Congress provided approximately $378 million in additional CARB funding, but the entire increase was for activities in human health, none in animal health.
Those in veterinary medicine and animal agriculture have worked hard to implement FDA’s Judicious Use strategy and voluntarily collect data and we need our federal partners be equipped with the funding to collect data and do the research to measure the impact of these changes and produce information to help producers and veterinarians become better users of these products.

Please ensure that veterinary medicine and animal agriculture are included as partners with the human health community in the CARB strategy and provide the funding to the USDA for its activities under the CARB strategy.

On behalf of the undersigned organizations:

Alliance for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics
American Association of Avian Pathologists
American Association of Bovine Practitioners
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases
American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners
American Association of Swine Veterinarians
American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians
American Dairy Goat Association
American Dairy Science Association
American Feed Industry Association
American Goat Federation
American Veterinary Medical Association
Animal Health Institute
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Consumer Federation of America
Emory Antibiotic Resistance Center
March of Dimes
Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals Multi-state Initiative
National Association of Federal Veterinarians
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Farmers Union
National Grain and Feed Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Pork Producers Council
National Turkey Federation
North American Meat Institute
Pure Cultures
The Fecal Transplant Foundation
United Egg Producers
United States Animal Health Association