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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
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Agenda Item 3

**CX/AMR 08/2/3
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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

**AD HOC CODEX INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE
ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE**

Second Session

Seoul, Republic of Korea, 20-24 October 2008

INFORMATION ON THE WORK BY FAO, WHO AND OIE ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

(prepared by FAO, OIE and WHO)

Background

1. The use of antimicrobials for treatment and prevention of diseases in food production animals contributes to the protection of animal health and welfare. The potential risk of emergence and spread of resistant microorganisms associated with such use has been addressed during the last decade by the international organisations, WHO, OIE and FAO. One of the main outcomes of this collaborative effort has been the development of two lists of critically important antimicrobials (a list of antimicrobial used in human therapy by WHO and a list of veterinary medicinal products by OIE) and the establishment of the Codex ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance which held its first session in Seoul, Republic of Korea, from 23 to 26 October 2007.

FAO/OIE /WHO Expert Meeting on Critically Important Antimicrobials – November 2007

2. FAO/WHO/OIE implemented an expert meeting on Critically Important Antimicrobials to review the overlap, identify the current and potential hazards to public health resulting from this and, find an appropriate balance between animal health needs and public health considerations. One of the objectives of the expert meeting was to provide further advice to Codex in the elaboration of strategies to prevent/contain resistance to those antimicrobials. The meeting was held in Rome, Italy 26 - 30 November 2007 and was attended by 15 experts from 12 countries. The final report has been published by FAO and is available at the FAO corporate document repository at: <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/010/i0204e/i0204e00.pdf>.

3. The meeting sought to identify the combinations – human-pathogen-antimicrobial use and animal species – that could be considered by risk managers as the priority combinations for future risk-benefit assessment and review current management strategies and options for maintaining the efficacy of critically important antimicrobials for humans and animals. This report contains the findings of that expert meeting and gives particular attention to principles and approaches for prioritization for risk assessment and the identification and characterization of preliminary risk management activities for minimizing the risk of antimicrobial resistance associated with food animals. In addition it includes a series of recommendations to FAO, WHO, OIE and national governments related to assessment and management of antimicrobial resistance resulting from the use of antimicrobials in food animals.

4. A stakeholders meeting was organized immediately prior to this expert meeting, allowing representatives of these organizations to express their views on this important issue.

5. FAO/OIE/WHO pay particular attention to ensure that the expert consultation and other related meetings follows the principles of scientific advice http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/agns/files/Final_Draft_EnglishFramework.pdf to ensure the scientific basis of the recommendations to be made at the meeting.

Recent WHO Activities for Containment of Foodborne Antimicrobial Resistance

6. WHO is working towards the goal of real reduction of use in food animals of critically important antimicrobials for human medicine, and the phasing out globally of use of antimicrobials as growth promoters.

7. WHO is carrying out work to enhance the capacity of Member Countries, particularly developing countries, through training courses (Global Salm Surv programme) and pilot projects, to conduct surveillance of antimicrobial use and resistance, to implement intervention strategies to contain antimicrobial resistance and to implement risk assessment approaches to support selection of risk management options.

8. In close collaboration with partners at international, regional and national level WHO promotes implementation of the WHO Global Principles for containment of antimicrobial resistance in animals intended for food.

9. WHO is in the process of establishing a WHO Advisory Group on Integrated Surveillance of Antimicrobial Resistance (WHO-AGISAR). An integrated antimicrobial resistance surveillance programme is a coordinated, continuous, ongoing surveillance programme that integrates zoonotic and enteric bacteria from animal, food and human sources. Ideally these programs report annually and link susceptible data to antimicrobial use data. The WHO-AGISAR will provide guidance to the WHO on a framework for the development of an international network to promote and enhance collaboration on harmonization and data sharing. All the reports food-related antimicrobial resistance are available at WHO website :

http://www.who.int/foodborne_disease/resistance/publications/en/index.html

Recent OIE Activities for Containment of Foodborne Antimicrobial Resistance

10. The approach of the OIE to the use of antimicrobials in animals is to take into account the risks associated with development of resistance from the misuse of antimicrobials, but at the same time to create an acceptable balance and acknowledgement between the need for the use of antimicrobials to promote animal health and their possible misuse.

