

Expanding Antimicrobial Stewardship

Ending Overuse in Animal Agriculture



Background

Antibiotic resistance is now among the CDC's "top concerns",¹ and the World Health Organization (WHO) recently stated that it is an "accelerating global health security emergency that is rapidly outpacing available treatment options".² Each year, 23,000 Americans die as a result of antibiotic resistant infections.³ Longer, more expensive hospital stays for treating resistant infections cost the United States health care sector an estimated \$21 to \$34 billion annually and an additional eight million hospital days.⁴

The vast majority of antibiotics in the United States are not used in human medicine – they are used in animal agriculture. According to government estimates, approximately 30 million pounds of antibiotics are sold for use in industrial animal agriculture. This is four times the amount used by the health care sector, and this number is growing. About 70% of these include antibiotics in classes which are also used to treat human infections, such as penicillins, macrolides, sulfas, and tetracyclines. These antibiotics are given routinely to otherwise healthy food animals to promote weight gain and to compensate for overcrowded and unsanitary living conditions. Most antibiotics are administered through feed and water, where dosing is typically at subtherapeutic levels – that is, not strong enough to treat an actual infection – to large numbers of animals for long periods of time yielding a perfect recipe for creating antibiotic resistant bacteria.⁵ There are more than 147 scientific studies documenting the transfer of bacterial resistance from farm-based reservoirs to the broader human population.⁶

Over 350 hospitals across the country are already buying meat raised without the routine use of antibiotics – will you join them?

Visit: <https://noharm-uscanada.org/foodday2014>

The Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society and the Sharing Antimicrobial Reports for Pediatric Stewardship (SHARPS) group is concerned about the rise in antibiotic resistance that is making treatment of bacterial infections increasingly difficult.



PEDIATRIC INFECTIOUS
DISEASES SOCIETY

We are advocating for a broader concept of antimicrobial stewardship, and are raising awareness about the role that antibiotic overuse in animal agriculture plays in antibiotic resistance. We aim to cultivate partnerships between the clinical missions of Antimicrobial Stewardship Programs and Nutrition Services at participating hospitals to encourage individuals and their institutions to purchase meat raised without the routine use of antibiotics.

Expanding Health Care's Stewardship Role

In recent years, many hospitals have expanded their roles as stewards of antibiotics, using their purchasing power and authority to support sustainable food policies and farmers who use these medicines appropriately.

Hospitals can create resolutions and purchasing policies that convey their commitment to stop purchasing meat raised with non-therapeutic antibiotics, and advocate that stakeholders in the supply chain carry products that meet this criterion. Even small shifts in hospital purchasing can have meaningful impacts in the food system.

References

- (1) CDC 2013. [Antibiotic Resistance Questions & Answers.](#)
- (2) World Health Organization (WHO) 2014. [Antimicrobial resistance: global report on surveillance 2014.](#)
- (3) CDC 2013. [Antibiotic Resistance Threats in the United States, 2013.](#)
- (4) Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) 2014. [Antimicrobial Resistance.](#)
- (5) Pew 2013. [Record-High Antibiotic Sales for Meat and Poultry Production.](#)
- (6) Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy 2012. [No Time to Lose.](#)