

# Antimicrobial resistance

Using antibiotics  
responsibly



Antibiotics are essential to keep animals and humans healthy, however the risk of use and overuse of antibiotics is that antibiotic-resistant bacteria emerge that endanger health. Livestock producers have a responsibility to protect human and animal health by using antibiotics responsibly in order to guard against antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

- ***The Government is aiming for a 20% reduction in antibiotic use across agriculture by 2018***
- ***Producers have a responsibility to guard against AMR through responsible use of antibiotics***



## ***What is antibiotic resistance?***

- Antibiotic resistance is a natural phenomenon. Resistant bacteria are found both on and in humans, animals and in the environment
- Resistant bacteria can survive treatment and multiply quickly
- Antibiotic resistance spreads as bacteria move from place to place via human and animal contact, through contaminated materials and in water, food and via particles carried on the wind

## *What are the main reasons for antibiotic use on beef and sheep farms?*



### **Beef**

- Treatment of calf health problems
- Treatment of pneumonia

### **Sheep**

- To reduce watery mouth and joint ill in young lambs
- To avoid abortion, where vaccination is not used and in the event of an abortion storm
- To treat sheep with footrot or contagious digital dermatitis (CODD)

### *So what can you do?*

- Review management and biosecurity strategies to prevent disease issues that require antibiotic use on your enterprise
- Discuss antibiotic use with your vet and ensure your herd/flock health plan is fit-for-purpose
- Ask your vet or AHDB about training on responsible antibiotic use

*Responsible use of medicines is about using  
'as little as possible but as much as necessary'*



## *Things to remember:*

- Resistant bacteria are all around us. Resistance occurs naturally as bacteria defend themselves against attack
- More intensive or productive farming is not the cause of AMR
- Strict biosecurity, vaccination and careful livestock management are important ways to avoid bacterial infections in your livestock

All livestock sectors are expected to play their part in reducing resistance. The Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA) will be developing sector-specific commitments to reducing antibiotic use by the end of 2017.

More information can be found at [www.ruma.org.uk](http://www.ruma.org.uk)

For more information, see the BRP manual **Using medicines correctly for Better Returns**, available at [beefandlamb.ahdb.org.uk/returns](http://beefandlamb.ahdb.org.uk/returns)

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