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## **WVA Position Statement on Responsible Use of Antimicrobials**

The World Veterinary Association (WVA) is committed to promoting responsible antimicrobial use in animals to safeguard animal and human health and environmental health. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) poses a significant global threat, and inappropriate antimicrobial use exacerbates its development. Therefore, the WVA emphasises the following principles:

1. **Risk-Benefit Analysis:** Decisions regarding antimicrobial use must be grounded in thorough risk-benefit analysis, considering the potential impact on animal, human, and environmental health.
2. **Veterinary Oversight:** Antimicrobials, particularly those vital for human medicine, should be administered to animals solely under the care of a veterinarian within a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship.
3. **Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing:** Regular testing is essential to guide treatment decisions, both at the individual case level and through regional monitoring and reporting.
4. **Regulatory Control:** Each country should establish and enforce appropriate regulatory systems for licensing, registration, and control of veterinary drugs, including antimicrobials. Unregistered or counterfeit products must not be used.
5. **Investment in R&D and Alternative Strategies:** Efforts should be directed toward developing and promoting effective alternatives to antimicrobials, such as vaccines, immunostimulants, and probiotics, in combination with preventive animal health measures, to minimise antimicrobial use while ensuring good animal health and welfare. Funding must be directed towards maintaining robust R&D pipelines to strengthen disease prevention and reduce the reliance on antimicrobials.
6. **Strengthen Animal Health Systems:** Investing in animal health infrastructure and the veterinary workforce is essential. Education and training should emphasise antimicrobial stewardship as a core competency of a well-trained veterinary workforce capable of implementing responsible antimicrobial use practices and managing diseases effectively.
7. **Equitable Access to Essential Veterinary Medicines:** WVA supports ensuring equitable and timely access to essential veterinary medicines, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, in alignment with the [Global Essential Veterinary Medicines List](#). Such access is vital for maintaining the health of all species if paired with prudent use of antimicrobials.

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In addition, the World Veterinary Association:

- Urges compliance with the laws and regulations of each country regarding antimicrobial use.
- Advocates for the use of antimicrobials only when needed and based on a veterinary assessment.
- Recommends active knowledge dissemination to achieve infection prevention and responsible use of antibiotics in both animals and humans.
- Encourages national governments to prioritize investment in AMR initiatives within the context of One Health, particularly focusing on improving animal health and welfare to reduce the need for antimicrobials through vaccination, biosecurity measures, and enhanced husbandry practices.
- Supports appropriate changes in agrifood systems to promote preventive measures that reduce antimicrobial use while maintaining high standards of animal welfare.

### Background

Antimicrobials play a crucial role in maintaining animal health and welfare. However, their use can lead to the development of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), posing significant threats to both animal and human health. In response to this pressing issue, the WVA advocates for responsible antimicrobial use guided by risk-benefit analysis, veterinary oversight, regulatory control, and ongoing education and innovation. The use of antimicrobials selects for resistant bacteria, and inappropriate use will promote AMR without balancing health benefits in both human and veterinary medicine.

Considerations:

- Preventing or treating infectious diseases is critical to good animal welfare.
- Veterinary involvement in decision-making regarding antimicrobial use is essential.
- Records of antimicrobial administration and regional updates on bacterial susceptibility should be maintained and shared.
- Improving funding and resources for AMR-related initiatives, especially in low- and middle-income countries, is critical to achieving sustainable progress in combating AMR.
- Effective alternative strategies, including preventive actions to reduce animal infections, should be developed and promoted to minimize antimicrobial use.

The WVA supports the September 2024 [Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance](#).