



Communique: AMR, Animal welfare and One Health Forum

Co-hosted by ReAct Asia Pacific and
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Since February 2019, when nearly 40 civil society organisations came together to address the urgent need to end misuse of antimicrobials in farming and issued the Bangkok Declaration on AMR, food systems and farming, governments have not done enough to end antibiotic overuse in the food sector, nor commit adequate resources to shift to more sustainable farming practices.

Whilst there have been some welcome overall reductions in use of antimicrobials in farmed animals, use of antimicrobials to promote fast growth or prevent disease across groups of animals remains commonly practiced. Inappropriate use of antimicrobials in animal agriculture to compensate for poor husbandry continues to drive antimicrobial resistance (AMR), impacting food safety, and AMR in manure spread on fields creates spill over into our environment and waterways.

The COVID-19 pandemic has since brought to stark light the potential for serious One Health impacts from the human-animal-environment interface.

On September 5-6 in Rome, G20 health ministers discussed One Health risks including in relation to food systems, pandemic risk and AMR, and issued a communique calling for prudent use of antimicrobials but failing to define clear next steps relating to overuse of antimicrobials in animal agriculture.

With G20 agriculture ministers due to meet on September 19-20 in Florence, it is imperative that they recognise the urgency of the situation and commit to regulate for and enforce a significant improvement in animal welfare conditions for the farming of livestock and end antibiotic overuse in animal agriculture.

A global response is needed and all national governments must take the following steps:

- Introduce and implement a ban on group preventative use and growth promotion use of antimicrobials in farming to align with the World Health Organisation recommendations. Set and enforce clear timelines for full implementation.
- Review progress of National Action Plans for AMR. Develop national roadmaps to overcome challenges and bring sectors together to end the growth promotion and group preventative use of antimicrobials in farming, and to ensure a safe and humane food supply to consumers.
- Support the transition towards humane and sustainable agriculture, avoid further intensification and support and empower small-scale farmers.
- Require the private sector to disclose antibiotic sales and use data. Governments must measure and publicly report on antibiotic sales and use by species, purpose, class and farming system as well as AMR on farms and in the environment.
- Support international efforts to share and harmonise domestic and international antibiotic trade data and to harmonise feed labelling. Antimicrobials should not be included in animal feed for any species.

As well as calling on G20 agriculture ministers to commit to the above necessary actions, this group has discussed further advocacy steps with a focus on the biggest animal agriculture economies including China, US, Brazil and Europe. Civil society groups interested in further exploring international trade in antimicrobials and animal products are invited to come forward.

Signatories

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Appendix

One health principles for addressing the AMR crisis to safeguard public health, consumer rights and animal welfare

The following One Health principles for national governments have been developed by civil society actors in public health, consumer advocacy and animal welfare. The principles should be adopted by governments when shaping national strategies and National Action Plans on AMR. They should also serve as the basis for education efforts involving relevant experts.

One Health principles for antimicrobials in human medicine

- Antimicrobials are universal public goods, and all efforts should be made to promote rational use of antimicrobials by health care providers, and affordability and accessibility of antimicrobials for all within quality health systems that offer universal health coverage, irrespective of their income or nationality
- Innovation and global cooperation in development of new antimicrobials should be promoted, and governments should minimise over-reliance on imports of antimicrobials where possible. Further investment in surveillance systems to monitor the quality of locally available antimicrobials and to tackle counterfeiting is required
- Stewardship and rational use of antimicrobials in human medicine should be complemented by sound diagnostic and epidemiological management systems that support tailored antibiotic use, and monitor and publicly report on antimicrobial use and AMR
- Pharmaceutical companies should be held responsible to avoid pollution associated with manufacture of antimicrobials in accordance with the polluter pays principle

One Health principles for antimicrobials in animal agriculture

- Antimicrobials should not be used across groups of animals to compensate for poor husbandry or conditions, to promote fast growth or routinely prevent disease. Antimicrobials should be reserved to treat individual sick animals with reference to the OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health) list of antimicrobial agents of veterinary importance
- High and highest priority critically important antimicrobials should be restricted to treatment of sick individual animals only
- National Action Plans on AMR should include measures to control and regulate the sale and use of antimicrobials in animal agriculture, and to publicly report on antimicrobial use by species and by farm type. There should be monitoring, surveillance and public reporting of AMR in farmed animals with standardised procedures at centralised laboratories to conduct sensitivity analysis. AMR levels in the environment should also be monitored
- Companies should be held responsible to avoid antimicrobial and AMR pollution associated with use of antimicrobials in animal agriculture in accordance with the polluter pays principle and attention should be paid to the importance of manure waste management
- Empower farmers including smallholders to transition towards humane and sustainable farming systems with rational use of antimicrobials, in particular improved animal husbandry practices, and animal manure management
- Build understanding of the links between husbandry practices, antibiotic overuse and AMR emergence amongst stakeholders in animal agriculture including veterinarians, pharmacists and farmers
- Animal welfare laws and practices should be strengthened and enforced in recognition of the relationship between antimicrobial use and animal welfare practices

- Harmonisation of regulatory efforts and animal welfare laws on antimicrobial use across countries, so that the farmers and producers in certain countries do not get an undue advantage in trade by lowering farming standards
- Further intensification of animal agriculture should be avoided in the interests of public and environmental health, food safety, pandemic prevention, empowering small holder farmers, and animal welfare

One Health principles for consumer rights

- The commercial promotion of antimicrobials in human medicine and veterinary sectors should be controlled to curb misuse and overuse.
- Intellectual property rules should support greater equity and affordability of access to antimicrobials across countries
- Further entrenchment of monopoly control of the food chain should be avoided given intensification is associated with routine antibiotic use in farmed animals. Consumers should be assured full transparency on antimicrobial practices within the food supply chain. This extends to the use of antimicrobials in plant-based agriculture which is an under-recognised contributor to AMR.
- Consumers have the right to a safe food supply. Antimicrobial residues and Antimicrobial Resistant Organisms should be considered as food adulterants, by all the food regulatory agencies across countries and there should be systematic monitoring and public reporting on antimicrobial use and AMR in the food chain
- Humane and sustainable food systems should be promoted for food safety and security, public health, sustainable access to food, local livelihoods and animal welfare

- Reducing animal production and consumption (in countries with high consumption rates) will support significant reductions in antimicrobial use and help address AMR risk within the food system. Remaining consumption should be from humane and sustainable systems.
- Promote farming of plant sources of high-quality protein; and take steps to promote innovations to preserve its nutritive value, increase the access and enhance acceptability of such agricultural products among the general public.

