

# ANIMAL WELFARE & REDUCING ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

3 GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is one of the greatest threats to global health and sustainable development, with millions of lives and livelihoods at risk. Strengthening animal welfare is a powerful, underused strategy to combat AMR through a One Health approach.

**6.22 mn**

deaths globally associated with AMR, with **1.27 mn** deaths directly attributable.

**~3.8%**

projected loss of global GDP by 2050 caused by AMR, pushing **28 mn** people into extreme poverty.

**>70%**

antibiotics used in animals raised for food, for growth promotion & disease prevention than treatment.

## CHALLENGES

Overuse of antimicrobials in healthy animals to promote growth or prevent disease in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions.

High-density, low-welfare farms increase stress and susceptibility to disease, driving up antimicrobial misuse.

Weak antimicrobial regulation, with limited animal health services and farmer training, and weak veterinary systems with insufficient workforce and surveillance capacity, especially in low- and middle-income countries.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Phase out non-essential antimicrobials for growth promotion and routine use in healthy animals, through a gradual, country-specific approach.

Prioritise implementing WOA's species-specific health and welfare standards, using their priority disease list and joining FAO's RENOFARM.

Strengthen veterinary capacity and systems (including better access to the right medication & equipment) to address the oversight and geographical gaps that lead to misuse of antimicrobials.

# INTERNATIONAL POLICY GUIDANCE

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**United Nations General Assembly High Level meeting on AMR Political Declaration** recognises the need to reduce the overall use of antimicrobials in the animal sector and promote good animal husbandry to reduce infection and the need for antimicrobial use.

**WOAH's Strategy on Antimicrobial Resistance and the Prudent Use of Antimicrobials** acknowledges that good animal husbandry, improved biosecurity and the implementation of animal welfare standards contribute to disease prevention and reduce the need for antimicrobial use & lays out the WOA's global vision for AMR control, calling explicitly for better animal husbandry and welfare as a core solution.

The **Independent Panel on Evidence for Action against AMR (IPEA)** will be established to deliver rigorous, policy-relevant, and systems-oriented evidence to address AMR through a One Health lens. Recognising the impact of animal welfare on the emergence and spread of AMR will enrich the quality and relevance of IPEA's recommendations.



## CASE STUDY: DENMARK

In 2000, Denmark became one of the first countries to **ban the use of antibiotics** for growth promotion in livestock. It also introduced the **"Yellow Card" initiative**, which sets farm-specific antimicrobial use thresholds and enforces reductions when exceeded.

Since then, antimicrobial use in pigs—Denmark's largest livestock sector—has dropped by over 50%, while **productivity and animal health indicators remained stable or improved**.

Central to the Danish approach are **animal welfare improvements**, such as more space per animal and better hygiene, which reduce disease pressure and antibiotic need.

## ONE HEALTH: AS DEFINED IN THE WHO PANDEMIC AGREEMENT

"One Health approach" for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response recognises that **human health is closely linked and interdependent with the health of domestic and wild animals, plants, and the wider environment, including ecosystems**. It uses an integrated, multisectoral, and transdisciplinary approach that contributes to equitable and sustainable development.



### SCAN FOR SOURCES & REFERENCES

All WFA policy recommendations are evidence-based — ensuring better outcomes for people, animals, and the planet.