



**COPA-COGECA**

**MRSA: The need for a comprehensive and global approach by Neil Cutler**

**FVE- European MRSA Conference 8 April 2008**

# INTRO

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What is COPA-COGECA

The role of EU livestock farmers

How can farmers help in reducing antimicrobial resistance

What farmers expect from partners

The need to coordinate efforts

# What is COPA-COGECA

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- 76 Member organisations
- Representing EU farming community and farm cooperatives in 27 Member States
- Created in 1958 (celebrating 50th this year !)
- Aim at promoting a sustainable EU agriculture

# The role of EU livestock farmers

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- EU livestock farmers want to keep their animals healthy, ensure their welfare, market safe products and make a living through productive and efficient farming.
- The farming community is very well aware of antimicrobial resistance in general and with MRSA in particular and is ready and willing to play its role in reducing this resistance.

# How can farmers help in reducing antimicrobial resistance (1)

COPA-COGECA has been involved for many years in analyzing what role farmers can play in helping to minimize antimicrobial resistance.

For COPA-COGECA a prudent use of antimicrobials aims at

- Preserving the ability to treat microbial infections in man and animals now and in the future
- Preventing the development and transmission of resistant bacteria from animals to humans through the food production chain
- Avoiding dissemination of resistant genes in the environment.

# How can farmers help in reducing antimicrobial resistance (2)

- Farmers can contribute to achieve these aims through **prevention** of disease.
- Good husbandry practices are key to prevention.
- This is by far the best option for sanitary and economical reasons.
- Farmers should be encouraged to work with a team of experts (veterinarians, agriculture advisors.....) so as to raise their general competence.

# What farmers expect from their partners

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- COPA-COGECA is also of the opinion that the improvement in a prudent use antimicrobial use concerns **all of their partners**: From the veterinary pharmaceutical industry to the research industry not forgetting decision makers veterinarians, distributors and feed companies.
- And further down the chain : the processors and retailers....

# The need to coordinate efforts

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EU livestock farmers are willing to be proactive and contribute to the overall debate.

This is why they have engaged:

- at national (UK RUMA) and
- at EU level in many initiatives, just to name one the EPRUMA initiative with IFAH-Europe and FVE

**Should we be going out and engage in partnerships at international level ?**



# CONCLUSION

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- **Mutual understanding** is key as it prevents unintended consequences of single actions.
- EU livestock farmers want to be a part of the solution but are not **THE** solution. It would be wrong to believe that if you stop giving antibiotics to animals that you will solve the problem.
- Need to extend synergies : in particular in **communication** strategies (EP RUMA ?)