

## Investors renew push to get Sanderson Farms to cut antibiotic use

By Lisa Baertlein | September 13, 2017

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - Sanderson Farms Inc shareholders have filed another proposal aimed at convincing the third-largest U.S. poultry producer to stop giving medically important antibiotics to healthy chickens for disease prevention.

Sanderson is the only large U.S. chicken producer that has not committed to curbing the use of those life-saving drugs.

The new proposal from the non-profits **As You Sow** and Oxfam America will get a vote from investors at the company's annual meeting in early 2018 if it is not successfully challenged by the company with regulators.

More than 70 percent of medically important antibiotics in the United States are sold for use in farm animals. Scientists have warned that routine use of antibiotics in healthy chickens and other food animals contributes to the rise of dangerous antibiotic-resistant superbug infections, which kill at least 23,000 Americans each year and pose a significant threat to global health.

A similar proposal at Sanderson Farms' annual meeting in February this year failed with only around 30 percent backing of shareholder votes cast.

"We expect to see a majority vote this year," said **Austin Wilson**, environmental health manager at **As You Sow**.

Sanderson Farms was not immediately available for comment.

In the past Sanderson Farms has said that the preventative use of antibiotics in food animals has not been shown to harm human health. It also said that there was not sufficient demand from shareholders or consumers to change its antibiotics policy.

The company, which is a low-cost chicken producer, currently is running an advertisement that takes aim at food industry "marketing gimmicks" and touts its own use of "the facts" and "common sense".

Meanwhile, major chicken buyers including fast-food giant McDonald's Corp are in various stages of switching to chicken raised without antibiotics important to human health.