

Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety  
European Commission  
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

## The implementation of the EU ban on the routine use of antimicrobials in livestock production

Dear Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Kyriakides,

The EU ban on the routine use of antimicrobials in animal production comes into force in January 2022.

**However, many Member States and EU producers might not be ready to implement the ban.** Therefore, a widespread **non-compliance could occur** when it comes into force in January. This would be very **harmful for human health** as a key objective of the legislation is to prevent excessive farm use of antimicrobials leading to the emergence of resistance, which can then be transferred to people, thus undermining the efficacy of some of the antimicrobials used to treat serious human disease. **If the EU animal production sector does not respect the legislation, it will be putting human health at risk.**

In order to comply with the legislation, we need to move **to ‘health-oriented’** systems for keeping animals, in which good health is inherent in the farming methods rather than being propped up by routine use of antimicrobials. Such systems would avoid overcrowding and excessive herd and flock size.<sup>i ii</sup> They would minimise stress and ensure that animals can perform their natural behaviours.<sup>iii</sup> **Moving to such systems would not only minimise use of antimicrobials but also support the ambition of the European Commission and the Parliament to improve animal welfare.**

The European Commission should advise Member States about the approaching date of January 2022 and urge them to take appropriate measures to ensure that their farming sectors comply with the new law. **We ask the European Commission to require that Member States produce updates of the key actions they plan to take for the enforcement of the new Regulation.** Member States should provide regular reports on their plans and activities that will enable the EC to assess the effectiveness of these measures and record progress or lack thereof.

Sincerely yours,

MEPs

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Sara Cerdas  
Francisco Guerreiro  
Martin Buschmann  
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<sup>i</sup> Otte, J, Roland-Holst, D, Pfeiffer, D, Soares-Magalhaes, R, Rushton, J, Graham, J, Silbergeld, E., Industrial Livestock Production and Global Health Risks (2007). Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Pro-Poor Livestock Policy Initiative Research Report.

<sup>ii</sup> O'Neill, The Review on Antimicrobial Resistance. Tackling drug-resistant infections globally: final report and recommendations (2016) [http://amr-review.org/sites/default/files/160518\\_Final%20paper\\_with%20cover.pdf](http://amr-review.org/sites/default/files/160518_Final%20paper_with%20cover.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> EMA (European Medicines Agency) and EFSA (European Food Safety Authority), 2017. EMA and EFSA Joint Scientific Opinion on measures to reduce the need to use antimicrobial agents in animal husbandry in the European Union, and the resulting impacts on food safety (RONAFA). [EMA/CVMP/570771/2015]. EFSA Journal 2017;15(1):4666.