

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

PAKISTAN IN ACTION

"ACTION TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF CODEX AMR TEXTS (ACT)" PROJECT

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a global threat to humans, animals, plants and the environment



Pakistan, with a population of over 240 million, has strong and diverse agriculture and farming traditions. To meet the needs of the growing population, traditional farming practices have shifted towards intensive farming methods that rely heavily on the use of antimicrobials to ensure productivity, profitability and animal health.

Antibiotics and other antimicrobials are commonly used in humans, animals, and plants to treat, prevent and control diseases. However, the extensive and sometimes indiscriminate use of antimicrobials has led to a significant global concern - antimicrobial resistance (AMR), a situation where these drugs stop working or are less effective.

Managing AMR poses a significant challenge for the world. One way AMR can spread to humans is through food, known as foodborne AMR. International Codex Alimentarius standards, guidelines, codes of practice (Codex texts) have been developed to assist countries in controlling foodborne AMR, and the "Action to support implementation of Codex AMR texts (ACT)" project is supporting these efforts in Pakistan.

Strengths and opportunities to control AMR in Pakistan

Pakistan has identified its priority areas for tackling foodborne AMR and is actively implementing several projects. These key areas include collaboration with various organizations to deliver AMR awareness training for farmers, improving AMR surveillance in food animals and advocating for legislation to prohibit/phase out antimicrobial growth promoters in animal production. The country developed a National Action Plan on AMR in 2017 that ensures the intersectoral coordination and establishment of an AMR surveillance system to generate data on its impact. In collaboration with public health and animal health stakeholders, Pakistan has developed several national surveillance strategies, including surveillance for AMR in healthy and diseased food animals, the farm environment, and aquaculture. The country also conducted several surveys with veterinarians and farmers on antimicrobial use and AMR in 2021 and prepared veterinary drug prescription guidelines. While the existing legislation in the country covers antimicrobial sales, there is a need to focus on enforcing regulations that specifically address antimicrobial use.

Landscape of antimicrobial resistance and use in Pakistan

- In Pakistan in 2019, there were 59 200 deaths attributable to AMR and 221 300 deaths associated with AMR. Pakistan has the 29th highest age-standardized mortality rate per 100,000 population associated with AMR across 204 countries (IHME).
- Monitoring antibiotic use in food-producing animals not routinely performed in Pakistan (<u>PVJ</u>).
- A recent study shows a lack of training for veterinarians on rational use of antimicrobials, frequent use of antimicrobials for mass medication and prophylaxis, widespread use of critically important antimicrobials and improper disposal practices (Preventive Veterinary Medicine).

What is being done in Pakistan under the ACT project?

- Collaborating with various stakeholders to raise awareness about rational antimicrobial use.
- Engaging with federal and provincial livestock departments to identify areas for legislation to encourage the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials.
- Delivering awareness training to farmers and veterinarians on prudent use of antimicrobials, AMR and Codex texts.
- Supporting the federal and provincial laboratories with proficiency testing.
- Advocating to implement legislation prohibiting antimicrobial growth promoters in animal production.
- Supporting the preparation of antimicrobial use guidelines for aquaculture.
- Collaborating with partners under projects such as the ones administered by the World Health Organization and funded by the Fleming Fund.

Project target audience

The ACT project assists Pakistan in working with various stakeholders, such as livestock farmers, governmental livestock departments, food authorities, veterinary diagnostic laboratories, veterinary professionals, consumers and students.

Expected results

- Increased awareness about AMR among producers, consumers and food safety officials.
- Adoption of Codex Alimentarius recommendations on antimicrobial use, including support for legislation to reduce the use of antimicrobials as growth promoters.
- Capacity building of food safety laboratories to test for antimicrobial resistance, being able to identify risks and develop effective responses.

Codex texts

The Codex Alimentarius, or "Food Code", is a collection of standards, guidelines and codes of practice (Codex texts) adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. When food producers and traders comply with Codex texts, consumers can trust the safety and quality of the products they buy and importers can have confidence that the food they ordered will meet the recommended specifications.



For more information, please visit:





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