



Representing the Manufacturers of Animal Medicines

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Press Release

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New DEFRA resistance surveillance plan builds on existing measures

The National Office of Animal Health has welcomed the publication of DEFRA's strategy for developing and implementing a surveillance programme for antimicrobial resistance in animals for England and Wales. The strategy was published on 11 May, and outlines a programme of work to increase knowledge about how antimicrobial resistance emerges and spreads. It addresses issues identified by the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Food (ACMSF) in its 1999 report on antimicrobial resistance.

While still studying the detail of the plan, NOAH is pleased to see that the approach appears to be in line with that already being taken by the those involved in producing food from animals, endorsing and building upon the measures already in place to ensure the responsible use of antibiotics, to the benefit of animal health and welfare.

"The European industry survey, which started in 1998, is acknowledged as meeting some of the objectives of the strategy: namely, to provide baseline information on the prevalence, patterns and trends of antimicrobial resistant micro-organisms in animals and their environment," said chairman of NOAH's antimicrobial and feed additive working group, Dr John Walters.

"Although resistance in man is primarily a hospital-based problem, those involved with antibiotics for animals recognise their responsibilities and look forward to working alongside colleagues in the medical profession to ensure these vital medicines remain effective to treat disease in man - and animals," he said.

Dr Walters added: "As well as its work on surveillance, the industry has been working towards the other objectives set out by the ACMSF in 1999. The whole food chain has collaborated through the RUMA Alliance to produce species guidelines on responsible use of antimicrobials. These stand alongside European prudent use guidelines and more detailed guidelines produced in the UK by the BVA for veterinary surgeons. NOAH has also been active in promoting public awareness of the issues relating to issues surrounding the use of antimicrobials in animals - indeed

we have recently updated our series of briefing documents on the subject which are available free of charge on the NOAH website www.noah.co.uk.”

“We look forward to working with DEFRA to progress the implementation of the plan, and to seeing how the data it generates will be used as part of a science based risk assessment process to assess the relative magnitude of the potential risks to man,” he added.

Ends

Notes for editors

1. For further information contact Phil Sketchley or Alison Glennon at NOAH on 020 8367 3131, or by email noah@noah.co.uk or look at the NOAH website www.noah.co.uk
2. The National Office of Animal Health was formed on 1 January 1986 to represent the UK companies which research, develop, manufacture and market licensed animal health products. The association has 33 corporate members and 14 associate members. In 2003 NOAH's members accounted for well over 90% of the £398 million UK animal health market
3. NOAH is a member of the RUMA (Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture) Alliance. RUMA was established in November 1997 to promote the highest standards of food safety, animal health and animal welfare in British livestock farming. A unique initiative involving organisations representing every stage of the "farm to fork" process, RUMA aims to promote a co-ordinated and integrated approach to best practice. For more information, see www.ruma.org.uk
4. The Government's response to the ACMSF report was published on 24 March 2000. Its publication was announced in MAFF News Release 98/00 of 24 March.
5. The key elements of the Government's strategy to reduce the development of antimicrobial resistance in farm animals are:
 - surveillance to determine the prevalence of resistant organisms in the animal population;
 - development of guidelines to encourage the prudent use of antimicrobials;
 - promote the development of livestock management systems that reduce the use of antimicrobials;
 - reviewing the dosage regimes for authorised products and contributing to the development of EU guidelines to ensure that regimes to delay the development of resistance are put in place for new products;
 - identifying research priorities and commissioning research projects to get a better understanding of resistance;
 - ensuring that veterinary education (undergraduate and continuous professional development) reflects the importance of the issue; and
 - promoting public awareness of issues relating to the use of antimicrobials in animals.
6. The strategy is available on the Veterinary Medicines Directorate's website at www.vmd.gov.uk.