WHY IS THIS CHANGE TAKING PLACE?

The incidence of antimicrobial-resistant infections in humans has the potential to pose a serious public health threat. Evidence shows that overuse and improper use of antibiotics in livestock can lead to an outbreak of antimicrobial resistant infection in the animals, which can then spread to humans. For example, in 2017 an outbreak of multidrug-resistant Salmonella was linked to dairy calves, leading to the hospitalization of numerous children across 15 states.

Ensuring the judicious use of medically important antimicrobial drugs in animals can help. In an article published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Doctor Megin Nichols says, “As a veterinarian, one of the things I learned from this outbreak is how important it is for veterinarians and human doctors to use antibiotics responsibly.”

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO NEXT

Work closely with your veterinarian, who can provide oversight and make recommendations as to when antibiotics are needed and which ones they should prescribe. If you don’t currently work with a veterinarian, the time to connect with one is now.

Implement best practices to prevent the introduction and spread of disease—both among animals and among the people working on your farm. Simple measures, like cleaning procedures, complying with animal welfare standards, and basic hand-washing can go a long way in reducing the need for antibiotics altogether.