

Responsible Use of medicines in animals: what does this mean?



- **Veterinary medicines, including antibiotics, need to be used responsibly to maintain their efficacy**
- **Responsible Use as promoted by EPRUMA is based on a holistic approach of minimising disease**
- **Antibiotics should be used “As little as possible, as much as necessary” to maintain their efficacy**

Like people, animals get sick and require medicines, including antibiotics which are vital to treat and control bacteria causing disease in people or animals. Veterinary medicines, including antibiotics, need to be used responsibly to maintain their efficacy. Responsible Use supports animal health and welfare, contributes to the production of quality food from healthy animals as well as public health, whilst minimising the impact on the environment.

Responsible Use: a holistic view

Responsible Use is based on a holistic approach of minimising disease through concepts including biosecurity¹, good housing and ventilation, good hygiene, appropriate nutrition and robust animals, regular monitoring of animal health and welfare, animal health planning², use of diagnostics, vaccination, and using and maintaining the pharmacovigilance system when necessary, as well as the use of antibiotics, as required by law, under veterinary prescription only.

EPRUMA promotes Responsible Use in the EU

[EPRUMA](#), the European Platform for the Responsible Use of Medicines in Animals, is a multi-stakeholder platform linking best practice with animal health and public health. Established in 2005, it works to promote the Responsible Use of medicines³ in animals in the EU in order to maintain efficacy and both prevent and minimise undesirable effects.

EPRUMA's objectives are:

- Promoting animal health and welfare as well as human health through the Responsible Use of veterinary medicines
- Developing best-practice frameworks concerning the use of veterinary medicines. EPRUMA works on broad principles at EU level, which in turn can be tailored nationally in EU member states.
- Communicating with and engaging all parties concerned with the Responsible Use of veterinary medicines.

EPRUMA has produced a 'Best-practice framework for the use of antimicrobials in food-producing animals which is available in 12 European languages. These can be downloaded from [the EPRUMA website](#).

¹ a set of preventative measures aiming to keep groups of animals healthy

² a voluntary and flexible management tool tailored to record specific actions at individual farms

³ Medicines as defined in Directive 2001/82/EC as amended by Directive 2004/28/EC

Antibiotic Information Leaflets

As little as possible, as much as necessary

IFAH-Europe supports the Responsible Use of antibiotics. This means use in the context of biosecurity, good housing and ventilation, good hygiene, appropriate nutrition and robust animals, regular monitoring of animal health and welfare, animal health planning, use of diagnostics, vaccination, and using and maintaining the pharmacovigilance system when necessary, as well as the use of antibiotics under veterinary prescription, as required by law.

Responsible Use also means ensuring transparency on how antibiotics are used. This will require veterinarians to electronically report data on individual farm use to the relevant authorities. With animal population data to hand, authorities will be able to compare the intensity of use on individual farms and intervene as necessary.

These antibiotic information leaflets are meant to inform the debate and to try to ensure that focused policy decisions are made to tackle the threat posed by antibiotic resistance – a threat we take very seriously.

“As little as possible, as much as necessary” – For more information on Responsible Use, check www.epruma.eu

IFAH-Europe is the representative body of manufacturers of veterinary medicines, vaccines and other animal health products in Europe. IFAH-Europe's membership covers 90% of the European market for veterinary products. Member companies invest over €400 million in research and development every year. IFAH-Europe promotes a single market in veterinary medicines across the EU ensuring the availability of medicines to protect the health and welfare of animals.

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