



EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY
SCIENCE MEDICINES HEALTH

15 October 2014
EMA/619398/2014
Press Office

Press release

15% decrease in sales of veterinary antibiotics in Europe

Report indicates encouraging signs of more responsible use of antibiotics in animals

Sales of antibiotics for use in animals fell overall by 15% between 2010 and 2012 in Europe, according to a report published today by the European Medicines Agency (EMA). Of the 20 European countries that provided data over this timespan, 18 observed decreases ranging from 0.4% to 49%.

These sales data are collected annually as part of the European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption (ESVAC) project which is a cooperation between the national authorities throughout the European Union (EU) and is coordinated by EMA.

“These latest figures, which suggest a positive trend in terms of the responsible use of antibiotics in animals in Europe, are highly welcome,” explains David Mackay, the Head of the EMA’s Division on Veterinary Medicines. “However, the report also shows that there is scope for further decrease. Measures to promote the rational use of antibiotics in animals need to continue as part of the European Commission’s action plan against antimicrobial resistance.”

Public health authorities worldwide are confronted with increasing levels of resistance to antibiotics in humans and animals and are engaged in actions at various levels to fight this issue. The responsible use of antibiotics is a key factor to minimise the risk of development of resistance.

According to Member States different factors may have contributed to the decline:

- national programmes and campaigns on the responsible use of antimicrobials;
- restrictions on the use of certain antimicrobials;
- increased awareness of the threat of antimicrobial resistance;
- reduction targets for the use of antimicrobials in animal production in certain Member States;
- fluctuations in size and types of animal populations.

While additional analysis is needed to confirm the main reasons for this decline, the reduction in the use of antibiotics is a positive sign.



At national level, policies exist to define and promote the most appropriate use of antibiotics in animals. Collecting accurate data on the sale and use of these medicines in food-producing animals is an essential first step to inform the development and monitoring of such policies.

The ESVAC project was launched in April 2010 by EMA following a request from the European Commission to develop a harmonised approach to the collection and reporting of data from EU Member States on the use of antimicrobials in animals. Since the start of the project, the number of countries providing data has continuously increased.

For the 2012 report, 26 countries from the European Economic Area (EEA) submitted data on sales of antibiotics authorised in their territory. These countries account for approximately 95% of the food-producing animal population in the region.

The ESVAC report is issued every year and is used by risk assessors and risk managers in Member States to inform antimicrobial policy and the responsible use of antimicrobials.

Notes

1. This press release, together with all related documents, is available on the Agency's website.
2. More information on the work of the European Medicines Agency can be found on its website: www.ema.europa.eu

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