



EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY  
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## Press release

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# Sales of antibiotics for animal use decrease by 13% in Europe between 2011 and 2015

Overall sales are coming down but the picture across Europe remains varying

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) has published a [report on the sales of veterinary antibiotics](#) in 2015 in Europe, which confirms the decreasing trend in most countries. This positive trend demonstrates that EU guidance and national campaigns promoting prudent use of antibiotics in animals to fight antimicrobial resistance start to have an effect.

The report of the [European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption](#) (ESVAC) project presents detailed sales data for the year 2015 and yearly changes in antimicrobial consumption dating back to 2010. In this 7<sup>th</sup> ESVAC report, 30 countries from the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA) plus Switzerland submitted data on sales or prescriptions of antimicrobial veterinary medicinal products for 2015, including Greece for the first time. The ESVAC project has grown from 9 countries providing the data for the first report to 30 countries.

Between 2011 and 2015 the sales (mg/population correction unit – PCU<sup>1</sup>) of antibiotics to treat animals decreased by 13.4%. This result covers those 25 out of the 30 participating countries that have provided data since 2011.

The ESVAC report also shows that the situation across Europe remains varying. A drop in sales of at least 5% was observed for 15 of these countries. However, eight countries recorded an increase of more than 5%. Given the substantial decline in the sales of antimicrobials for food-producing species observed for some countries, there is also a potential for a decrease in others.

In the last years, important guidance documents were published to encourage prudent use of antibiotics in animals. In 2016 EMA and EFSA adopted a Joint Scientific Opinion on measures to reduce the need to use antimicrobial agents in animal husbandry in the European Union ([RONAFA](#)). The opinion recommended specific measures on how to reduce antimicrobial consumption in animals based on the 'reduce, replace and rethink' approach. In 2015, the European Commission (EC) published guidelines that provide the Member States with practical guidance on the development and implementation of strategies to promote the prudent use of antimicrobials, especially antibiotics, in

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<sup>1</sup> Population correction unit or PCU is the estimated weight of livestock and slaughtered animals.



veterinary medicine. The effects of these efforts are expected to be seen in sales data in subsequent years.

The sales data are collected annually as part of the ESVAC project, which is a partnership between the national authorities throughout the European Union that is coordinated by EMA.

All data contained in the report are accessible in the [ESVAC interactive database](#). Launched in 2015, the database enables users to conduct their own searches and analyses and create charts, maps or graphs tailored to their needs. It has been updated and now includes an additional tab with indicators for the sales of veterinary antimicrobials per year and country. The tab was created in order to support the outcome of the joint ECDC, EFSA and EMA scientific opinion on a list of outcome indicators as regards surveillance of antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobial consumption in humans and food-producing animals. This scientific opinion was adopted in September 2017.

The ESVAC project was launched by EMA in April 2010 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. The ESVAC report is issued every year and is used by risk assessors and risk managers in Member States as a reference for antimicrobial policies and for guidance on responsible use of antimicrobials.

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## 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](http://www.ema.europa.eu)

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