



European Platform for the Responsible Use of Medicines in Animals

EPRUMA calls for science and animal welfare concerns to take precedence over politics

Brussels, 7 July 2021: Incitement to disregard the scientific assessment of the EMA, EFSA and ECDC, could have serious consequences on public health.

In a misguided bid to protect the use of antibiotics for human use and stem the tide of antimicrobial resistance development, some MEPs have tabled a [motion for a resolution](#) objecting to the draft Commission delegated regulation ([DEA 2021/2718](#)) on “Criteria for the designation of antimicrobials to be reserved for the treatment of certain infections in humans”.

With concerns based on outdated beliefs about misuse of antibiotics in the animal sector and a misinterpretation of WHO recommendations*, such a move could seriously jeopardise not only animal health and welfare but also public health and food safety, as well as food security.

It is highly surprising that anyone would argue against the fact that when animals fall ill, they should be treated, especially in cases of life-threatening bacterial infections. It must not be forgotten that there is no product yet available that may replace antibiotics in terms of capacity to treat bacterial diseases in any living being. Both farm and companion animals may get life-threatening diseases which can only be treated by an effective antibiotic. By prohibiting the only therapeutic choice available, these animals will be left unprotected against bacterial infections, leading to the unnecessary suffering and perhaps even death of animals, including pets. This is contrary to Article 13 (Title II) of the TFEU, which recognises animals as sentient beings, requiring we pay full regard to their welfare requirements. Farmer’s livelihoods will also be affected as a result of animal losses.

Moreover, the use of antibiotics in animals is only allowed on veterinary prescription and the use of veterinary medicines “*to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry or lack of care or to compensate for poor farm management*” is expressly banned as per [Regulation 2019/6 \(article 107\)](#). In fact, only in exceptional cases is a group treatment permitted and use of antimicrobials for growth promotion has been banned in the EU since 2006.

Massive efforts have been made by the animal sector over the last decade which has seen a reduction of sales of veterinary antibiotics of over 34% ([2020 ESVAC report](#)) resulting now in lower in use of antibiotics in food-producing animals than in humans as recognised in a recent report from EFSA, EMA and ECDC ([third JIACRA report](#)). Yet, to fight AMR, a One Health approach is needed, with efforts being made in the field of human health, animal health and the environment, in line with the One Health approach promoted by the European Commission in its One Health Action Plan of 2016 and by [WHO](#).

EPRUMA looks to the European Parliament’s ENVI committee to reject this motion for a resolution and ensure continued access to the tools and measures deemed necessary by balanced EU scientific expertise, taking into account the protection of public health, animal health and the environment, to protect the health and welfare of all of Europe’s people and animals. Focusing efforts on supporting means to improve disease prevention and further protect animal welfare will have a much better impact on reducing the need for antibiotics in the animal sector.

EPRUMA

168 Avenue de Tervueren • 1150 Brussels • Belgium

Tel.: +32 2 543 7564

E-mail: info@epruma.eu - Website: www.epruma.eu

Twitter: [@epruma1](https://twitter.com/epruma1)

Ends

Contact: EPRUMA secretariat - info@epruma.eu

* The WHO acknowledges that animal health should be considered before applying controls, and recommends the list set out by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) to be equally considered.

Notes for editors:

EPRUMA is a multi-stakeholder platform linking best practice with animal health and public health. It aims to ensure best practice through responsible use of medicines in the prevention and control of animal diseases.

EPRUMA partners:

- AnimalhealthEurope: The voice of the animal medicines industry
- COPA-COGECA: European Farmers and Agri-Cooperatives
- Diagnostics for Animals
- EGGVP: European Group for Generic Veterinary Products
- FECAVA: Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations
- FEFAC: European Feed Manufacturers Federation
- FESASS: European Federation for Animal Health and Sanitary Security
- FVE: Federation of Veterinarians of Europe

Associate partners (National Responsible Use platforms):

- AMCRA: Centre for Expertise on Antimicrobial Consumption and Resistance in Animals (Belgium)
- RUMA: Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (United Kingdom)
- SDa: Veterinary Medicines Institute (The Netherlands)
- VETRESPONSABLE: Platform for the Responsible Use of Medicines in Animals (Spain)

For further information visit, www.epruma.eu

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