



European Medicines Agency
Press office

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PRESS RELEASE

European Medicines Agency makes recommendations on the use of antimicrobials in livestock and companion animals in relation to the risk of MRSA infection in animals

The European Medicines Agency has adopted a reflection paper setting out a number of recommendations relating to the authorisation and the use of antimicrobial medicines in livestock and companion animals which aim to reduce the risk of colonization or infection of animals with meticillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) in the interest of both public and animal health. The recommendations form part of the Agency's overall strategy on antimicrobials as veterinary medicines.

Following concerns over the increased occurrence of MRSA in livestock and companion animals, the Agency's Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use (CVMP) asked its Scientific Advisory Group on Antimicrobial Resistance (SAGAM) to carry out an in-depth review on the impact of the use of antimicrobials in livestock and companion animals on the risk of MRSA infection (clinical signs of illness or inflammation) and colonisation (presence of bacteria, but no signs of illness or infection) in animals.

The review was carried out in parallel with the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on other aspects of MRSA, to which the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (ECDC) contributed. A summary paper, bringing together the findings on the topic of MRSA by the three EU agencies, is under preparation and will be published later.

Based on the SAGAM review, the CVMP concluded that MRSA is resistant to virtually all beta-lactam agents and is very often also co-resistant to other antimicrobials. All the major lineages of MRSA can infect both animals and man. The Committee made the following recommendations:

- Prudent use of antimicrobials as set out by the Codex Alimentarius, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe, and as discussed in the CVMP strategy on antimicrobials 2006-2010, remains a key measure.
- Consumption of antimicrobials in animals in the EU should be monitored to identify any sources of unnecessary use and to target specific counter actions, as required.
- Development of non-antimicrobial control measures, such as sanitary measures, for infected or colonised animals should be encouraged.
- Use of last-resort medicines for MRSA treatment in man should be avoided in animals.
- When evaluating a marketing authorisation application for a veterinary medicine containing molecules used as last-resort treatment for MRSA infections in man, the CVMP will pay special attention in its assessment of the benefits and risk to the need to ensure the continued efficacy of such molecules in human medicine.

The Agency will disseminate its recommendations to key stakeholders, including Member State competent authorities, pharmaceutical industry, veterinarians and other interested, as a first step towards fostering implementation of the proposed measures.

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Notes:

1. The Reflection paper on MRSA in food-producing and companion animals in the European Union: epidemiology and control options for human and animal health is available here: <http://www.emea.europa.eu/pdfs/vet/sagam/6829009en.pdf>
2. The CVMP strategy on antimicrobials 2006-2010 and status report on activities on antimicrobials (EMEA/CVMP/353297/2005) is available here: <http://www.emea.europa.eu/pdfs/vet/swp/35329705.pdf>
3. The EFSA Panel on Biological Hazards opinion on the public health significance of MRSA in animals and foods is available here: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/ScientificPanels/BIOHAZ/efsa_locale-1178620753812_Opinions435.htm
4. The Codex code of practice to minimize and contain antimicrobial resistance (CAC/RCP 61-2005) is available here: http://www.ipfsaph.org/servlet/BinaryDownloaderServlet/codex10213_CXP_061e.pdf.pdf?fileName=\kopool_data\codex_0\en_cxp_061e.pdf&refID=codex10213
5. The OIE Guidelines for the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobial agents in veterinary medicine are available here: http://www.oie.int/eng/normes/mcode/code2007/en_chapitre_3.9.3.htm
6. This press release, together with other information on the work of the EMEA, can be found on the EMEA website: www.emea.europa.eu

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