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Antimicrobial use in animals in the EU almost halved in the last 10 years due to strong commitment of the animal health sector

23 November 2021 - Today, the European Medicines Agency published its 11th report on the European Surveillance of **Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption** (ESVAC). The report covers data from 31 countries for 2 years (2019 and 2020).

Today's report shows the degree of commitment to sustainable agriculture and responsible use of antimicrobials in the European Union. The great efforts done by the animal health sector over the last years, which include the implementation of best practices that improve health and welfare of animals and minimise disease are paid off with a **decrease of 43.2% of the overall sales** of veterinary antimicrobials between 2011 and 2020, in the 25 countries across Europe that provided data during this period. A **noticeable decrease was seen in the some of the highest-selling countries**. Another very good news is the **decreasing trend seen for the Critically Important Antibiotics**, classified by EMA in the AMEG Category B¹, especially the sales of polymyxins (colistin) which reduced by 76.5 % between 2011-2020.

The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) welcomes the report and its results. It shows the animal health sector is on the right way, which is also underlined by a decrease seen in the resistance of some zoonotic bacteria e.g. *E. Coli*².

FVE is committed to combatting AMR in a 'One Health' approach and following scientific evidence. To be effective, coordinated action towards prudent and judicious use of antibiotics is needed in both animals and people.

FVE, together with EPRUMA³, has been proactively promoting implementation of best practices on responsible use, awareness campaigns, guidelines, and policy papers. FVE is grateful for the whole animal health sector working together **to ensure good health and welfare**, whilst heading towards the goal of reducing antimicrobial sales in agriculture and aquaculture by 50% in 2030 - a Farm to Fork⁴ goal for more sustainable food systems.

The new Veterinary Medicines Regulation⁵ will implement further measures to promote

¹ EMA AMEG Classification: https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/report/infographic-categorisation-antibiotics-use-animals-prudent-responsible-use_en.pdf

² The EU Summary Report on Antimicrobial Resistance in zoonotic and indicator bacteria from humans, animals and food in 2018/2019. <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.2903/j.efsa.2021.6490>

³ European Platform for the Responsible Use of Medicines in Animals. <https://epruma.eu/>

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/food/farm2fork_en

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/6/oj>

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prudent use of antimicrobials. One of the actions will be to get a better insight into antibiotic use per animal species. Reporting on antimicrobial data collection per species will start from 2024 for pigs, poultry and veal calves, by 2027 for all food-producing animals and by 2030 for all animals making that way Europe a true best practice area.

FVE will continue to **work on strengthening disease prevention** to further reduce the need to use antimicrobials. Special attention will be given to support higher usage countries in their efforts, as we observe there is still a large difference in sales between the countries (range from 2.3 mg/PCU to 393.9 mg/PCU and median value of 51.9 mg/PCU).

This 2021 ESVAC report covers data from 31 European countries. It confirms the trend in the decreasing use of antimicrobials in animals from previous reports. FVE is an ESVAC partner.

The total reduction of sales of veterinary antimicrobials in the 25 countries that participated between 2011 and 2020 is:

- Overall sales -43.2%
- Polymyxins (colistin) -76.5%
- 3th and 4th generation cephalosporins -32.8%
- Fluoroquinolones -12.8%

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) is an umbrella organisation of veterinary organisations from 39 European countries, representing a total of around 300 000 veterinarians. The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) strives to promote animal health, animal welfare and public health across Europe.

For further information, consult the FVE website www.fve.org
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- ESVAC [Press release](#)
- [11th ESVAC report](#)