

Long Term Objective (Internal Position)

T-3.3 Adopted Policy on Antibiotic* Growth Promoters

Background

Over the last couple of decades procedures of farming have been rapidly changing. In many of the big farming countries, the trend has been to increase the size of the animal holdings. This has implied a change in the pattern of the animal diseases recognized in the herds and a change in the veterinary services to the breeders. Especially are recognized whole herds with the same contagious disease such as enteritis, pleuropneumonia etc. Typical diseases related to housing systems and stock density.

At the same time there has been a development in designing new medicinal product intended for animal application to prevent herd diseases. Typical medicaments are antibiotics.

Problems

In recent years, a number of microbes have been identified as causative agents to enteritis and pleuropneumonia etc. An increasing number hereof are resistant to one or more antibiotics, some are even multi resistant (= resistant to more than 4 different antibiotics). There are additional indications that the genes containing resistance can transfer to other microbes giving them the same characteristic.

Human beings suffering from diseases caused by (multi-) resistant microbes may face troubles in curing because of difficulties for human doctors in choosing the right antibiotic medicament in due time. In rare cases no known effective antibiotics are available.

WVA Position

Antibiotics are dedicated for curing and prevention of diseases and should not be used as growth promoters.

Breeding procedures and housing facilities should be so designed as to prevent herd diseases. Elements to achieve this are for example more spacious housing, no mixing of animals from other herds and in the herd, a longer period with mother animals, a more considerate feeding.

*The word "antibiotic" covers all antimicrobial products administered orally and parenterally to animals, i.e. antibiotics (produced by fermentation of live micro-organisms) but also chemically-synthesised compounds with antibiotic activity such as sulphonamides and quinolones; it does not include disinfectants.

The World Veterinary Association wants to keep the effect of the antibiotic medicaments for treating sick animals and human beings. The WVA realizes that new types of medicaments should be developed as the horizon of the efficacy of the presently known antibiotics might be limited.

The Way Forward

The WVA shall take part in any position-making body in the area.

The WVA members should, on a national basis and on a regional basis, promote the WVA policy on banning antibiotics for growth promoting purposes in herds and should contribute with advice and proposals for farming procedures better safeguarding animals and consumers.