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European Medicines Agency

CVMP concludes review on quarter-based selective antibiotic dry cow therapy

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) has concluded a scientific review of quarter-based selective antibiotic dry cow therapy.

In the context of prudent use of antibiotics, the EMA's veterinary medicines committee (CVMP) received a request from Germany to assess whether it is scientifically justified to generally allow quarter-based selective dry cow therapy with antibiotic intramammary veterinary medicines (medicines applied into the udder). The request also sought clarity on whether the product information (summary of product characteristics, package leaflet and labelling) for these veterinary medicines should be updated to reflect this practice.

After evaluating the available scientific data, the CVMP concluded that routinely treating all cows and quarters with antibiotics at dry-off does not offer signifcant efficacy or safety benefits compared with selective antibiotic dry cow therapy (SDCT). In contrast, selective approaches help reduce antimicrobial use and hence likely antimicrobial resistance. Both cow-based and quarter-based SDCT are suitable options if supported by good herd management, accurate diagnostics, and the use of teat sealants. The decision on which approach to use should be made case-by-case by the veterinarian together with the farmer, taking into account herd-specific indicators and practical considerations.

As part of its scientific advice, the CVMP considered quarter-based SDCT to be consistent with the latest scientific knowledge aimed at reducing antibiotic use, without compromising animal health.

The CVMP also considered how this approach could be reflected in the product information of intramammary antibiotic dry cow veterinary medicines and made recommendations for possible amendments. Including such information would provide clear, evidence-based guidance which is expected to assist veterinarians and farmers in determining whether cow-based or quarter-based SDCT is more appropriate under specific herd conditions, while ensuring use remains within the terms of the marketing authorisation.

More about the procedure

The review was initiated on 17 July 2025 at the request of Germany under Article 141(1)(i) of Regulation (EU) 2019/6.

The review was carried out by the Committee for Veterinary Medicinal Products (CVMP), responsible for questions concerning medicines for veterinary use, that has provided a scientific advice on this matter.

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