



EURACTIV

Event Report | June 2022

One Health approach: Time for implementation

Supported by 

<https://eurac.tv/9W3Q>



One Health approach: Time for implementation

Event Report | June 2022

<https://eurac.tv/9W3Q>

In the wake of the COVID pandemic, and with the race against antibiotic resistance becoming ever more pressing, it is more important than ever to make the 'One Health' approach a reality.

The idea is to create a collaborative, cross-cutting approach which recognises the interconnections between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment with a view to achieving optimal health and well-being outcomes.

In this Event Report, EURACTIV explores how this concept can go from words to action and what role healthy animals play for One Health, in terms of producing safe and sustainable food but also in preventing outbreaks of diseases and their transmission between other animals or people.

Contents

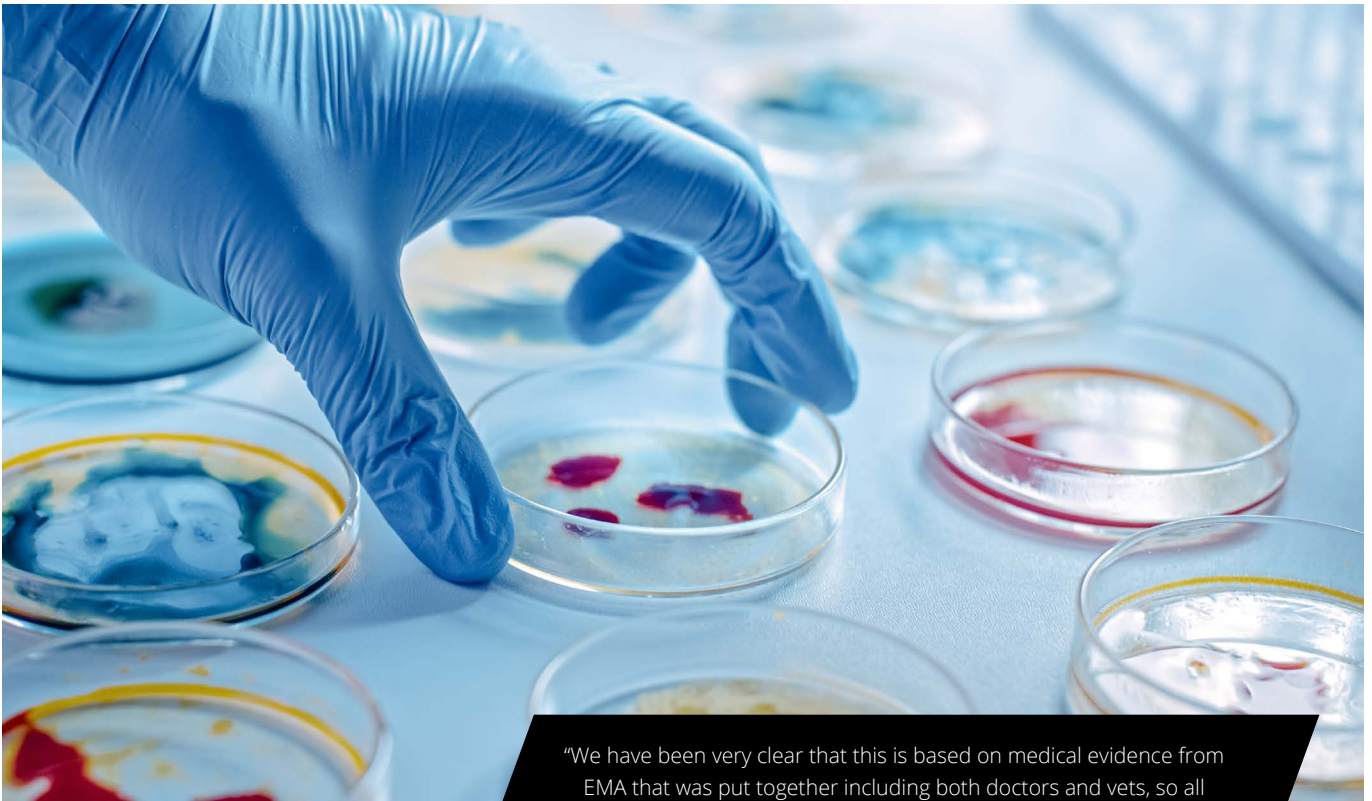
Commission defends 'humans only' antimicrobials list saved by MEPs	4
WOAH chief: Protecting environment key to ensuring human, animal health	6
Investment in animal health systems is essential for our future One Health	8



