



Final version, 16 May 2013

DOCUMENT ON VETERINARY MEDICINAL PRODUCT (VMP) TERMINOLOGY

What is EPRUMA

EPRUMA is a **multi-stakeholder platform** linking best practice in animal husbandry and the use of veterinary medicines with the aim of optimising animal health and public health. EPRUMA pursues its goal by facilitating and promoting a **co-ordinated and integrated approach**, involving all stakeholders, including European

- veterinarians;
- farmers and agri-cooperatives;
- manufacturers of animal medicines and diagnostics;
- feed manufacturers;
- professionals working in animal health, sanitary security and sustainable agriculture;
- pharmacists;

and communicating with EU institutions, food processing industry, retailers, consumer organisations, etc

Why do we need common definitions?

EPRUMA aims at ensuring **best practice** through responsible use of medicines in the prevention and control of animal diseases. EPRUMA members felt that there were sometimes difficulties in communicating on veterinary medicines due to the lack of common understanding of certain terms. What does prophylactic use mean? What is the difference between an antibiotic and an antimicrobial? Should we say antibiotic resistance or antimicrobial resistance? These are just a few of the difficulties faced when talking about the use of antimicrobials and resistance.

The document was elaborated through task force meetings followed by several consultations in the plenary EPRUMA meetings. Throughout the process the group aligned its work with the Heads of Medicines Agencies, who focused on the definitions of antimicrobial-antibiotic; while the EPRUMA task force mainly focused on the treatment terms: Curative – Prophylaxis – Metaphylaxis. From the start the main aim was to create a common understanding simplifying the terms. As such, rather than opting for



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complicated academic definitions, the group opted for user-friendly easy to understand definitions for a broad public whilst remaining scientifically accurate.

TERMINOLOGY COVERED:

- [Antimicrobials – Antibiotics](#)
- [Treatment : Curative – Prophylaxis - Metaphylaxis](#)
- [Veterinary Prescription and POM](#)
- [Responsible Use](#)

Antimicrobials – Antibiotics

Almost exclusively now, when people talk about antibiotic resistance, they are talking about antibacterial resistance.

Antimicrobials: a general term for any compound with a direct action on micro-organisms used for treatment or prevention of infections. Antimicrobials are inclusive of anti-bacterials, anti-virals, anti-fungals and anti-protozoals.

Anti-bacterials: compound with a direct action on bacteria used for treatment or prevention of infections. **Antibiotics:** synonymous with anti-bacterials.

The task force aligns itself with these definitions with the adopted Heads of Medicines Agency (HMA) agreed definitions: see HMA adopted position on [definitions](#).

It is also noted that when people talk about antimicrobial resistance or antibiotic resistance, actually they mean antibacterial resistance.

Treatment / Therapy

Curative (therapeutic) treatment: Treatment of an ill animal or group of animals, when the diagnosis of disease or infection has been made.

Control treatment (metaphylaxis)(!): treatment of a group of animals after the diagnosis of clinical disease in part of the group, with the aim of treating the clinically sick animals and controlling the spread of disease to animals in close contact and at risk which may already be (subclinically) infected.



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Preventive treatment (Prophylaxis): treatment of an animal or a group of animals before clinical signs of disease, in order to prevent the occurrence of disease or infection

- Prophylaxis with antibiotics should only be applied to animals diagnosed at high risk of bacterial disease. It should only occur under prescription by a veterinarian on the basis of epidemiological and clinical knowledge.
- Prophylaxis with antibiotics should never be applied routinely
- Prophylaxis with antibiotics should not be used to compensate for poor hygiene or for inadequate husbandry conditions
- Prophylactic treatment is also called preventive treatment

Veterinary prescription of an antibiotic

Prescribing is considered to be the action of deciding, instructing and recording which treatment should be administered to an animal.

A **veterinary prescription of an antibiotic** is the prescription provided or dispensed by a veterinarian to the owner or the person taking care of the animal(s) only if he/she has examined the animals and made a diagnosis before the prescription or has personal knowledge of the condition of the animals to make a diagnosis and prescribe¹

A written or electronic prescription is always required when the antibiotic is not dispensed by the prescriber but instead by another dispenser (e.g. pharmacy ...).

Prescription only medicines (POMs)

A prescription- only medicine (POM) is a licensed medicine that is regulated by legislation to require a prescription before it can be obtained. The term is used to distinguish it from over-the-counter medicines which can be obtained without a prescription.

All antibiotics for animals must be POMs.

Responsible use of medicines in animals

Responsible use of medicines in animals is a shared responsibility of key stakeholders which **play a different role in minimising diseases:**

¹ Prescription is defined in the EU by Directive 2001/82, Article 1(21) : [Any prescription for a veterinary medicinal product issued by a professional person qualified to do so in accordance with applicable national law](#)



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Veterinarians: ensuring good management and sanitary rules, proper diagnosis, prescribing of medicines as appropriate and explaining responsible use and administration of prescribed medicines; the veterinary surgeon should maintain clinical records of that herd/flock/individual and records of all prescriptions made.

Farmers: Ensuring good husbandry and management practices such as biosecurity measures aiming to keep groups of animals healthy or to limit the spread of disease within an animal population by :

- Good housing and ventilation,
- Good hygiene,
- Appropriate nutrition,
- Regular monitoring of health and welfare,
- Farm-based health management as a voluntary and flexible tool tailored to record specific actions at individual farms, including records of all treatments,
- Use of vaccination where possible
- Adhering to veterinary advice and prescription.

Pet owners: asking veterinary advice, following vaccination programmes and prescription instructions, ensuring good hygiene, appropriate nutrition and regular monitoring of health and welfare;

Pharmacists: collaborating with veterinarians to promote responsible use; providing professional service to animal owners

Other key stakeholders (i.e. feed industry): contributing to the provision of safe, healthy, affordable and wholesome food ; Adhering to food hygiene laws and guidance to reduce the risk of food borne infections.

When disease occurs, diagnosis and treatment under veterinary care should follow. Veterinary medicines should be used according to the instructions given by the veterinarian and/or medicine manufacturers.

For more see www.epruma.eu