

Utrecht, September 11, 2019

Your reference: -  
Our reference: 010.2019-HS

Re: SDa report *Usage of Antibiotics in Agricultural Livestock in the Netherlands in 2018 - Trends and benchmarking of livestock farms and veterinarians*

Dear Sir or Madam,

It is with great pleasure that the Netherlands Veterinary Medicines Institute (SDa) presents to you its report *Usage of Antibiotics in Agricultural Livestock in the Netherlands in 2018*. With this report, the SDa wants to provide insight into the amounts of antibiotics used in the Dutch veal, rabbit, poultry, cattle and pig farming sectors in 2018.

The report shows that in 2018, antibiotic use in terms of defined daily doses animal (DDDA<sub>NAT</sub> values) declined slightly in the cattle and pig farming sectors. More prominent reductions were achieved by the veal and turkey farming sectors, while the broiler farming sector recorded a minor increase in the amount of antibiotics used. The rabbit farming sector is characterized by fluctuating antibiotic usage data.

Sales of antibiotics for veterinary use have dropped by 63.8% since 2009. According to the 2018 data, third-choice antibiotics - fluoroquinolones and third- and fourth-generation cephalosporins in particular - were once again used very sparingly in the monitored livestock sectors.

The number of livestock farms included in the action zone (i.e. the number of livestock farms with high antibiotic usage levels) showed little improvement compared to previous reporting years.

In its report, the SDa expert panel describes a discrepancy between FIDIN-provided data on the numbers of kilograms of antibiotics sold and the delivery record data on the numbers of kilograms used, which are provided through the livestock sectors' databases. The SDa expert panel feels this discrepancy warrants further investigation in order to identify its origin.

The SDa board has taken note of the findings set out in this report. On the whole, antibiotic use may have declined slightly in 2018, but the SDa board does recognize that usage levels have been rather stagnant over the last few years. Despite most livestock farms having managed to achieve and maintain target zone usage levels, the number of livestock farms recording relatively high action zone usage levels has not decreased considerably over the years, in spite of efforts by all parties concerned. In light of this, the SDa board feels the parties' joint approach towards reducing the amount of antibiotics used should be aimed at high action zone usage levels in particular. After all, the livestock farms with the highest usage levels provide the greatest opportunity for improvement and are most at risk for antibiotic resistance. This is particularly relevant in light of the new benchmark thresholds that will be applied as of the 2019 reporting year, as they will result in a larger number of livestock farms being included in the action zone. In the summer of 2019, the SDa will also present its new benchmarking system and associated new benchmark thresholds for veterinarians.

The SDa board also has taken note of the growing discrepancies between the sales data provided by FIDIN and the data the SDa obtains from the livestock sectors. The SDa board has decided to look into the possible reasons for these discrepancies. This will be done in consultation with FIDIN, veterinarians and the various livestock sectors. It will draw up an action plan to this end.

The antibiotic usage data fluctuations observed for the rabbit farming sector (i.e. meat rabbit farms) also warrant further investigation, in order to assess the completeness and reliability of the data provided throughout the years and to analyze the differences between the rabbit farms with high usage levels and those with low usage levels.

On behalf of the SDa board,

F.J.M. Werner, MSc  
*Chair*

H.M.G. Schreurs, DVM, PhD  
*Director*

Attachment: [SDa report Usage of Antibiotics in Agricultural Livestock in the Netherlands in 2018 - Trends and benchmarking of livestock farms and veterinarians](#)