Commission defends ‘humans only’ antimicrobials list saved by MEPs

.....

By Julia Dahm | euractiv.com



“We have been very clear that this is based on medical evidence from EMA that was put together including both doctors and vets, so all sides of the issue have been factored in,” the Commission official said.

The European Commission’s list of antimicrobials to be reserved for human use only is based on sound scientific evidence, an EU official stressed after EU lawmakers dropped their objection to the act implementing it.

The list is meant to help avoid the development of resistance against antibiotics and other antimicrobials in Europe by reserving some crucial substances for humans and thus minimising their intake as they could

no longer be used for animals.

“For us, it is an important first step to have this list – it is an important issue of principle,” Claire Bury, deputy director at the Commission’s directorate-general for health and food safety (DG SANTE), told EURACTIV on the sidelines of a recent event.

The EU’s medicines agency EMA has [recently published the list](#), as required by the [regulation](#)

[on veterinary medicinal products](#), in a bid to combat the scourge of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

According to a recent study published in the medical journal the Lancet, AMR caused more than 1.2 million deaths in 2019 worldwide while antimicrobial-resistant infections played a role in almost five million deaths.

EMA recommendations guided the Commission’s implementing

acts to designate “antimicrobials or groups of antimicrobials to be reserved for the treatment of certain infections in humans.”

However, the Commission’s plans have drawn criticism not only from stakeholders but also from MEPs.

Initially, lawmakers in the Parliament’s health and environment committee [voted in favour](#) of an objection to the Commission’s draft implementing act that contains the contentious list of antimicrobials.

MEPs urged the Commission to withdraw the draft and propose a new one in line with the recommendations in the [World Health Organisation’s list “Critically Important Antimicrobials for Human Use.”](#)

During the committee debate, several MEPs slammed the proposal for being “unambitious” and maintaining the status quo.

However, last week the European Parliament plenary rejected the objection with 280 votes against 269 and 46 abstained, thus saving the Commission’s implementing act and the antimicrobials list.

List based on medical evidence

The Commission’s Bury insisted the list will “have an impact in practice,” especially as the rules are set to apply also to imports from third countries, where many of the antimicrobials in question are still used.

She also emphasised that the Commission’s decision about which substances make or do not

make the list had been based on scientific assessments from the EMA.

“We have been very clear that this is based on medical evidence from EMA that was put together including both doctors and vets, so all sides of the issue have been factored in,” she said.

One of the main points of contention is the omission of colistin, an antibiotic currently used in human medicine but also for livestock animals like pigs and cattle.

However, Bury pointed out that “the use has declined very significantly over the last few years.”

Some EU countries have already phased out the use of colistin for animals, and the Commission is “encouraging and working with member states to keep going in that direction,” she added.

Moreover, the official stressed that the list would be actively monitored and regularly revised in the future, taking into account any additional information stakeholders will submit.

Thinking human and animal health together

Another way to tackle antimicrobial resistance by managing trade-offs and interactions between human and animal health – like in the case of the Commission’s list – is through the more holistic ‘One health’ approach.

Policymakers, stakeholders or other decision-makers following this approach try to incorporate

human health, animal health, and a healthy environment into their policies and decisions.

“Improving our understanding of the complex linkages between the wider environment, biodiversity, climate change and emerging infectious disease is essential to improving health crises and reducing the risk of future pandemics,” Dieter Schillinger, deputy director-general at the International Livestock Research Institute, explained at a recent event.

