

Ensuring responsible antimicrobial use in EU food production

MEP Interest Group on AMR Annual Meeting

 #MEPvsAMR



29 June 2021 | 15:00 - 17:30 CEST

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The overuse of antimicrobials in agriculture and aquaculture, alongside human medicine, is a major concern globally; it contributes to the development and spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) – a major health threat. Resistant microorganisms can develop, spread to the environment and contaminate the food chain – this poses a serious threat to healthcare as common infections are becoming increasingly difficult to treat.

Thanks to improved good practice in biosecurity, prevention, and surveillance, there has been growing progress in the EU in promoting the responsible use of antimicrobials in food production. The latest [ESVAC report](#) showed that sales of antibiotics for animal use in Europe fell by more than 34% between 2011-2018.

The EU's [Farm to Fork Strategy](#) aims to further decrease antimicrobial sales for farmed animals and in aquaculture by 50% by 2030; this will be supported by the Regulations on [Veterinary Medicinal Products](#) and [Medicated Feed](#). This legislation is hailed as the most ambitious framework for more prudent and responsible use of antimicrobials in food production, and will be the main focus for the 2021 Annual Meeting of the [MEP Interest Group on AMR](#).

A leading network of 18 MEPs committed to boosting actions to tackle AMR at EU level, the Interest Group will convene on 29 June to discuss opportunities for the transition to a sustainable model of food production that ensures responsible antimicrobial use and contributes to the global response to tackling AMR.

AGENDA

15:00-15:10

● WELCOME BY

Sarah Wiener MEP, Chair - MEP Interest Group on AMR
Susana Pombo, Director-General – Directorate-General of Food and Veterinary, Portugal

15:10-16:10

● SESSION 1 – TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION SYSTEM IN EU

The Veterinary Medicinal Products and Medicated Feed Regulations will put in place a wide range of provisions to support responsible use of medicines, particularly antimicrobials. They also pave the way for a list of medically important antimicrobials reserved for human use as well as a system of data collection on antimicrobial use across species.

While representing major progress, there remains concerns whether Member States and the food production sector are ready to implement and comply with the provisions or whether they are sufficiently aware of the system changes needed to move towards a more sustainable model of food production.

- What are the barriers to more sustainable animal husbandry that minimises antimicrobial use? How can animal welfare be improved?
- What critically important antimicrobials should be reserved for human use?
- How can innovation and technology support implementation of best practices and minimise the need for antimicrobial use?

- How can we ensure that pharmaceuticals not classified as antimicrobials will not be used to compensate for poor animal husbandry?

Introduction

Sarah Wiener MEP, Chair – MEP Interest Group on AMR

Panel discussion

Jeroen Dewulf, Professor in Veterinary Epidemiology – Ghent University

Imke Lühns, Board Member – Doctors Against Factory Farming

Sirpa Pietikäinen MEP, Member – MEP Interest Group on AMR

Peter Stevenson, Chief Policy Advisor – Compassion in World Farming

Eva Maria Zamora Escribano, Head of Unit for Animal Nutrition and Veterinary Medicines – European Commission

Moderated by Jean-Yves Stenuick – Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) Europe

16:10-16:20

● BREAK

16:20-17:20

● SESSION 2 – SHAPING THE GLOBAL AGENDA

Third-country operators in many parts of the world do not produce food to the high standards of the EU, yet they will not be subject to the EU ban on the prophylactic use of antimicrobials for groups of animals. This will pose a threat to European consumers and expose EU food producers to unfair competition.

The EU has a key role to play in driving markets and advocating for changes at the global level such as concerning the use of antimicrobials as growth promoters. The global agreement on the use of antimicrobials and the chapter on sustainable food systems of free trade and investment agreements are additional potential avenues for the EU to shape the global agenda.

- How can we ensure a level playing field for food imports when prophylactic use of antimicrobials for groups of animals will still be allowed?
- What would the food production component of a global agreement on the use of and access to antimicrobials look like?
- How can responsible antimicrobial use be integrated into free trade and investment agreements between the EU and third countries?
- What role can the EU play in championing responsible antimicrobial use at the upcoming UN Food Systems Summit?

Introduction

Sarah Wiener MEP, Chair – MEP Interest Group on AMR

Panel discussion

Stephanie Ghislain, Trade and Animal Welfare Programme Leader – Eurogroup for Animals

Manuela Ripa MEP, Member – MEP Interest Group on AMR

Birthe Steenberg, Secretary-General – AVEC EU Poultry

Keith Sumption, Chief Veterinary Officer of Animal Production and Health Division – Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)

Koen Van Dyck, Head of Unit for Bilateral International Relations – European Commission

Moderated by Zoltán Massay-Kosubek – European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)

17:20-17:30

● CLOSING REMARKS

Sarah Wiener MEP, Chair – MEP Interest Group on AMR



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