



EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY
SCIENCE MEDICINES HEALTH

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News announcement

Consumption of antimicrobials in animals reached lowest level ever in Europe

European countries have substantially reduced sales of veterinary antibiotics, which translates into a lower risk of bacteria becoming resistant in people and animals. Overall sales of veterinary antibiotics decreased by 53% between 2011 and 2022, reaching the lowest level ever reported, according to data from 25 countries. This is one of the key findings of the thirteenth annual report on the European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption (ESVAC).

During the same period, sales of antibiotic classes that are considered critically important in human medicine for veterinary use noticeably decreased: sales of third- and fourth- generation cephalosporins dropped by 49%, polymyxins by 81%, fluoroquinolones by 25% and sales of other quinolones dropped by 90%. While all antibiotics should be used prudently and responsibly to preserve their effectiveness, it is of particular importance for these antibiotics to mitigate the potential risk to public health, as indicated in the [Antimicrobial Advice ad hoc Expert Group \(AMEG\) categorisation](#).

"The collection of data on sales of veterinary antimicrobials has been critical in shaping policy initiatives, assessing the impact of current measures and setting objectives that assist in tackling the emergence of antimicrobial resistance," said Ivo Claassen, Head of EMA's Veterinary Medicines Division.

EMA has been monitoring sales of veterinary antimicrobials in Europe through the ESVAC project since 2009, when 9 European countries volunteered to provide data on sales of veterinary antimicrobials. The number of participating countries has increased more than three-fold since the start, and in 2022, 31 European countries were working together in this project.

ESVAC has led to the collection of reliable data on antimicrobials sold for use in animals, providing invaluable insights for participating countries on the impact of their measures to promote the prudent use and setting targets to reduce the consumption of antimicrobials in animals.

The ESVAC project is a European success story about commitment and strong collaboration. The project is coming to an end in 2023 and EMA will publish the last ESVAC report with data from 2022. The ESVAC concept has been integrated into the EU legislation, making the collection of data mandatory for all EU countries, not only for sales of veterinary antimicrobials but in the coming years



also for use of antimicrobials in animals. The first report with sales and use data from 2023 will be published in 2025.

The last ESVAC report also includes information on the progress made towards the targets set in the European Commission's [Farm to Fork Strategy](#) to reduce the sale of antimicrobials for farmed animals and aquaculture in the EU. In 2022, the 27 EU Member States have achieved just over half of the 50% reduction target set for 2030 compared to 2018, proving that countries are on the right track of meeting the goals of the strategy.