While many institutions at the EU and national level today subscribe to the principle of one health, especially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, how consistently it is applied can vary considerably.

“Obviously, one health is a principle that we in the Commission espouse too,” Bury stressed during the event, adding it was enshrined in the mission statement of Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides.

At the same time, however, she admitted the EU executive could do more in this area than it is doing so far, pointing out that many of those working in DG SANTE were still approaching issues “from the perspective or the training that they have or the policy they are responsible for”.

“We need to get them to think out of the box a bit more,” she concluded.

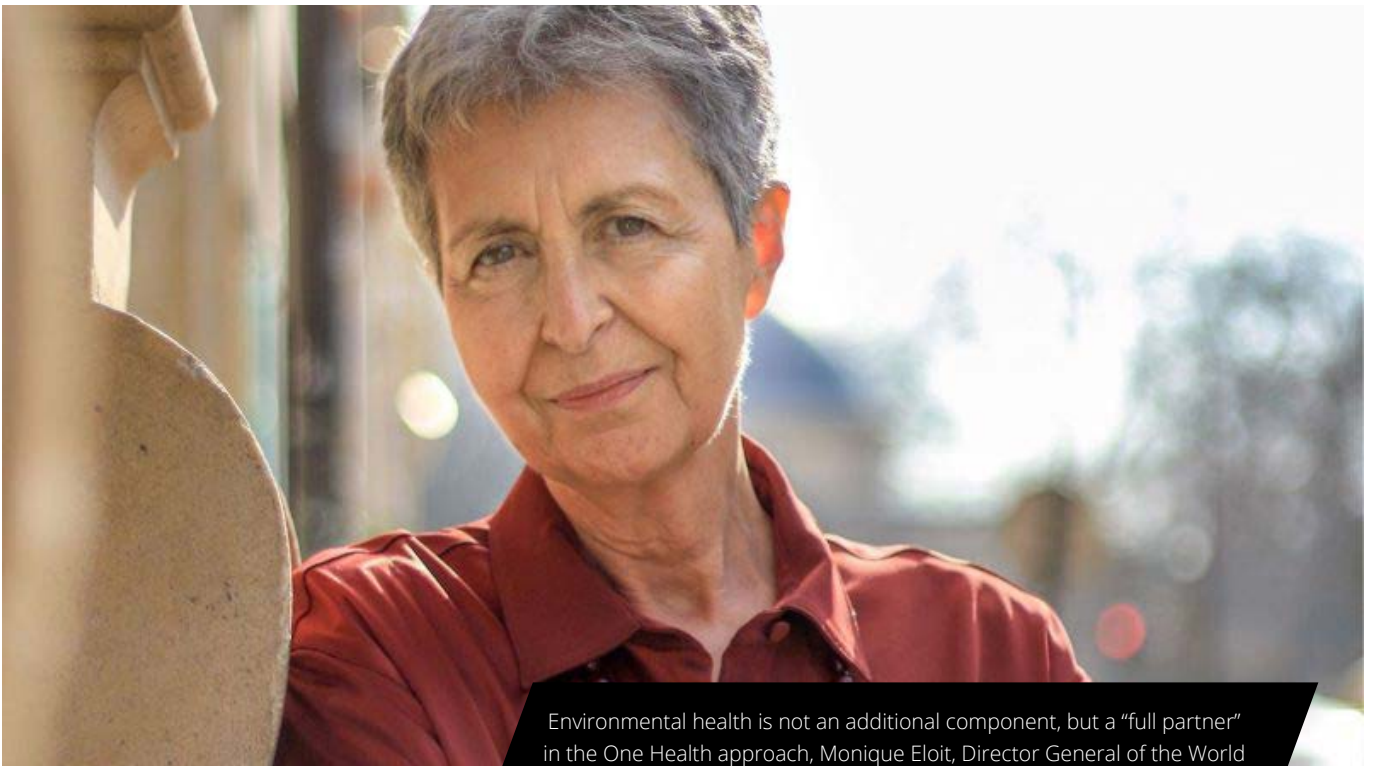


INTERVIEW

WOAH chief: Protecting environment key to ensuring human, animal health

.....

