

Event Report

Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance in Food Production: A One Health Perspective

Wednesday 26 November 2025 14:30-16:00 CEST

Webinar organised by EPHA & Una Europa Alliance – 26 November 2025

1. Background and context

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) continues to rise across the world, threatening human health, food production, and the environment. As multiple speakers in the session emphasised, AMR is no longer an isolated health challenge – it is a systems-level crisis shaped by the relationship between humans, animals, plants, and the environment. This complexity demands coordinated action grounded in the One Health approach, which recognises that the health of people, animals, and ecosystems are interconnected.

In this context, the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) and Una Europa Alliance co-organised the webinar “*Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance in Food Production: A One Health Perspective*”. The event brought together international experts from WHO, EFSA, academia, and major data-monitoring institutions to discuss the state of AMR in food production, current global and European efforts, and areas where scientific evidence must better inform policy.

The session was moderated by Professor Bruno Gonzalez-Zorn, head of the Antimicrobial Resistance Unit at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and chair of One Health in the Una Europa Alliance, and aligned with EPHA’s longstanding mission to support robust, equitable health governance in Europe.

2. Opening remarks

The webinar opened with words of welcome from the EPHA team, who reaffirmed the organisation’s commitment to bridging evidence, practice, and policy in the AMR debate.

Professor Bruno Gonzalez-Zorn set the stage by placing the session within the broader context of One Health collaboration in Europe and globally. He has underlined the urgency of the issue, as AMR already causes an estimated 1.2 million deaths annually.

3. Expert presentations

WHO perspective: global One Health efforts to address AMR

Speaker: *Jorge Mathey Alvarez*, WHO AMR Department

Jorge Matheu Alvarez offered an overview of the global governance frameworks and evolving actions behind One Health AMR action. He emphasised the integrated, unifying definition of One Health, adopted in 2021, and the need for multiple sectors and communities to coordinate – a challenge many countries still struggle to implement at scale.

Key messages included:

- Many of the pathogens identified as global priorities circulate between humans, animals, and the environments, meaning that tackling AMR in food production is inseparable from addressing AMR in clinical settings.
- Jorge highlighted cooperation among FAO, UNEP, WHO, and WOA, noting the establishment of a Joint Secretariat on AMR and multiple shared guidance tools developed to support national action plans.
- While improvements have been made over the past nine years, only 46% of countries currently have all relevant sectors engaged in their AMR coordination mechanisms.
- Work is on the way to build a global integrated surveillance system – Global Architecture for Integrated AMR and AMU Surveillance (GISSA) – linking data from human health, animal health, food safety systems, and environmental monitoring. Jorge described ongoing efforts to harmonise indicators, methodologies, and legislative frameworks.

Surveillance, risk assessment, and emerging threats

Speaker: *Ernesto Liebana*, EFSA

Ernesto Liebana provided the European perspective, drawing on EFSA's extensive surveillance and risk assessment work. His intervention highlighted EU's institutional mechanism for One Health collaboration, including joint initiatives between EFSA, ECDC, EMA, and other agencies.

Key insights included:

- EFSA and ECDC jointly publish the EU Summary Report on AMR in healthy animals and food products, analysing prevalence trends and detecting emerging resistance. Ernesto notes both successes (e.g., decreases in certain types of resistance) and emerging concerns, including recent slowdown in positive trends that require careful monitoring.
- An important example of emerging threats is the detection of carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae in European food production since 2011. The number of new enzymes and effected countries continues to grow.
- Ernesto underscored the importance of strengthening surveillance beyond indicator bacteria, noting ongoing collaborations to improve monitoring of veterinary pathogens, environmental routes, and resistance to antifungals.
- Ernesto highlighted the importance of developing tools for communication, education, and stakeholder engagement to navigate and use for policy makers, researchers, and other stakeholders.

AMR across the food chain

Speaker: *Prof. Azucena Mora*, University Santiago de Compostela & AESAN

Professor Azucena Mora brought a microbiological and food safety perspective, drawing on her work with the Spanish Food Safety Agency (AESAN) and the EU's foodborne zoonosis networks.

Her key points included:

- The importance of coordination between national agencies and international authorities in AMR surveillance.
- *E. coli* remains a cornerstone organism for AMR surveillance.
- She outlined the integrated monitoring systems that track AMR from environment to farm, processing, and retail.
- She emphasised the need for sustainable, resilient food systems where antimicrobial use is minimised without compromising animal welfare or productivity.

Evidence-driven strategies for reducing AMU in animals

Speaker: Wannes Vanderhaeghen, AMCRA

Wannes Vanderhaeghen presented the Belgian approach to reducing antimicrobial use in animals, explaining how the AntiMicrobial Consumption and Resistance in Animals AMCRA was created as a multi-stakeholder centre of expertise bringing together academia, veterinarians, industry, and public authorities. He described Belgium's model as a bottom-up system on communication, shared responsibility, and strong data infrastructure.

Key messages included:

- Belgium's bottom-up model relies on awareness-raising and science-based advice that is developed jointly with veterinarians, farmers, and policy makers.
- Multiple private and public data collection systems feed into AMCRA's central analysis unit, enabling harmonised methods, benchmarking, and detailed farm-level feedback.
- Belgium has achieved almost 60% reduction in veterinary antimicrobial sales since 2011, with marked declines in critical substances.
- The system has evolved from voluntary measures to co-regulation, supported by long-term strategies and Antibiotic Conventions between government and stakeholders.
- Belgium now publishes One Health reporting through its annual Belmap report.

4. Key takeaways

- One Health is indispensable for addressing AMR in food production – fragmented responses are no longer viable.
- Integrated surveillance systems remain a global priority; harmonisation is possible but requires sustained investment.
- Antimicrobial use in the food chain is a major pressure point, especially when the most important antibiotics for human health are still used in animals.
- Data gaps persist, especially in the environment and in veterinary pathogens.
- International cooperation between continents, agencies, and disciplines is fundamental.
- The biggest barrier now is implementation, not awareness.