

# Antimicrobial Resistance: A Threat to Humans and Animals

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a global concern, and the World Organisation for Animal Health works alongside international partners and stakeholders to develop processes and tools to combat the spread of AMR in animals and humans.

## What is antimicrobial resistance?

- Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) occurs when microorganisms that cause disease **stop responding** to drugs and medicines that were once effective in treating them.
- When antimicrobial drugs are administered **incorrectly or excessively in humans and animals, the drugs may stop working against infections** they once successfully treated or cured. This is known as **AMR**.

## What are antimicrobial drugs?

- Antimicrobial drugs are life-saving medications used to treat **infectious diseases, including those caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites**.
- Animal and human health depends on the availability, effectiveness, and appropriate use of antimicrobial drugs.
- The OIE supports Veterinary Services in Member Countries with guidance and tools to help combat AMR.



In 2015, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance. Developed through a collaboration with the OIE and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the WHO Global Action Plan calls for a “One Health” approach.



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization

## What is the OIE doing to fight AMR?

Veterinary Services play a critical role in educating people about AMR and encouraging the prudent use and management of antimicrobial products in animals.

The **OIE Strategy on Antimicrobial Resistance and the use of antimicrobials** was published in November 2016 and is available at [www.oie.int/amrstrategy](http://www.oie.int/amrstrategy).

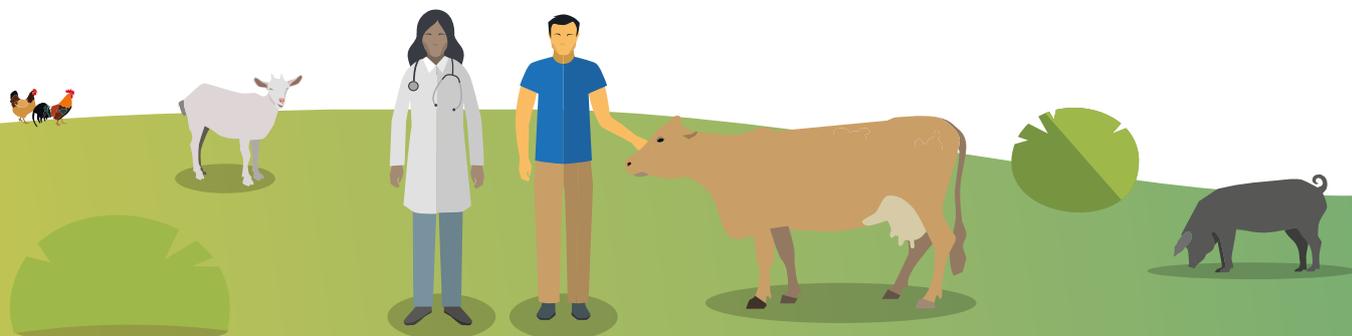
### The OIE supports Member Countries through:



- OIE Standards
- Awareness and communications
- Data collection, surveillance and response initiatives
- Training and education of animal health professionals
- Assistance in developing legislative and regulatory frameworks
- Research into vaccines and alternative antimicrobial products
- Good governance and capacity-building efforts

## What is the ‘One Health’ Approach?

“One Health” means that issues and solutions are viewed through the lens of collaboration between public health and veterinary medicine, agricultural interests, financial entities, environmental activists, and consumers. OIE Standards, adopted democratically by all 180 Member Countries, support the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobial drugs in animals as part of the “One Health” approach.



## Reducing the impact of AMR

**Prevention is better than cure.** At the OIE's 83rd General Assembly in 2015, all 180 Member Countries made a commitment to combatting antimicrobial resistance and promoting the prudent use of antimicrobial agents in animals through the adoption of Resolution 26. This shared global commitment highlights the increasing awareness of the threat posed by disease-resistant pathogens.

The OIE supports Veterinary Services and policymakers in developing policies and legislative frameworks to govern the import, manufacturing, distribution and use of antimicrobial products and other medications used in animal healthcare.

The OIE's World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) tracks epidemiological reports and information submitted by Member Countries. A parallel database is in development specifically to establish a global surveillance system on antimicrobial use in animals.



**The AMR database is designed to:**

- Monitor the type and use of antimicrobial products
- Measure trends over time
- Trace circulation and use patterns globally
- Evaluate the quality and authenticity of antimicrobial products in use

## What are OIE Standards?

OIE international Standards are science-based and adopted by 180 Member Countries. They are recognised around the world as the benchmark for animal health and zoonotic diseases. OIE Standards are reviewed and updated annually to reflect advances and developments in animal health and sciences.

**The OIE has published a full range of standards dedicated to fighting antimicrobial resistance, for both terrestrial and aquatic animals, regarding:**



- General recommendations for controlling antimicrobial resistance
- National antimicrobial resistance surveillance and monitoring programmes
- Monitoring of the quantities and usage patterns of antimicrobial agents used in food-producing animals
- Responsible and prudent use of antimicrobial agents in veterinary medicine
- Risk analysis for antimicrobial resistance arising from the use of antimicrobial agents in animals

The OIE has also published a List of Antimicrobials of Veterinary Importance.

The Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Pathway helps Member Countries develop processes to achieve compliance with OIE Standards. Current editions of OIE Standards are published on the OIE website ([www.oie.int](http://www.oie.int)) in English, French, and Spanish.

[www.oie.int/antimicrobial-resistance](http://www.oie.int/antimicrobial-resistance)