By Gerardo Fortuna and Natasha Foote | euractiv.com



Environmental health is not an additional component, but a “full partner” in the One Health approach, Monique Eloit, Director General of the World Organisation for Animal Health, said. [WOAH]

The COVID-19 crisis has shown there is no way to ensure human and animal health without broader consideration of environmental health, Monique Eloit, Director-General of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, formerly OIE), told EURACTIV in an interview.

The One Health approach was

initially coined in the context of zoonosis, but now the concept has become much broader. Is this a good thing, or should we take the idea back to its roots?

It’s true that initially, the One Health approach was seen as strictly related to human and animal health and was not so much taking into account environmental health.

One of the lessons of the COVID-19 crisis is that it became evident to a broader group that one sector should not work in isolation but that all sectors involved in health have to work together. This should not be limited to the strategy of a single organisation: this approach also needs to be applied by policymakers and resource partners to fund any

action plan.

The environment is not an additional component but an integral component for achieving better global health. We cannot merely involve human and animal health without considering a more holistic approach considering their interdependence with the environment.

Focusing now on antimicrobial resistance (AMR), this is heavily discussed at the international level, but how do you see the debate and action at the national level?

The discussion at the national level on AMR is exactly the same as the one we have at the global level. The difference is that at the national level, countries not only have to discuss AMR strategies but also need to ensure their concrete implementation in the field. However, in many countries, there are additional concerns that we do not experience here in Europe.

Here, our main challenge is how to use better and control medicines, but the regulation related to veterinary or human medicines is well respected. But many countries from other regions face challenges pertaining to the black market, counterfeit products and illegal import and export of medicines.

They also have to address the lack of awareness of farmers, doctors, veterinarians or professionals concerning what AMR is, how we can fight it, and how we can use alternatives to antibiotics, such as vaccines or better biosecurity practices for instance.

As a holistic approach, One

health involves many actors from different fields. How can we ensure better coordination between these?

For several years, we have had a Tripartite alliance between the WHO [World Health Organisation], the FAO [Food and Agricultural Organisation of the UN] and WOA. More recently, UNEP [United Nations Environment Programme] has joined us to form the Quadripartite.

Over the past months, we have developed a joint plan of action, whose first component is strengthening health services. Through this component, we'll see how we can better develop relationships at the national level between the different departments involving human health, animal health and environmental protection.

The idea is to work together to advocate at the national level, with policymakers and national authorities, to see how they can better coordinate and collaborate in responding to shared health challenges.

Of course, additional factors will also need to be taken into account, notably, investment in human resources, education, awareness, and training for health professionals.

On the human health side of things, there's a lot of discussion about incentivising research on new antibiotics. Is this also a discussion in the world of animal health?

Of course, indeed, if you look at the strategy of the World Health Organisation (WHO) or the global action plan on AMR. If you look at

the one of the World Organisation for Animal Health, you will see that they have more or less the same structure, as they were developed in parallel in the framework of our One Health collaboration.

This is because we share the same objectives and challenges – prudent use of antimicrobials, but we also look at alternatives for the future. How can we better develop new vaccines, new molecules or alternatives to antibiotics?

In this context, collaborating with the pharmaceutical industry is also crucial: pharmaceutical companies are critical partners in researching and developing alternatives to antibiotics.

At the EU level, there is currently a controversy about colistin and the list of antibiotics that are used for human health. What is your take on this situation?

It is true that several antibiotics, including colistin, are considered 'critical' for treating human infectious diseases and are vital to preserving their efficacy.

Over the years, we have developed a list of antibiotics that are not recommended to be used in animals. With this list, we aim to guide countries in adopting appropriate practices to preserve the efficacy of antibiotics that are critical to human health.



PROMOTED CONTENT

DISCLAIMER: All opinions in this column reflect the views of the author(s), not of EURACTIV Media network.

