

What the European animal medicines industry does to fight antibiotic resistance



Antibiotic resistance presents a global challenge to both human and animal health. There is growing concern that the human and animal antibiotic toolbox is becoming insufficient to address the challenge of resistant bacteria, and there is a clear need for concerted action that balances public health and the environment and the need to treat sick animals – the One Health approach.

As such, AnimalhealthEurope is a signatory association of the Global Animal Health Sector Commitments and Actions on Antibiotic Use, which includes the following principles:



- PRINCIPLE 1:** Protect animal health and welfare in a unified One Health approach
- PRINCIPLE 2:** Use antibiotics judiciously and responsibly
- PRINCIPLE 3:** Promote disease prevention and increased access to products and expertise
- PRINCIPLE 4:** Invest in development of products for prevention and treatment
- PRINCIPLE 5:** Increase knowledge, transparency and communication

The animal medicines industry plays an active role in ensuring both the responsible use and the continued efficacy of all solutions for treating and preventing disease in animals. For the past two decades, AnimalhealthEurope and its membership have been proactively leading the charge against the challenge of antibiotic resistance development on a number of different levels. This includes actions such as: providing input into policy tools; promoting responsible veterinary and animal health practices; awareness-raising and more.



Our actions

1. ADHERING TO REGULATORY ASSESSMENT

Before antibiotics even get to the veterinarian, farmer or pet owner, as with all medicines, they undergo thorough review by the EMA¹. This includes proof of efficacy and an assessment of resistance risk, which encompasses not only resistance of bacteria in animals but also in foodborne bacteria, as well as risk management of any potential human impact. Our members strictly apply good manufacturing practice ensuring that medicines comply with all quality requirements.

2. COMMUNICATING RESPONSIBLE USE

To try to limit the potential for stimulating the development of resistant bacterial strains, the animal health sector has communicated with users for many years regarding responsible use of all medicines. Our core message remains that antibiotics should always be handled responsibly and only used under prescription. They should be used **“as little as possible, as much as necessary”**. The industry also contributes to awareness-raising through active involvement in events organised at both EU – e.g. European Antibiotics Awareness Day – and national level.

3. ENGAGING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

At European level the animal medicines industry along with the vets and farmers associations initiated EPRUMA², a stakeholder platform, back in 2005, promoting the responsible use of medicines in animals. Membership of EPRUMA has grown to include: veterinarians; farmers and agri-cooperatives; manufacturers of animal medicines and diagnostics; feed manufacturers; professionals working in animal health, sanitary security and sustainable agriculture; and pharmacists. A number of national platforms established over the years are also associate members of EPRUMA and promote responsible use messages at national level: RUMA³ (est. 1997); VetResponsible⁴ (est. 2008); AMCRA⁵ (est. 2012); and a platform run by the Dutch SDa⁶.



4. PROMOTING DISEASE PREVENTION PRACTICES

With the objective of reducing the need to use antibiotics, member companies and national associations, alongside national Responsible Use platforms, promote a **“Prevention is better than cure”** approach. This is in the context of a number of best practices that contribute to disease prevention. Practices include: good hygiene; nutrition; prevention through vaccination; health management; etc. Brochures aimed at vets, farmers and pet owners promoting best practices and responsible use have been published in several EU languages by stakeholder platforms and the animal health industry.



5. HELPING DEVELOP RESPONSIBLE USE STANDARDS

To ensure wide-spread dissemination of the responsible use message, animal medicines companies and associations have contributed proactively to the development of guidelines at EU level as well as internationally via Codex⁷, and the OIE⁸, and in many European countries. The animal health sector has also contributed in time, commitment and funding to standards developed by numerous responsible use platforms.

6. CONTRIBUTING TO POLICY

To help establish science-based action plans to address the AMR challenge, AnimalhealthEurope, its membership and national responsible use platforms contributed to consultations on both the first and second EU action plans on AMR. Industry also contributed to the EMA Antimicrobial Expert Group response to a series of questions posed by the European Commission on AMR in veterinary medicine. Our member associations also work with local authorities in member states to help form national action plans to address the challenge.

Antibiotics play a vital role in animal health and welfare. They help prevent animal suffering and death, and diminish waste of animal-sourced food products caused by disease, while ensuring a safe and sustainable food supply. They also help protect people from potential outbreaks of diseases that can pass from animals to humans. When addressing this global health challenge, it is important to cooperate from a One Health perspective to achieve the appropriate balance between protection of public health and the environment and the need to maintain high standards of animal health and welfare.

More information on:

AnimalhealthEurope.eu/AntibioticAction

7. IMPROVING LABELLING AND PRACTICES

Significant thought and resources have been devoted to use, control and application of antimicrobials. This has resulted in numerous actions toward better promotion of the responsible use of animal medicines in general. Our members firmly adhere to requirements in terms of marketing and distribution, and responsible use guidelines are increasingly being included in labels.

8. MONITORING, SURVEILLANCE AND USAGE STUDIES

With the objective of collecting harmonised data that can be used to identify possible risk factors that could lead to the development of resistance, we help to better inform policy on antibiotic use. The animal health sector has a longstanding commitment to monitoring and surveillance of resistance since 1998. We support the CEESA⁹ programme – a unique pan-European programme of monitoring resistance in foodborne and veterinary pathogens. To date, no such other programme exists. Our members also contribute to usage studies conducted by other bodies, including the EMA's ESVAC¹⁰ report, as well as OIE usage reports. National members and companies also contribute to a number of national reports regarding use and resistance data such as DANMAP (DK), SVARM (SE), VARSS (UK), etc. Some member companies have also started working directly with food producers to develop tools to help monitor and manage use of antibiotics from the very beginning of the food chain.

9. INVESTING IN R&D

The European animal medicines industry invests on average 8% of its annual turnover in R&D to continuously provide new and improved solutions for managing infectious diseases, such as prevention through vaccines, immunostimulants, or novel anti-infectives for suitable veterinary use, etc.

10. ADVOCATING LEGISLATION CONDUCIVE TO INNOVATION

In the ongoing EU revision of the legal framework for veterinary medicinal products AnimalhealthEurope members call for antibiotics to be given special status to encourage innovation. We support proposals for EU decision-making on the categorisation of critically important antibiotics to be entirely science-based, following the recommendations of EU scientific experts within the EMA. We also support proposals for legislation that would curb unnecessary prophylactic use of antibiotics in livestock, provided there is no negative impact on animal health.

1. European Medicines Agency: <http://www.ema.europa.eu/>

2. European Platform for the Responsible Use of Medicines in Animals: <http://www.epruma.eu/>

3. Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (UK): <http://www.ruma.org.uk/about/>

4. Spanish platform to promote responsible use of veterinary medicines: <http://www.vetresponsable.es>

5. Center of Expertise on Antimicrobial Consumption and Resistance in Animals (BE): <http://www.amcra.be/en>

6. Dutch animal health authority: <http://www.autoriteitdiergeneesmiddelen.nl/>

7. FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme: <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/en/>

8. World Organisation for Animal Health: <http://www.oie.int/>

9. Executive animal health study centre: <http://www.ceesa.be/>

10. European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption: http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/index.jsp?curl=pages/regulation/document_listing/document_listing_000302.jsp



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