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16th November 2016

Dear MEP Aguilera García,

Dear MEP Grossetête,

Please support EU proposals to ban the routine preventative mass medication of groups of animals

The current legislative reviews of the EU Veterinary Medicines and Medicated Feed Regulations provide a significant opportunity to reduce and refine farm antibiotic use across Europe.

As you will be aware, on 10 March 2016, the European Parliament Plenary adopted the report by the Committee for Environment, Public Health and Food Safety [ENVI] on the proposed Regulation on Veterinary Medicinal Products. This report calls for an EU-wide ban on the routine mass medication of groups of animals with antibiotics where no disease has been diagnosed in any animals within the group (prophylaxis). The ENVI report also proposes restrictions on metaphylaxis i.e. the mass medication of a group of animals after disease has been diagnosed in part of the group, to prevent further spread of the disease. The ENVI report does not permit routine metaphylaxis and provides that where it is used non-routinely, the farmer must adopt measures to reduce the need to resort to metaphylactic use in the future.

We welcome the overwhelming support from MEPs for a ban to the routine mass medication of groups of animals. Such a ban would mean significant changes to the status-quo where veterinarians are legally entitled to prescribe antibiotics for purely preventative purposes; a practice particularly common in intensive farming systems where crowded, stressful conditions mean that animals are prone to disease.

However, we are concerned that the position adopted by the Parliament's Agriculture Committee is less ambitious in its report on the proposed Regulation on Medicated Feed. It does not include any restrictions on routine metaphylactic treatments with antibiotics. This omission threatens to permit the continued abuse of our antibiotics in intensive livestock farming. Farmers may side-step a ban on routine prophylaxis by regularly waiting for a few animals to become ill and then dosing the whole group on a metaphylactic basis.

As trialogues commence on these two files in early 2017, the European Parliament must seize this unique opportunity to tackle profligate use of antibiotics in farming, and to prioritise a shift to health-oriented systems of rearing livestock. We urge you to support strong measures to save our antibiotics; specifically:

- A ban on the routine prophylactic and metaphylactic preventative mass medication of groups of animals with antibiotics via their feed or water. [Such a ban would permit non-routine metaphylactic group treatments subject to the development of a health plan and compliance with a number of specified measures designed to reduce future need for antibiotics, as set out by the ENVI committee and adopted by the Plenary]
- **A ban on all preventative use and group treatments using the 'critically important' antibiotics.** These antibiotics may only be used where sensitivity testing, or the results of recent sensitivity testing, shows that no other antibiotics are likely to work

- A shift to higher welfare farming systems, where animals are kept healthy through good health and welfare, rather than through routine antibiotic use

The antimicrobial resistance crisis is predicted to cause the death of one person every three seconds by 2050. If we are to have a chance of avoiding this catastrophe, we must work to conserve these resources for use only when they are needed. The routine use of antibiotics in groups of animals to prop up unsustainable and inhumane farming practice is wholly unacceptable. We trust you will take every necessary action to safeguard our antibiotics for future generations. The specific measures proposed above will ensure that this happens without delay.

Yours Sincerely,

Emma Rose
Alliance to Save our Antibiotics



Nina Renshaw, Secretary General
European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)



The [Alliance to Save our Antibiotics](#) and the [European Public Health Alliance](#) collectively represent over 150 organisations which span the medical, health, environmental and animal welfare sectors.