World Antimicrobial Resistance Week – Together for Public Health
WVA on prevention of antimicrobial resistance

November 19th 2023, Brussels

From November 18th to 24th, the World Veterinary Association (WVA) participates in World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW) 2023, underlining the pivotal role of responsible antimicrobial use in veterinary medicine.

As the global threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) looms, the WVA emphasizes the significance of international cooperation, harmonization, and the adoption of crucial standards to address one of the most pressing challenges in veterinary medicine and public health.

AMR poses a formidable threat to humans, animals, plants, and the environment, affecting all facets of life. This year's WAAW theme promotes cross-sector collaboration to preserve the effectiveness of these critical medicines. Combatting AMR demands a united One Health approach, with all sectors coming together to promote prudent antimicrobial use and preventive measures.

The WVA is a member of the AMR Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Platform, established and managed by the Quadripartite (FAO, UNEP, WHO and WOAH), with representation, e.g. governments, the private sector and civil society representing human, animal, plant and environment health, as well as agriculture and food and feed production. The aim is to develop and implement a shared global vision, narrative and targets, generating, in this way, a global movement for action against AMR.

Dr. Rafael Laguens, President of the World Veterinary Association, was in attendance of the Inaugural Plenary Assembly of the AMR Multistakeholder Partnership Platform and emphasized, "The AMR Partnership Platform is a unique opportunity to catalyze multi-stakeholder voices and contributions, so both the 2024 UNGA High-Level Meeting on AMR and the future political declaration will be valuable tools in the fight against this silent pandemic".
The WVA shines a spotlight on pharmaceutical stewardship, and this vital concept encompasses three essential areas:

- Responsible antimicrobial use to combat AMR by promoting prudent practices to safeguard the effectiveness of critical antimicrobials, protecting both animal and public health.
- Access to high-quality medicines worldwide, empowering veterinarians with the tools they need to provide optimal care.
- Proper medication disposal, which is the safe management and disposal of unused medications, whether expired or remnants of previous prescriptions, is crucial to prevent environmental contamination and public health risks.

Additionally, an emphasis on good animal husbandry practices and welfare of animals plays a pivotal role in minimizing the incidence of diseases among animals, thereby reducing the necessity for antimicrobial use. Promoting animal health through proper nutrition, housing, welfare standards, and disease prevention creates a proactive approach to safeguarding animal well-being and public health.

WVA dedication to pharmaceutical stewardship aligns seamlessly with the collaborative spirit of WAAW 2023. WVA will continue advocating for these principles, empowering veterinarians globally to implement pharmaceutical stewardship in their practices.

Dr. Olatunji Nasir, WVA Pharmaceutical Stewardship Working Group Chair, highlighted, "Pharmaceutical stewardship is our collective responsibility. Let us work together to ensure the responsible use of antimicrobials and protect the health of animals, environment and humans alike."

The WVA remains unwavering in its commitment to address challenges hand in hand with international organizations, in calling for national WOAH’s recommendations for controlling antimicrobial resistance in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code (chapters 6.7 to 6.11) and Aquatic Animal Health Code (Section 6) standards implementation. Together, we advance the cause of responsible antimicrobial use, enhance access to quality medicines, and advocate for proper medication disposal.