In France, the total sales (mg/PCU) of antimicrobial agents fell by 44% between 2011 (114.4 mg/PCU) and 2018 (64.2 mg/PCU) and by 6% between 2017 (68.0 mg/PCU) and 2018. The declining trends were observed for nearly all antimicrobial classes, except for amphenicols and other antibacterials. In 2018, the most-sold classes were tetracyclines (39%), sulfonamides (18%), penicillins (14%) and aminoglycosides (11%) and sales of 3rd- and 4th-generation cephalosporins, fluoroquinolones, other quinolones and polymyxins were low, accounting for 0.03%, 0.2%, 1% and 3%, respectively, of the total annual sales.

* Other antibacterials (classified as such in the ATCvet system).
Sales of 3rd- and 4th-generation cephalosporins (mg/PCU) fell by 94% between 2011 (0.30 mg/PCU) and 2018 (0.016 mg/PCU), although a slight increase of 8% was observed between 2017 (0.015 mg/PCU) and 2018. The aggregated sales for 25 countries were 0.18 mg/PCU.

From 2011 (0.62 mg/PCU) to 2018 (0.13 mg/PCU), sales of fluoroquinolones fell by 79% and from 2017 (0.16 mg/PCU) to 2018 by 16%. The aggregated sales for 25 countries were 2.42 mg/PCU.

For other quinolones, sales decreased by 52% from 2011 (0.80 mg/PCU) to 2018 (0.39 mg/PCU) and by 17% from 2017 (0.47 mg/PCU) to 2018. The aggregated sales for the 25 countries were 0.27 mg/PCU.

Sales of polymyxins fell by 76% between 2011 (7.67 mg/PCU) and 2018 (1.83 mg/PCU) and by 17% between 2017 (2.20 mg/PCU) and 2018. The aggregated sales for 25 countries were 3.31 mg/PCU.

Sales of macrolides have also dropped by 50% from 2011 to 2018, accounting in 2018 for 7% of the total annual sales.

The large decrease in antimicrobials used in animals in France is the result of collective action by all stakeholders to implement the French Action Plan ‘EcoAntibio’ 2012-2017. During this period, overall exposure to antimicrobials decreased by 32.8%, significantly exceeding the objective of the first EcoAntibio plan to reduce the use of antimicrobials by 25% in five years.

Specific measures have been undertaken on critically important antimicrobials through a decree limiting the use of 3rd- and 4th-generation cephalosporins and fluoroquinolones, with the objective (included in the law) of reducing the use of fluoroquinolones and 3rd- and 4th-generation cephalosporins by 25% exceeded.

The EcoAntibio2 plan aims to maintain the good results obtained and has set a goal of a 50% reduction in exposure to colistin in the cattle, pig and poultry sectors over five years, with as reference the average exposure for 2014-2015. Between 2015 and 2018, sales of polymyxins decreased by 54.5%.