

FUTURE ANTIBIOTIC USE IN ANIMALS EVOLUTION OR REVOLUTION?

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(RUMA)

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Who am I?

- 17th generation, active Hill and livestock farmer in English Lake District
- Farming 900 hectares, 1100 sheep and 60 suckler COWS
- Have been involved in farming politics since 1987 both nationally and internationally
- Honoured by the Queen in 2001 for work for Hill farming and work on FMD in UK
- Was only farmer member of The Royal Society Inquiry into infectious diseases in 2001/2

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What is RUMA?

- Alliance of diverse elements of the “farm to fork” process to promote best practice in the use of antibiotics (and other medicines) in food producing animals
- Members include representatives of farmers, vets, medicine manufacturers, distributors, species groups, retailers, trainers and food quality assurance schemes
- Funded by members’ fees
- Founded in 1998
- Main output is responsible use guidelines for farmers and vets

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RUMA Guidelines

- Use of antimicrobials, antiparasitics and anthelmintics
- Each guideline is species specific and in farmer and veterinary surgeon versions
- Kept up to date
- Free on RUMA website ruma.org.uk
- Give primacy to on-farm husbandry practices which promote animal health in all aspects e.g. biosecurity, good ventilation, clean water, and so minimise the need for medicines

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RUMA Guidelines (2)

- Planning research to check the benefits of the guidelines but UK has less MRSA in pig herds than most other MS in recent survey
- Welcome EPRUMA
- More MS should produce RUMA style guidelines for their farmers and vets

The Issues

- Antimicrobial resistance affects us all – resistant bacteria reduce the effectiveness of treatments and can transfer from animals to humans and humans to animals
- Welcome Commissioner Dalli's comment to the French parliament that antimicrobials are necessary for use in animals if the right balance can be found.
- Safe food comes from healthy animals so RUMA's work is all about identifying this balance
- Like all medicines, antimicrobials should be used as little as possible and as much as necessary
- Management of antimicrobial resistance should be based firmly on scientific evidence not dogma or political expediency

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Responsible Use of Antimicrobials on Farm

- Treatment of bacterial diseases should not always involve the newer generation of antimicrobials when older products are as effective
- Last resort/human critical antimicrobials should not be used as front line treatments
- Antimicrobials should be used according to the label
- Cascade use should be the exception
- Regulation must be based on sound, up to date scientific risk assessment not inappropriate use of the precautionary principle
- The Commission should extend their laudable human medicine initiative to provide funds for training and education on responsible use to professionals in the veterinary sector

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Conclusion

- We must all recognise the risks to both animals and humans from antimicrobial resistance and work together to minimise them.
- Antimicrobials are essential for the treatment of farm animals to ensure the supply of safe food while maintaining animal health and welfare throughout the European Union.
- The HMA and EMA reflective papers recommend that responsible use be a core part of AMR control.
- One way to achieve this would be for all member states to introduce (if they haven't already done so) RUMA type guidelines tuned to the appropriate husbandry practices.
- The key to minimising resistance at grass roots level is not so much 'what' antimicrobials are used but 'how and when' they are used.

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And Finally

- The answer to the question in the title has, therefore, to be 'evolution'.
- Any less than carefully considered and gradual process of change would be likely to have consequences damaging to the excellence we are trying to promote.

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For more information on RUMA please go
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Any questions?

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