11. As OIE Members need to implement new standards and guidelines and also, where applicable, reflect it in national legislation, the OIE has taken several initiatives to help Members to achieve this goal. One of the main prerequisites which will enable them to implement the guidelines and to conduct antimicrobial risk analysis including risk management is a functional Veterinary Service. Veterinary Services in their role as supervisory authority play an essential role in the application of the risk analysis process and the implementation of risk-based recommendations.

12. The OIE has initiated an evaluation methodology for the evaluation of the performance of Veterinary Services, the OIE-PVS Tool, which also takes into account the public and private component, and the interaction with stakeholders. Evaluations are not obligatory and are conducted only upon request of an interested country. It is an independent evaluation system used by specifically OIE trained experts for the purpose of assessing the performance of the Veterinary Service. As it is recognised by major donors it helps participating countries to make request for investments on an accepted basis. More than 50 evaluations were already completed, most of them in African countries. In selected countries the initial evaluations will be followed by a specific gap analysis to help Members to address the critical needs in moving towards compliance with international standards.

13. Another important prerequisite is the existence of technical and scientifically recognised laboratories able to support the Veterinary Service with expertise and as a scientific backup to develop and propose sanitary standards. The OIE laboratory twinning programme creates opportunities for developing and in-transition countries to have more ready access to scientific expertise and to progress towards compliance with the standards of the OIE.

14. OIE also enhances awareness of the importance of the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobial agents in veterinary medicine through their regional activities. As an example in March 2008, OIE organised a conference on Veterinary Medicinal Products "Towards the harmonisation and improvement of registration

and quality control” in Dakar (Senegal) to provide a forum for the exchange of the latest scientific information and experiences on the improvement of registration procedures, legislation, control over quality and distribution of veterinary medicinal products including antimicrobials in Africa. Similar conferences are planned in other regions. The next one will take place in the Middle-East in 2009.

Recent FAO Activities for Containment of Food-borne Antimicrobial Resistance

15. FAO’s involvement with the issue of food-borne antimicrobial resistance include normative and field activities, are carried out for several units, mainly the Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division (AGN), the FAO’s Fishery Industries Division (FII) and the Animal Production and Health Division (AGA). The activities consider the food chain approach and are focus on prevention. In particular, in the capacity building Workshops on fish safety conducted in Albania, Vietnam, Iran, Bosnia during 2007-2008, aspects of veterinary drug residues, good aquaculture practices to reduce antimicrobial use and the Codex Code of Practice to minimise and contain antimicrobial resistance were included. FAO is working closely with WHO and OIE on the normative and risk assessment activities in this field.

16. The Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) has since 1956 continually developed principles for safety assessment of chemicals in food. The JECFA risk assessment framework for residues of antimicrobial veterinary drugs has been developed and are used on the international and national, regional level. At its forthcoming meeting in October 2008, the Committee will evaluate the safety of a number of antimicrobial veterinary drugs. The draft agenda is available at the FAO and WHO JECFA websites: <http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/agns/files/JECFA%2070%20Call%20for%20data.pdf>; <http://www.who.int/ipcs/food/jecfa/jecfa70.pdf> .

Codex Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance

17. The Codex *Ad Hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance, which was established by the 29th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, held its first session in 2007. FAO/WHO/OIE supports the Task Force in the development of its work on this area.

18. In developing guidance on methodology and policies for risk assessment for antimicrobials used in human and veterinary medicine, it is recommended that the Codex Task Force fully takes into account the existing work within Codex and build on it. The OIE considers that this work in Codex should be complementary to existing OIE standards.