Investment in animal health systems is essential for our future One Health

.....

By Roxane Feller | AnimalhealthEurope



[AnimalhealthEurope]

W*e are only as strong as the weakest health system in our interconnected world."*

This sentence uttered by UN Secretary-General António Guterres during the pandemic has resonated around the globe and brought decision-makers and the private sector together to devise innovative, forward-looking and multisectoral

solutions to the challenges we face now and in the future.

Roxane Feller is the Secretary General of AnimalhealthEurope.

We are living in a time of 'One World, One Health', and recent events continue to highlight the interconnectivity and interdependence of our world today. Just

as we know that disease knows no borders, so we realise that humanity faces many challenges that require global, joined-up and actionable solutions.

Protecting animal health is an important action for addressing some of these challenges and it is a step that deserves greater attention. The increasingly crowded nature of our

planet – on which man and animals live in increasingly close proximity – has enhanced the potential for zoonotic diseases to jump between species. And with today's evolving ecosystems, trade globalisation, increasing urbanisation and an ever-expanding population, diseases can spread as never before.

It has long been noted that around 60% of human infectious diseases have an animal source, with around 72% of the newly emerging infectious diseases stemming from wildlife. This is why the animal health industry has been a long-term supporter of 'One Health', a concept raised centuries ago by Hippocrates and reaffirmed in the 1800s by Dr. Rudolf Virchow, which highlights the need for a joined-up approach to tackling health-related issues.

In today's Europe, veterinarians, farmers and other animal owners, are facing never-before-seen animal diseases such as Lumpy Skin Disease or African Swine Fever. And in a One Health spirit they are also faced with dealing with climate change impacts, trying to mitigate environmental impacts and emissions from livestock farming, and playing their part in addressing the rise of antimicrobial resistance. All these challenges mean one thing: we must do more to prevent diseases in animals from the outset.

Better animal health plays a key role in protecting our collective health in a number of ways:

Innovation in preventive veterinary medicines, the widespread use of vaccines and the development of vaccine banks are playing an increasingly important role in combatting infectious diseases that can pass between

people and animals.

Other animal health tools such as ectoparasiticides also play an important role in helping to stop the spread of infectious diseases transmitted by insects like ticks and mosquitoes, protecting the health of both animal and human populations at the same time.

From a food safety, security and affordability perspective, better animal health also supports public health. We know that preventing disease in animals plays a key role in delivering higher quality and safe meat, fish, eggs and dairy produce to market. And as today's consumers are increasingly interested in having information on the provenance and quality of their food, digital traceability tools allow the agri-food sector to access important information on the animal from farm to fork.

From an environmental perspective, better animal health can also help to prevent food losses and farm inefficiencies. Use of modern animal health technologies make it easier to control and eradicate disease without having to slaughter healthy animals, by making it possible to differentiate vaccinated animals from infected animals.

And highly effective parasite controls have also helped farmers to combat the huge losses that can be caused by worm infections. This helps the food processing industry to reduce food losses from products that are unacceptable for human consumption, contributing to a more sustainable food production and lessening the environmental footprint.

The One Health concept has been operative in animal health innovations for decades, but there remains a clear need for public investment in animal disease surveillance and prevention. This includes increased investment in the least developed countries – those most threatened by animal diseases and from where many viruses emanate.

The global pandemic has demonstrated to the entire world that trying to solve today's issues and preparing for those arising tomorrow cannot be accomplished with yesterday's approaches.

If more people working in the animal, public health and environmental sectors adopt a One Health mindset, and if governments adequately invest in ALL health systems, there will be a greater opportunity to address the challenges occurring at the interface between humans, animals and ecosystems.



For information on
EURACTIV Event Reports...

Contact us

Gerardo FORTUNA

Agriculture & Health Editor
gerardo.fortuna@euractiv.com
tel. +32 (0) 2 788 36 69

Marco VENOSTA

EU Affairs Executive
marco.venosta@euractiv.com
tel. +32 (0) 2 226 58 19