Vision 2030

Introduction

The Vision 2030 defines the objectives and actions for sustainable and rational antibiotic use in animals in Belgium until 2030.

The Vision 2030 starts from a 'One World, One Health, One Welfare' approach, aiming to improve human, animal, and environmental health. The sustainability of livestock farming, now and in the future, is particularly important in this respect.

First, the Vision 2030 aims to ensure sustainable antibiotic use in all animals (food-producing and non-food-producing) to safeguard animal health and welfare and reduce antibiotic resistance.

The Vision 2030 will require all sectors, but especially those that were rather in the background in the previous action plans (cattle, small ruminants, horses, companion animals), to come to the forefront, through the implementation of various initiatives (such as awareness raising, data collection and benchmarking, antibiotic stewardship, etc.). For the pig, broiler chicken and veal calf sectors, which have already made significant efforts to reduce antibiotic use and use antibiotics prudently, the challenge is to continue with the commitments already made. The goal is to achieve sustainable production where the use of antibiotics on livestock farms is minimal and acceptable.

To monitor progress after implementation of the plan, global targets based on antibiotic sales figures have been defined. Currently, sales figures are the most complete and reliable. Where usage figures are available, AMCRA defines specific targets based on reduction pathways in close consultation with industry partners. The extension of data collection to all animals by 2030 will eventually allow antibiotic use-based targets to be set for all animal species.

Targets for the veterinary sector in Belgium for the period 2025-2030

1. Trend in total antibiotic sales towards a maximum of 50 mg/PCU

The goal is to achieve sales of no more than 50 mg/PCU (European median) by the end of 2030. Compared to 2011, this represents an overall reduction of at least 70%. The table below shows the relationship between the European unit of measurement (mg/PCU) and the unit of measurement used at Belgian level in the annual BelVet-SAC report (mg/kg biomass).

	Reference year in Belgium	Reference year in Europe (Farm to Fork strategy and Council Recommendation)	ESVAC-rapport last results	Targets End of 2024 65% vs. 2011	Targets End of 2030 70% vs. 2011
	2011	**2018**	**2022**	**2024**	**2030**
mg/PCU (European measurement unit)	175,1	113	73,5	60	50
mg/kg biomass (Belgian measurement unit)	146,5	96,2	61,3	50	42

2. Production of antibiotic-medicated feeds stops in 2027

A phase-out of antibiotic-medicated feeds is fully in line with the ambition of the Belgian Federation of Animal Feed Manufacturers (BFA), which has set itself the goal of ending the production of antibiotic-medicated feeds by 2027.

3. Legally defined use of (fluoro)quinolones and 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins: sales will be reduced by 90% compared with 2011

The application of the conditions for the use of (fluoro)quinolones and 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins in all animal species, as provided for in the amended RD of 21 July 2016, will automatically lead to reduced sales of these molecules. The drop in sales is estimated at 90% compared to 2011. The competent authorities should conduct effective controls (see action points in this document) at regular intervals to ensure compliance.

4. Sales of polymyxins stay below 1 mg/kg biomass

The target is to keep the sales of colistin for animals below 1 mg/kg biomass.

5. Targets based on antibiotic use in all animals

These targets will be defined by AMCRA under specific working groups in consultation with partners active in the different animal sectors.

Pigs, broiler chickens and veal calves:

i. Pursuit of existing reduction pathways with new targets if deemed necessary, in consultation with sector partners.
ii. Maximum 1% alarm users

For all other animal species:

i. Development of reduction pathways once antibiotic use is registered, and usage data is reliable.

Actions:

1. **Progress in data collection of antibiotic use and benchmarking**
   a. Develop a long-term vision for the collection, analysis, and benchmarking of antibiotic use in all animal species.
   b. Antibiotic use should be recorded in a central database for all animal species and among all veterinarians (practices).
   c. Create a one-to-one relationship between the person responsible for the animals and the farm veterinarian to improve benchmarking and empowerment of each.
   d. Improve data quality (affecting the quality of the numerator and denominator of the antibiotic use indicator) so that accurate and effective analysis and benchmarking could be guaranteed. To improve and maintain this quality, the government should provide adequate support to agencies/associations that facilitate and ensure data collection and analysis.
   e. Provide compensation for veterinarians to make it easier for them to record antibiotic use and to encourage and facilitate automatic data transfer (which at the same time reduces the administrative burden of their work and prevents errors).
   f. Improve access to benchmark reports for those responsible for animals and veterinarians to take appropriate action.
      i. Make access easier through access portals.
      ii. Encourage those responsible for animals and veterinarians to look up published reports.
      iii. Encourage those responsible for animals and veterinarians to use published reports to take necessary action.
   g. Benchmark reports should be used by government and quality systems to achieve necessary checks on those responsible for animals and veterinarians.
      i. Increase frequency of inspections for veterinarians and those responsible for animals.
      ii. Realise controls based on the result of the benchmark report: e.g. on long-term zero users.
      iii. Controls based on high use and prescription of red antibiotics.

iv. Inspectors should have a sufficient knowledge of the correct application of legislation and the content and meaning of benchmark reports.
v. Better cooperation between government and private quality systems allowing better deployment of resources for controls.

