Veterinary medicines: another step in fighting antibiotic resistance

MEPs adopted new rules to limit the use of antibiotics in farming in order to keep drug-resistant bacteria out of our food.

On Thursday 25 October, MEPs adopted a new regulation on veterinary medicinal products to stop the spread of antibiotic resistance from animals to humans and to ensure that consumers are not exposed to antibiotic residues in food products and to make sure antibiotics remain effective against infection. French EPP member Françoise Grossetête is guiding the file through the Parliament.

Limiting the use of antibiotics

Under the new rules the preventative use of antimicrobials will be limited to single animals and will be allowed only when justified by a veterinarian and where there is a high infection risk. Collective treatments - treating a whole group of animals when only one is sick - will be permitted only where no suitable alternatives exist and after appropriate justification from a veterinarian.

Certain antimicrobials will be reserved for the treatment of humans.

Video
According to the new rules, veterinary medicines should never be used to compensate for poor conditions of animal farming or to make animals grow faster.

**What causes antimicrobial resistance?**

- Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is the ability of micro-organisms such as bacteria and viruses to resist the action of one or more anti-microbial agents
- The most common causes of the occurrence and spread of AMR are the overuse and misuse of antibiotics and the transmission of resistant micro-organisms between humans; between animals; and between humans, animals and the environment.

**EU standards for imports**

Trading partners will have to respect EU standards on the use of antibiotics when exporting food products to the EU.

**Boosting innovation**

Incentives for research on new antimicrobials will be encouraged to increase competitiveness in the veterinary pharmaceutical sector and to fight antimicrobial resistance.

**Animal medicated feed**

The rules on veterinary medicinal products are closely linked to another regulation to ban the preventative and collective use of antibiotics in medicated feed that MEPs also adopted on 25 October. In addition, prescriptions for antibiotic medicated feed will have to be always issued by veterinarians following a proper examination. Spanish S&D member Clara Eugenia Aguilera García is the MEP in charge of steering the legislation through Parliament.

**Next steps**

The new rules will be fully operational as of the end of 2021.

Find out what else MEPs are proposing to fight antimicrobial resistance

Read our overview explaining how the EU improves public health.

**Find out more**

- Press release on the plenary vote (25 October 2018)
- Legislative procedure on veterinary medicines
- Press release on animal feed
- Legislative procedure on animal feed
- Study: stronger bacteria, weaker antimicrobial
- EU action on antimicrobial resistance