



Centre of Expertise on Antimicrobial Consumption and Resistance in Animals

AMCRA 2020

An ambitious yet realistic plan for veterinary antibiotic policy until 2020

The 10 objectives and action points developed by the member sectors of AMCRA:

1. 50% lower antibiotic use by 2020
2. 75% lower use of the most critical antibiotics by 2020
3. 50% lower use of feed medicated with antibiotics by 2017
4. A global data collection system by 2016
5. A plan for each farm
6. Benchmarking of farmers and veterinarians
7. No antibiotics for prophylaxis, promotion of alternatives
8. Awareness-raising, repeatedly
9. Transparency and monitoring of suppliers and users
10. Surveillance of resistance to antibiotics



The sector-based approach advocated by AMCRA constitutes a unique initiative in Europe. The AMCRA model has after all set an example, and other European countries have now launched similar initiatives. It is proof that a coordination and action body benefiting from broad support works. Joint actions with the aim of a rational reduction in the use of antibiotics have already demonstrated a steady decrease in their use among animals. Furthermore, all AMCRA members/sectors confirm that they wish to continue to advocate this approach and they have together developed a vision 2020.

The **AMCRA 2020 vision statement** defines the guidelines of the policy relating to the use of antibiotics and to antibiotic resistance among animals in Belgium. It should lead to a rational use of antibiotics for all animals in order to limit the increase in and spread of resistance to antibiotics and to thereby protect human and animal health in the future.

The plan comprises **10 objectives and action points** linked to a precise schedule. The plan is clearly not complete and needs to be specified in greater detail before a number of measures or objectives are implemented. Its content will be developed in cooperation with the relevant authorities and players involved.

AMCRA will organise an evaluation meeting each year at the end of spring (when the consumption data for the previous year are available) in order to establish baseline figures and to verify to what extent objectives have been achieved and what adjustments need to be made where necessary.

1. 50 % lower antibiotic use by 2020

All partners within AMCRA are committed to striving for a 50% reduction in the total consumption of veterinary antibiotics by 2020¹. This means that an annual reduction of around 7% of total consumption must be achieved. Once the results from the collection of data by species are available in reasonable quantities (see below), the established objective can be refined to finally exclude 100% of ineffective consumption while objectives can be defined for each species of animal as part of the goal of rationally reducing total consumption by at least 50%.

2. 75 % lower use of the most critical antibiotics by 2020

In view of the major importance both for human and animal health of the most critical antibiotics (quinolones and 3rd and 4th generation systemic active cephalosporins), a sustained decrease in these substances of up to 75% is aimed for by 2020¹ as part of the overall target described above.

3. 50 % lower use of feed medicated with antibiotics by 2017

As far as the use of antibiotics in medicated feed is concerned, efforts will be made to achieve the objective specified in section 1 sooner, in the form of a 50% reduction by 2017¹. The authorisation to prescribe medicated feed will be reserved for the veterinarian responsible for guidance alone as soon as possible. The objective is to implement this measure by 2016 at the latest.

4. A global data collection system by 2016

Beginning in 2014, Belpork (Certus) launched a system of data collection for the pig sector. Other initiatives are currently being developed. The data collection systems should be operational by 2016 and will allow the use of antibiotics to be measured in

¹ Expressed in mg of active substances/kg of biomass as measured in the annual BELVETSAC reports: The reference point taken here is level of use in 2011.

each farm (pigs, poultry, calves, beef cattle). These data collection systems can be managed by the sectors or by the authorities provided they use an identical methodology and identical methods of calculation in order to be able to compare data among themselves and with those collected in neighbouring countries. A working group will be set up within AMCRA for the purpose of studying the possibilities for collecting data on other species of animals.

5. A plan for each farm

In parallel to the introduction of data collection, a health plan and plan of approach will be defined for each farm under veterinary guidance.

In the farm's health plan the veterinarian responsible for guidance will, in consultation with the farmer, establish a programme with the purpose of optimising the general state of health of the animals. This may be reflected in improvements in management, in the areas of housing, biosecurity, hygiene, nutrition, vaccination status etc. Enhanced diagnostics and the establishment of historical diagnostic records by farm will constitute a major aspect of this. The plan will be reviewed annually and a check will be made on the extent to which the agreements made have been observed.

The plan of approach will, for its part, specify which antibiotics may be available in reserve, how they are to be kept and for which indications they may be administered following initial diagnosis by the veterinarian responsible for guidance. This plan of approach will always reflect the recommendations for treatment as set forth in the AMCRA forms. In addition, it is essential that the farmer is adequately instructed with regard to the correct and responsible use of veterinary medicines.

6. Benchmarking of farmers and veterinarians

Using the data collection systems specific to each species, boundary values will be defined for the use of antibiotics by farm and by veterinarian. A supporting programme will subsequently be developed to induce farmers and veterinarians to reduce their use of antibiotics where this proves necessary.

7. No antibiotics for prophylaxis, promotion of alternatives

It should no longer be possible for any antibiotic to include a prophylactic indication with the exception of pre- and peri-operational uses and preparation for the lactation dry period. The instruction leaflet for products where this is actually the case should be adapted as soon as possible. When doing this, it is advisable to launch a pan-European initiative since the adaptations should become effective in all European countries and because numerous registrations are already managed at the European level.

The pharmaceutical industry will also suspend all forms of marketing relating to the prophylactic use of antibiotics. In return, the interest and the use of vaccines based on an appropriate diagnosis will be promoted as will all non-antibiotic preparations.

For this purpose, authorisation should be given for the pharmaceutical to provide information linked to non-antibiotic preparations direct to the person responsible for the animals.

European policy with regard to the harmonisation of registration and to the availability of medicines in different member states must be continued in order to improve the availability of registered veterinary medicines, in particular for « minor use - minor species ».

8. Awareness-raising, repeatedly

AMCRA intends launching an extensive and long-term awareness-raising campaign in order to continue to inform all players of the necessity of change in terms of consumption of antibiotics and the existence of alternatives. This awareness-raising campaign will be conducted across all possible channels of communication in collaboration with all the parties involved. Additional funds must be made available in order to permit this awareness-raising and AMCRA calls on the authorities to take the necessary steps in this regard.

9. Transparency and monitoring of suppliers and users

AMCRA calls on the relevant authorities to perform thorough inspections on the movement of medicines among veterinarians, farmers, pharmacists and compound feed producers to ensure their correct registration in data collection systems and to ensure the strict application of legislation. Furthermore, AMCRA demands that the relevant authorities draw up a regular report on the methodology and the results of these inspections. The relevant authorities should show an adequate response with regard to offenders.

10. Surveillance of resistance to antibiotics

Besides an integrated approach to the use of antibiotics, it is essential for the occurrence of cases of resistance to be monitored and for this to be linked to the data relating to the use of antibiotics. In this context, all data relating to resistance in possession of the farms, the authorities, the ARSIA/DGZ, the laboratories etc. must be made public as far as possible in order for AMCRA to be able to collate them, subject them to analysis and publish its results.

It is also vital to work towards harmonising the implementation, interpretation and reporting of the detection of susceptibility. For this purpose, AMCRA will bring together the authorities and laboratories concerned in order to achieve standardised protocols.

Ultimately, investments should continue to be made into performing research into all factors (antibacterial and other) that may favour or hinder the selection and spread of resistance and into the link between the use of antibiotics among animals and the occurrence of resistance among humans.