

# Media Release



DATE: 16 September 2016

NPA PRESS RELEASE

## **UK Pig Industry fully committed to addressing AMR**

The UK pig industry is already fully committed to a programme of action to address anti-microbial resistance (AMR), the National Pig Association said as the Government outlined its stance on the issue.

On Friday (September 16), the Government published its response to Lord Jim O'Neill's review on AMR.

It confirmed Defra's commitment to a reduction in antibiotic use in livestock and fish farmed for food to an average across the sectors of 50mg/kg by 2018. This compares with the most recent figure, from 2014, of 62mg/kg.

Defra will work with individual sectors to ensure appropriate sector specific reduction targets are agreed by 2017.

The Government also announced its intention to agree new rules to restrict the use of antibiotics considered to be of the 'highest critical importance to human medicine'. There will be a 'significant increase in regulatory oversight of veterinary antibiotics'.

The pig industry is up for the challenge. Earlier this year, the NPA launched its Antibiotic Stewardship Programme, which provides a framework for action and progress is already being made under it.

New figures this week showed records covering more than five million pigs have now been entered onto eMB-Pigs, the industry database introduced to record antibiotic usage.

The NPA's producer group recently recommended that eMB-Pigs should be made compulsory under the Red Tractor Pork scheme.

Dr Georgina Crayford, who leads on AMR for the NPA, said the industry was fully aware of its responsibilities on the issue but needed support from Government to achieve their mutual aims.

She said: "The pig industry is completely committed to meeting the recommendations laid out in the O'Neill report. Good progress is being made in recording antibiotic usage and we continue to encourage farmers to use eMB-Pigs so we can quantify national usage levels and ensure appropriate reduction targets are set.

"We will continue to work with Government and the industry alliance brought together by RUMA (Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture) to set responsible and proportionate usage targets for the pig sector.

“However, any reduction in antibiotic use must balance the need to address AMR with the equally important need to protect the health and welfare of our livestock.

“It is also important to stress that AMR will only be addressed through a holistic One Health approach covering human and animal medicine.

Dr Crayford welcomed the Government’s commitment to work with the industry to address wider animal health issues, including through the Rural Development Scheme.

She added: “We can’t do this on our own. Producers need support from Government, particularly for new pig buildings, which are more hygienic and allow better biosecurity, to improve herd health and reduce the need for antibiotics.

“This is something we will be pushing for now and as the Government develops its post-Brexit UK agricultural support policy as a means of helping both producers and the wider public.”

The O’Neill Review, published in May, called for co-ordinated measures on a global scale to ensure the responsible use of antibiotics in human and animal medicine.

### **Notes to editors**

1) Key commitments in Government’s response to the O’Neill review include:

- A global approach to addressing AMR working with the EU
- Investing in research to stimulate the development of new antimicrobial drugs
- Reducing inappropriate human antibiotic prescribing by 50%, with the aim of being a world leader in reducing prescribing by 2020
- A reduction in antibiotic use in livestock and fish farmed for food to a multispecies average of 50mg/kg by 2018
- A significant increase in regulatory oversight of veterinary antibiotics, enabling restrictions, or even bans, in animals on use of antibiotics of highest priority and critical importance to people.

2) The NPA’s Antibiotic Stewardship programme has six strands of activity:

- Capture and collate antibiotic use data recorded on pig farms
- Benchmark each farm's antibiotic use against other farms of a similar type
- Extend education in effective disease control strategies
- Reduce antibiotic use, consistent with responsible human and food-animal medicine
- Promote veterinary prescribing principles to strictly limit the use of antibiotics of critical importance to human health
- Appoint Stewardship Commissars who will continually review industry's use of antimicrobials and champion initiatives.

3) The Electronic Medicines Book (eMB Pigs) is a UK-wide website developed by AHDB Pork and the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), supported by Northern Ireland and the Scottish and Welsh levy bodies. It enables producers to provide records of antibiotic usage

### **ENDS**

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