

# Questions raised on Antibiotics - June 2015

## Erythromycin: Pregnant Women

Department of Health

17<sup>th</sup> June 2015



**Jim Shannon** DUP, Strangford

To ask the [Secretary of State](#) for Health, if he will discuss with the British Medical Association and other medical bodies the potential effects of erythromycin on unborn babies and pregnant women.



**George Freeman**

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health

The Department has no plans to discuss the potential effects of erythromycin on unborn babies or pregnant women with the British Medical Association and other medical bodies.

The Commission on Human Medicines has recommended that no change to the licence for erythromycin is required. Infection in pregnancy can cause serious harm, both to the mother and baby, and it is essential that pregnant women receive treatment with an appropriate antibiotic, including erythromycin, when necessary.

# Farm Animals: Disease

## Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

18<sup>th</sup> June 2015



**Kerry McCarthy** Labour, Bristol East @ 9:30 am, 18th June 2015

What steps she is taking to reduce the routine use of antibiotics to prevent disease in farm animals.



**George Eustice**

The Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

We have made it very clear that we do not support the routine preventive use of antibiotics or the use of antibiotics to compensate for poor animal husbandry. That is reflected in the revised guidelines on the responsible use of animal medicines on the farm, published by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate last December. We continue to work with a number of industry bodies to encourage the development of prescribing guidelines, to challenge and optimise prescribing practices and behaviour.



**Kerry McCarthy** Labour, Bristol East

Today, we hear that [MRSA](#) of a livestock origin is not only likely to be well established within the [UK](#) pig herd but has for the first time been found in British retail pork, from which it could be passed on to humans. In the light of this new and extremely troubling evidence, will the Department now finally set clear targets for phasing out routine preventive use of antibiotics in farm animals where no disease has been diagnosed, or is the [Minister](#) happy to take the risk of a post-antibiotic future?



## George Eustice

The Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

It is important to recognise that livestock-associated MRSA is a different strain from that which affects our hospitals and does not cross to the human population. This country has always had slightly lower levels of antibiotic usage than countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands, which have had more serious problems. They have to be prescribed and clinical decisions have to be made, but the guidelines we have issued mean we have managed to suppress the use of antibiotics and ensure they are used sparingly.



## Andrew Bridgen

Conservative, North West Leicestershire

Does the Minister agree that microbial antibiotic resistance is by no means exclusively a concern for veterinary

medicine, and will he join me in welcoming the publication back in 2013 of a Government strategy to deal with the issue across Departments?



## George Eustice

The Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

My hon. Friend is absolutely right. This issue also affects the Department for Health, and the chief medical officer is leading our work in this area. As my hon. Friend says, we have published an antimicrobial strategy setting out our approach for the next five years. It is also true that, although the use of antibiotics in farming has been relatively static over the past decade or so, we have seen an increase in the use of antibiotics in medicine, which is of great concern.



**Jim Shannon** DUP, Strangford

McDonald's is phasing out beef products that contain antibiotics, but it has indicated that beef products containing ionophore drugs will be acceptable, as they harm neither animals nor humans. What discussions has the Minister had with the catering industry about that?



**George Eustice**

The Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

I have not had any specific discussions on that point. As I have said, all antibiotics have to be prescribed. It is important to distinguish between routine use and preventive use. Sometimes it is right to use them preventively if there is a particular problem in a herd or a flock, but they have to be prescribed by vets—and only sparingly.

# Agriculture: Antibiotics

## Department of Health

23<sup>rd</sup> June 2015

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**Kerry McCarthy** Labour, Bristol East

To ask the [Secretary of State](#) for Health, what discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs about bringing forward targets for reducing the inappropriate use of antibiotics in agriculture in line with comparable targets for reducing their use in medicine in the [UK Five Year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy 2013-18](#); and what assessment he has made of the potential effect on human health of not so adjusting those targets.



**Jane Ellison** The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health

The [UK Five Year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy 2013-18](#) was developed with close collaboration between the Department of Health, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Veterinary Medicines Directorate. The collaboration continues during the implementation phase of the Strategy. This includes senior representation from these departments on the High Level Steering Group, which oversees the implementation.

The High Level Steering Group endorsed the publication in December 2014 of the annual progress report and implementation plan of the UK five year antimicrobial resistance strategy, which set out targets for reducing antimicrobial use in livestock production in real terms over the next four years.

It is recognised that the link between antibiotic use in animals and the development of antibiotic resistance in humans is complex. The Government continues to carry out research and surveillance to better understand the potential impacts of one on the other.

# Pigmeat: MRSA

## Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

29<sup>th</sup> June 2015



**Maria Eagle** Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

To ask the [Secretary of State](#) for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department has taken to investigate the implications for human health of the appearance of antibiotic resistant strains of [MRSA](#) in pig meat.



**George Eustice**

The Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food ([ACMSF](#)) sub-group on antimicrobial resistance ([AMR](#)) has been considering an assessment of the risk to consumers from [MRSA](#) in the food chain. Based on current evidence, the risk of contracting MRSA through consumption of foodstuffs is considered to be very low. This will be kept under review. Food Standards Agency food hygiene advice remains the same, i.e. that foodstuffs should be stored appropriately, handled hygienically and meat should be cooked thoroughly.

# Antibiotics: Livestock

## Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

29<sup>th</sup> June 2015



**Maria Eagle** Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

To ask the [Secretary of State](#) for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will set a target to reduce farm antibiotic use.



**Maria Eagle** Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

To ask the [Secretary of State](#) for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will take measures to reduce farm antibiotics use.



**George Eustice**

The Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The annual progress report and implementation plan for the [UK](#) five Year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy sets out our ambition for reducing antimicrobial use in livestock production over the next four years. The focus is on: improving bio-security and husbandry, optimising prescribing practices and improved education, training and public engagement.

# Antibiotics: Livestock

## Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

30<sup>th</sup> June 2015



**David Anderson** Labour, Blaydon

To ask the [Secretary of State](#) for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to tackle the overuse of antibiotics in farms; and if she will make a statement.



**George Eustice**

The Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Government published its annual progress report and implementation plan for the [UK](#) five Year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy in December 2014. This includes the further measures on animal health to be taken over the next four years to respond to the risk of antibiotic resistance and to promote the responsible use of antibiotics.

The Government continues to work with a number of industry bodies to encourage the development of prescribing guidelines to optimise prescribing practices and foster good stewardship of antibiotics.