

## Year-on-year reduction in veterinary antibiotic use shows Responsible Use well-established in Europe

Brussels, 21 October 2020; 25 European countries register a 34.6% overall decline in sales of antibiotics for animal health purposes since 2011. This is the result of more than a decade of efforts to increase disease prevention and improve animal health management through better hygiene practices, biosecurity measures, vaccine use and nutrition.

Now in its tenth year of publication, the European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption (ESVAC) report also outlines continued decreases in sales of veterinary antibiotics regarded as medically important: 24.4% for 3rd- and 4th-generation cephalosporins; 69.8% for polymyxins, 4.2% for fluoroquinolones and 74.4% for other quinolones.

This is a clear demonstration that Europe is on the right path to improving animal health and taking a more prevention-focused approach in livestock farming. Farmers together with veterinary oversight are actively playing their part in reducing the need to use antibiotics in animals. Variations between member states are noted in the report, so continued efforts are needed to ensure all farmers everywhere have access to preventive medicines and all tools needed to better manage animal health, as well as the means to measure progress while taking local specificities into account.

“The continued decline in the need to use antibiotics for animal health purposes is a true indicator of both progress and change. Veterinarians, farmers and the animal health industry, along with the authorities, are clear in their minds of what can be achieved through continued and coordinated efforts to protect the efficacy of antibiotics and slow the development of antibiotic resistance. This effort must now be cemented across all countries through greater awareness-raising and a more focused use of the wider veterinary toolbox to ensure better animal health,” said Roxane Feller, AnimalhealthEurope Secretary General.

“We support reducing the need for antibiotics, but the impacts should be closely monitored. For example, that this does not negatively impact animal welfare on those farms who have already put in place many preventive measures and already dramatically reduced their use of antibiotics. We would strongly discourage the promotion of ‘raised without antibiotics’ policies or labels, as antibiotics should always be allowed for vets to treat bacterial infections in animals. This can be the difference between life and death.”

Earlier this year the substantial progress made in the animal sector was recognised in the [2019 European Court of Auditors report on AMR](#). The report also recognised that further measures outlined in the new EU Regulations for veterinary medicinal products and medicated feed, which will apply from 2022 will further support responsible use of antibiotics in animals. These measures include: the ban on the preventive use of antibiotics in groups of animals and the ban on the preventive use of antimicrobials through medicated feed.

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Notes for editors:

- The European Medicines Agency (EMA) started the [ESVAC project](#) in April 2010. Now containing data from 31 countries, it is a harmonised approach for the collection and reporting of data on the use of antimicrobial agents in animals from EU and European Economic Area (EEA) Member States.
- [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.