

Statement of Fedele Bauccio, Chief Executive Officer, Bon Appétit Management Company, before the House Rules Committee, July 13, 2009

Chairwoman Slaughter, honorable members of the Rules Committee, I am Fedele Bauccio, CEO of Bon Appétit Management Company, a national onsite restaurant company that serves 80 million meals each year at 400 cafés in 29 states. As a company we are committed to two goals, culinary expertise and social responsibility, and in that vein I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to voice my strong support for H.R. 1549, The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act.

It is imperative that we, as a country, discontinue the use of antibiotics for nontherapeutic purposes in animals. In addition to being harmful to the animals themselves, this common practice of using antibiotics as feed additives has led to dramatically increased antibiotic resistance in humans and has become a serious public health problem. I feel so strongly about this issue that I have banned most meat that has been raised in this manner to be served in my restaurants, and I'd ban it entirely but there isn't enough supply for us to be able to make that commitment yet.

Our concern about this issue goes back seven years. In 2002, I learned that an estimated 70 percent of the antibiotics used in this country are fed to farm animals that are not sick in order to promote growth or prophylactically treat diseases caused by questionable animal husbandry practices. As I learned more and realized how widespread these practices are in the meat production industry, Bon Appétit formed a partnership with Environmental Defense Fund to look at how we could take the lead and discourage antibiotic use in meat and poultry production. Our partnership resulted in the creation of the farthest-reaching corporate policy on antibiotics use to date: Bon Appétit only buys chicken raised without the "nontherapeutic" routine use of human antibiotics as feed additives. In 2005, we extended this policy to turkey breast. We took this policy another step further and, since March 2007, we only serve hamburgers made from natural beef with no trim. While there is no strict legal definition of "natural," our suppliers commit to using no antibiotics, no added growth hormones, no animal by products in feed and treating the animals humanely.

Our biggest challenge in implementing our antibiotics policy has always been sourcing the products. We have recruited both major poultry producers as well as small, local producers as suppliers. We only purchase food from those who provided written confirmation of their compliance. But there are not enough suppliers who meet our standards everywhere. We use a purchasing preference to induce suppliers in many markets, but we don't have the concentration of business in all markets to buy enough chicken or turkey or beef in some states to tip the scales as we have in other locations, and we can't find a national pork producer who will commit at all. Many producers are afraid to change, even with an economic incentive. They need a push. H.R. 1549 could be that lever of change we need.

From 2006 to 2008, I served as a member of the Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production. I learned from physicians, poultry producers, farmers and industry representatives on the committee, as well as those who testified before us. I came away from that experience enriched and much better educated about animal husbandry. One of the many things I concluded is that there is absolutely no good reason, and certainly no good

moral reason, for feeding medically important human antibiotics to animals that we eat. None.

The bottom line is, Americans want safe food. Food is nourishment. It shouldn't be something that does us harm. Antibiotic resistance is harmful. These drugs were meant to treat humans and animals when we're really sick and need them, not as a feed additive for animals so they won't be effective when humans need them. Let's get our priorities straight. The time to ban antibiotics as a feed additive is long overdue. I strongly support this measure. Thank you.