

Antibiotic Stewardship Supports Animal Health and Safe Food



With growing concerns about antibiotic resistance, people ask how antibiotic use in animals could affect their health and the health of their families. While many understand that these medicines are needed to protect animal health and produce safe food, some ask how farmers can ensure antibiotics are used responsibly to minimize the selection for antibiotic-resistant bacteria and to protect these valuable medications for both human and animal health.

This is an important conversation and one the U.S. pork industry has been engaged in for many years. The industry is committed to helping consumers understand how and why antibiotics are used to keep our food safe and animals healthy through continuous improvement of best practices on the farm. Antibiotic resistance is a critical issue that everyone must address together through a science-based approach.



Antibiotics are essential for healthy livestock and safe food.

Antibiotics are critical to treat and prevent disease – in humans and animals. Without the responsible and timely use of antibiotics, sickness can spread rapidly on a farm, endangering the health of animals and the safety of our food.

Our view is simple: Produce healthy livestock, produce safe food. When you go into a grocery store or restaurant, you should not have to worry about the safety of the food you are buying for your family. For that reason, the pork industry ensures that pigs stay healthy in several ways:

- Farmers work closely with their veterinarians to protect their pigs' health and reduce the need to use antibiotics.
- The pork industry funds research on antibiotic resistance to ensure that farmers continue to improve best practices for the use of these medicines on the farm. The goal is to protect the efficacy of antibiotics for humans and animals.
- The industry works closely with animal and human health experts to define and guide responsible antibiotic use.
- Farmers need access to the right tools to treat and prevent disease in their animals. To not treat them would be inhumane, resulting in reduced animal welfare and increased concerns about food safety.
- Farmers keep detailed records of all medicine they use in raising and caring for pigs.

Pork Quality Assurance® Plus Program

Pig farmers support the five principles of responsible antibiotic use described in the Pork Quality Assurance® Plus program, an independently-monitored, producer-driven, certification program that ensures U.S. pork products are of the highest quality:

1. Take appropriate steps to decrease the overall need for these medicines.
2. Assess the advantages and disadvantages of all uses.
3. Use these medicines only when they provide measurable benefits.
4. Fully implement the management practices described for responsible use of animal health products into daily operations.
5. Have a working veterinarian-client-patient relationship and follow the responsible antibiotic use guidelines.

The program also conducts on-farm assessments, provides guidance on best practices and requires veterinary oversight and compliance with FDA requirements, including maintaining medical records.





With a focus on continuous improvement, real change is occurring on farms across the U.S.

The pork industry is committed to ensuring responsible antibiotic use in animals to protect the efficacy of antibiotics for humans and animals. The industry tests and implements alternative ways to keep pork safe and healthy. Antibiotics are just one of the many approaches in a comprehensive strategy to keep animals healthy and produce safe food.



Education: The pork industry is working to ensure farmers are equipped with the information and resources they need to use antibiotics responsibly. The industry shares research findings and educational materials about antibiotic stewardship with more than 60,000 pork producers and the academic and swine veterinarian communities.

Research: Since 2003, the Pork Checkoff has invested more than \$6 million in research on the epidemiology of antimicrobial resistance and antibiotic alternatives. The board is investing nearly \$1 million in research in 2016 alone. The pork industry will continue to work closely with federal agencies and other commodity group partners to research and identify models and metrics for continuous improvement of antibiotic use.

Communications Outreach: Communication regarding responsible antibiotic use is shared with all segments of the pork chain, from producers, to processors, retailers and consumers. It is a main emphasis for the pork industry. Ongoing outreach to state pork associations ensures antibiotic news and information reaches farmers and state-level allied industries. And collaboration with swine veterinarians, the feed industry, land-grant universities and others helps to amplify the industry's communications efforts and outreach.



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) play important roles to ensure responsible antibiotic use in animals.

The FDA approves the use of medically important antibiotics in pigs for treatment, control and prevention of disease. New regulations – FDA Guidance 209 and 213 – will be fully enacted January 1, 2017. Pig farmers embrace and support the new guidelines. The pork industry is working now to implement the guidelines, which:

- Strengthen the rules requiring licensed veterinarians to oversee the use of antibiotics on farms;
- Require a prescription or veterinary feed directive from a licensed veterinarian for the use of antibiotics in water and feed, respectively; and
- Prohibit the use of medically important antibiotics for anything other than treatment, control and prevention of disease.

The USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) regularly tests and monitors meat to ensure its safety before it enters the food supply. These inspections and safeguards throughout the food chain ensure that antibiotics used in pork production support both good health in animals and a safe food supply for humans.

To learn more about the pork industry's antibiotics stewardship priorities, visit porkcares.org/antibiotics