Aiming for a more prudent use of antimicrobials: the progress of the animal health sector

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR): a global threat

Some infectious diseases are becoming harder to treat because usual treatments are losing their efficacy against numerous pathogens.

Drug-resistant pathogens can spread between and within animals, humans, plants and through the environment.

In one year, 1.27 million human deaths were the direct result of AMR

Global burden of bacterial antimicrobial resistance in 2019: a systematic analysis.
The Lancet, 2022.

By using antimicrobials more prudently, and following a One Health approach, AMR can be curbed.

We must all be part of the solution

The animal health sector is on the right track

Key findings of the Sixth Annual Report on Antimicrobial Agents Intended for Use in Animals

Global antimicrobial use in animals has declined by 27% in 3 years

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<th>2016</th>
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<td>120 mg/kg</td>
<td>107 mg/kg</td>
<td>88 mg/kg</td>
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Trends obtained from data reported by the 72 participating countries that consistently provided quantitative information on antimicrobials in animals from 2016 to 2018.

Antimicrobial use is expressed in mg/kg of biomass. It is determined by adjusting the quantity of antimicrobial agents reported (mg) by the live domestic animal biomass (kg) each year. This indicator can be compared between regions and over time.

The use of antimicrobials critical to human health is declining in animals

-62% Polypeptides

-43% Macrolides

An antimicrobial is classified as highest priority and critically important when it is the sole therapy or one of few alternatives to treat serious human diseases. These antimicrobials are vital for human health. We must preserve their efficacy by using them in a sustainable way.

The use of antimicrobials for growth promotion is no longer a practice in 69% of participating countries

In 2020,

108 countries do not use antimicrobials for growth promotion

40 countries use antimicrobials for growth promotion

Growth promotion means using antimicrobials in healthy animals to boost productivity. This practice should be phased out in the absence of a risk analysis.
Monitoring the use of antimicrobials to foster better practices

The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, founded as OIE) is the global leader in the fight against antimicrobial resistance in animals. As part of its efforts, the Organisation has spearheaded the development of a global database on antimicrobial agents intended for use in animals.

Type of reporting

Every year, we invite countries to participate in our data collection on antimicrobial agents intended for use in animals.

Sustained country participation

The data collection process has seen an overall increased engagement from countries, who have improved their capacities to provide more detailed information over time. Despite the disruptions caused by COVID-19, nearly 160 countries have participated in the last round.

The most complete set of data on antimicrobials in animals

A report has been published every year since 2016 to provide an analysis for the global understanding of the use of antimicrobials in the animal health sector.

The sixth annual report provides an analysis of data from 2018 covering:

72% of the world’s domestic animal biomass

Measuring the use of antimicrobials in animals is key to improve the practices of the animal sector, thereby contributing to curb antimicrobial resistance under a One Health approach.