Animal & Plant Health Agency

Veterinary Medicines Directorate

Sharpening our focus on AMR in livestock

What is AMR?

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) develops when bacteria adapt to survive medicines (antimicrobials/antibiotics) that would usually kill them. Bacteria can become resistant to several antibiotics.

Why is AMR important in livestock?

Loss of effective antibiotics threatens livestock and human health:

Production losses
Poor cure rates, increased mortality

Spread of resistant bacteria to people
Through the food chain, contact, environment

Impaired health & welfare
Potential for prolonged suffering

Driving further resistance
Fewer treatment choices, more resistance pressure

How can vets and livestock owners help?

Disease prevention
Vets and farmers working together to develop health plans
Consider management, biosecurity and infection control

Responsible use
Ensuring antibiotics are only used when appropriate
Usage is always under appropriate veterinary guidance

Record antibiotic use
To facilitate regular vet-farmer discussions on antibiotic use
Sharing with industry to help with national reporting

Use culture and sensitivity
To help vets understand which antibiotic is likely to be effective
Can detect new and changing resistance patterns

APHA and VMD are collecting AMR data and bacterial isolates

Veterinary practices & farms with in-house culture or mastitis diagnostics can help

Please contact AMR.Data@apha.gov.uk