2. **Reward for low users, follow up and coaching of livestock farmers and veterinarians**

a. Develop and implement reward system(s) for users with green status.
b. Harmonisation of measures for yellow, red, and alert users between government and private quality systems.
c. Application of sanctions for users in alarm zone when there is no decrease in antibiotic use at the end of a coaching programme.
d. In case of a structural pattern of high supply/prescription/administration at a veterinarian level: establish a plan of action for improvement. This plan should be reviewed by the government or a veterinary auto-control body. Veterinarians systematically in the red zone are actively contacted by the competent authorities.

3. More and better figures on the prevalence of antibiotic resistance in all animals

a. For indicator bacteria
    i. Have a monitoring system that reliably reflects the prevalence of antibiotic resistance in food-producing animals in Belgium.
    ii. Extend monitoring to non-food-producing animal species.
b. For pathogenic bacteria
    i. Establishment of a network of laboratories realising antibiotic susceptibility testing according to harmonised procedures.
    ii. Broadly collect and publish the results of existing monitoring systems in pathogenic bacteria on an annual basis. Communication and accessibility for veterinarians and those responsible for animals are optimised to support their farm-specific choice management.

4. Implementation of all European and national legislations on animal health and animal welfare and control by competent authorities

a. European and national legislations contain good rules on animal health and welfare and specifically on the rational use of antibiotics: the competent authorities ensure implementation and make the necessary checks.
b. Cooperation between authorities with different competences is increased and improved.

5. Focus on disease prevention and promotion of alternatives

a. A preventive approach at farm and animal level (focusing on general health, immunity, quality of feed and water, hygiene, …) should be systematically applied.

   i. Critical factors are identified per sector and systematically addressed (animal health at purchase, air quality, balanced nutrition adapted to the needs of the animal, ...).

   ii. The preparation on each farm of a farm health plan by the farm veterinarian, together with the person responsible for the animals, helps to apply a preventive approach.

   iii. The use of vaccination must be facilitated and encouraged to increase animal immunity directly or indirectly (for instance transmission of immunity to newborns following maternal vaccination).

b. Control and vaccination programmes that improve and strengthen animal health are applied in Belgium to have healthier animals at start-up. Improved animal health will help reduce antibiotic use.
c. Encourage the use of alternatives when available and authorised.
d. Encourage production systems that require less antibiotic use.
e. Competent authorities should actively engage (and, among other things, control) critical factors such as stocking density, weaning age, minimum age for transport...

6. In the different sectors, involve the entire chain in antibiotic policy

a. In each sector, the different organisations that contribute to animal health and welfare will be consulted: from the producers at the top of the chain to slaughterhouses and supermarkets (“from feed to food”).

b. In the case of companion animals, those responsible for animals in kennels are also held accountable for their direct impact on animal health.

c. For horses, both owners and those responsible for animals in equestrian centres are addressed regarding their direct impact on animal health.

d. In each organisation, actions are taken to reduce antibiotic use in animals.

7. Promote and further develop guidelines on antibiotic use (AMCRA formulary)

a. Keep current guidelines up to date.
b. Promote the use of the guidelines by veterinarians (especially as a web version and application).
c. Extend the guidelines to other animal species (rabbits, ornamental birds, fish, etc.).
d. Strive to embed the guidelines in quality systems to make them more enforceable.

8. Continuous communication and sensibilisation

a. Intensify cooperation with human sector and realise an annual 'One Health' campaign (messages addressed to target groups in the human and animal sector).

b. Specific communication regarding the risks related to antibiotic resistance and awareness-raising of those responsible for animals and veterinarians.

c. Organise training on antibiotic stewardship for veterinarians.

    i. Encourage participation of veterinarians in trainings on 'prudent use' of antibiotics: for instance, by double points received for those trainings.

d. Organise trainings for those responsible for animals around the proper use of antibiotics.

e. The AMCRA e-learning or other information materials as teaching materials for:

    i. Students

    ii. The persons responsible for animals (food-producing and companion animals, also staff in kennels and riding stables)

9. More research on links between the antibiotic use and resistance in animals, humans, and the environment

a. Facilitate the evidence-based medicine approach by supporting research when information is missing.

b. Investigate all factors that influence the development and persistence of antibiotic resistance.