

## HealthforAnimals Statement on WHO Guidelines on Antibiotics

(BRUSSELS, November 10, 2017) – There is little evidence that implementing the new *WHO Guidelines on the use of Critically Important Antimicrobials in Food-Producing Animals* will have any impact on antimicrobial resistance.

The guidelines make clear that the recommendations are based on ‘low’ and ‘very low quality’ evidence, and more research is needed on the ‘effects of restriction of antimicrobial use...on resistance in bacteria.’

This is a weak foundation to create a set of global guidelines that could prohibit veterinarians from treating animals in danger of disease and hurt the billion people who rely on livestock worldwide.

Veterinarians are dedicated to caring for animals and protecting their welfare. Under their care, antibiotics will be administered preventatively in situations where they recognize the threat a group of animals faces. Veterinarians rely on their knowledge and experience to make a medical judgement that can ultimately save the lives of animals. Forbidding preventative antibiotic treatment, as these guidelines recommend, means forcing veterinarians to wait for suffering or death before taking action.

The Chief Veterinary Officers of the G7 also acknowledged the value of preventative treatment in a [recent statement](#).

The Animal Health industry shares the same goal as the WHO – managing AMR. We adhere to five core antibiotic use principles, which are outlined in our recent ‘[Commitments and Actions on Antibiotic Use](#)’ statement. The industry is also taking [concrete actions](#) to live up to these principles, such as funding new research on AMR pathways and developing new vaccines that prevent disease altogether.

We encourage the WHO to reconsider these guidelines for a more inclusive, One Health-focused process that brings veterinarians and animal health experts to the table together. The result could be a balanced document approved by the WHO Assembly that sets the global agenda for AMR management; a more valuable resource than a non-binding, Expert Group paper based on ‘low’ and ‘very low quality’ evidence.

HealthforAnimals and our Members are ready and willing to work with the WHO on this process.

**ENDS**

### Notes for editors

HealthforAnimals represents the animal health sector: manufacturers of veterinary pharmaceuticals, vaccines and other animal health products throughout the world, as well as the associations that represent companies at national and regional levels. HealthforAnimals represents the nine largest animal health companies, over 200 small-to-medium sized companies, and 85% of the global market through its Membership. All HealthforAnimals Members are signatories to the global ‘[Commitments and Actions on Antibiotic Use](#)’. For more information on HealthforAnimals, please visit [www.healthforanimals.org](http://www.healthforanimals.org)

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