

# Media Release



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NPA PRESS RELEASE

## **O'Neill is right, says National Pig Association — we've all got to pull our weight on antimicrobial resistance**

Headline recommendations from the O'Neill report on antimicrobial resistance published today will be incorporated into National Pig Association's recently launched Pig Industry Antibiotic Stewardship Programme.

"We support the report's view that unnecessary use of antimicrobials in agriculture can cause a threat to human health and we agree with its key findings concerning agriculture," said chief executive Dr Zoe Davies.

"Its recommendations regarding improved animal health education, the need for accurate data on antibiotic usage, and restricting the use of last-resort antibiotics are already included in our new stewardship programme. Our goal now will be to ensure our aspirations are aligned with the O'Neill report in key areas and to make sure our stewardship programme moves forward as quickly as possible."

The O'Neill report, "Tackling Drug-Resistant Infections Globally", proposes a concerted international approach to reducing unnecessary use of antimicrobials in both human and farm medicine. It voices particular concern about countries where non-targeted use of antibiotics is still allowed.

"We can't do much ourselves about countries where antibiotics are used indiscriminately, but we can take the necessary actions to make sure our own standards are beyond reproach," said Dr Georgina Crayford, NPA senior adviser.

"Although the British pig industry aims to be a responsible user of antibiotics, there is inevitably room for improvement, and this will be our focus as we step up collection of data so we can introduce best-practice bench-marking."

There are six strands to the British Pig Industry Antibiotic Stewardship Programme, which was announced earlier this month in association with other industry bodies.

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

microbials and champion initiatives.

NPA will issue its first update on progress in the next few weeks.

## **Ends**

**Note to editors:** O'Neill proposes country by country ten-year targets to reduce unnecessary antibiotic use in agriculture, to be introduced in 2018 with milestones to support progress that is consistent with each country's economic development. The report proposes restrictions on antibiotics that are highly critical in human medicine (already introduced by the British pig industry via the industry's specialist pig vets), and he wants improved transparency to enable consumers to make more informed purchase decisions. The report says around 700,000 people die every year from drug resistant strains of common bacterial infections. But although antimicrobial resistance "is a massive challenge", it can be tackled effectively. "The human and economic costs compel us to act: if we fail to do so, the brunt of these will be borne by our children and grandchildren, and felt most keenly in the poorest parts of the world."

The report can be downloaded here: <http://amr-review.org/Publications>

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