



Sanderson Farms shareholders agree with board: Don't stop antibiotics use

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Dive Brief:

- Sanderson Farms shareholders voted against a proposed companywide policy that would have phased out the use of medically important antibiotics, according to [Meat + Poultry](#).
- The proposal was brought about by [As You Sow](#), a group that promotes corporate accountability on the environment, on behalf of the Gun Denhart Living Trust and other investors.
- The Sanderson Farms board sent a letter to its shareholders emphasizing the company's commitment to finding alternative methods of controlling avian disease and reducing the use of antibiotics. Those steps include partnering with drug companies to phase out medically important antibiotics when other choices become available.



Dive Insight:

Sanderson Farms' antibiotics stance is one almost the opposite of other major poultry producers — such as [Tyson Foods](#), [Pilgrim's Pride](#) and [Perdue](#) — which all have made a commitment to decreasing or eliminating antibiotics from their chicken supply.

Reducing antibiotic use for food animals is a trend that came from concerns that exposure to antibiotics in food could eventually lead to [antibiotic resistance in humans](#). Big food players, such as McDonald's and Wendy's, have committed to use chicken raised without medically important antibiotics, while Panera Bread and Chipotle Mexican Grill now prohibit most antibiotic use in their livestock supply chains.

According to the Rand Corporation, failing to tackle antimicrobial resistance could cause the world population to decrease by as much as 11 to 44 million lower by the year 2050 than it would have been.

Still, Sanderson Farms has publicly said [it disputes this belief](#). Last August, the company even started an ad campaign to address common misconceptions about antibiotic use in poultry production.

The vote shows that Sanderson's shareholders are in agreement with this belief, and continues to monitor the situation in-house. The company stated that it's "judicious use of these drugs in a responsible manner is consistent with our moral obligation to provide safe food products, treat animals humanely and conserve natural resources."