

Preserving antibiotics: Animal health sector united and supporting Europe's farmers in responsible use efforts

Brussels, 18 November 2020; 'Stay United to Preserve Antimicrobials' is the theme of this year's antibiotic awareness day and the animal health industry believes that the focus throughout the year must remain firmly on these parallel objectives of preserving the efficacy of antibiotics and reducing antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Greater recognition of efforts already made in Europe's animal sector must also form the basis of both continued awareness-raising and European policy measures.

A number of European countries have already recorded a 50% reduction in sales of veterinary antibiotics through voluntary plans and measures agreed at national level amongst cross sectors of vets, farmers, animal health and feed sectors, and authorities, etc. These plans include improved knowledge-sharing on breeding, establishment of animal health management plans and application of a greater focus on prevention and biosecurity measures.

Commenting on the animal sector's contributions so far, Roxane Feller AnimalhealthEurope's Secretary General said:

"Across Europe the average reduction in sales of antibiotics stands at 34.6%, but the animal health situation in a given country does not feature in any data collection, and so is not part of the broader picture. It is important that a balance remains between ensuring Responsible Use of antimicrobials, reducing the need to use antibiotics, and protecting animal health and welfare.

There is of course good reason to be concerned about the potential dangers of overuse of antibiotics in both humans and animals, and the animal health industry shares that concern. Nevertheless, targeting reductions in sales of antibiotics for animals alone will not be enough to achieve the objectives of EU policies and action plans to address AMR. The animal health industry believes that a greater understanding of which actions have led to high levels of Responsible Use in some countries should be encouraged and built upon. A firm focus must remain on knowledge transfer and training for farmers, access to animal health management and disease prevention tools, and continued awareness raising to ensure greater uptake of Responsible Use practices on all farms, in all countries."

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Notes for editors:



AnimalhealthEurope represents 12 of Europe's leading manufacturers of animal medicines and 17 national associations in 19 countries, covering 90% of the European Market. The animal health industry provides tools for veterinarians to care for around 700 million animals in Europe, supporting 5.7 million livestock farms and 85 million pet-owning households across Europe.