



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

COLOMBIA 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



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Colombia has a big land area, with around 50 million hectares used for farming, and most of this land is used to raise animals. Antibiotics and other antimicrobials are commonly used in humans, animals and plants to treat, prevent and control diseases. Although the country has several regulations about antibiotic access and use (e.g., all antimicrobials must be sold under a veterinarian's prescription), and extended surveillance and infection prevention programmes, there are improvements to be made regarding access to and use of antimicrobials.

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 antimicrobial-resistant bacteria can spread to humans is through food, known as foodborne AMR. International Codex Alimentarius standards, guidelines, and 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 Colombia.

Strengths and opportunities to control AMR in Colombia

Colombia has been actively implementing its National Response Plan to AMR since 2018, with the support of a dedicated intersectoral governance board. In addition, the country has maintained the Commission on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures for 15 years, comprising representatives from animal health, plant health and food safety. There are also different AMR monitoring programmes throughout the food chain.

Colombia has made significant progress, but there are still opportunities for improvement. Some of these include formalizing the governance board dedicated to AMR, continuing to promote collaboration among different sectors through the One Health approach, and sustaining awareness-raising activities. Additionally, Colombia can benefit from more training initiatives to share good practices and enhance the development of an integrated AMR surveillance system.

Landscape of antimicrobial resistance and use in Colombia

- In Colombia in 2019, there were 4 700 deaths attributable to AMR and 18 200 deaths associated with AMR. Colombia has the 43rd lowest age-standardized mortality rate per 100 000 population associated with AMR across 204 countries ([IHME](#)).
- In 2014, the Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA) started the implementation of the AMR Monitoring Pilot Plan in eggs and bovine milk, which from 2019 also includes swine meat production ([MINSALUD, Gobierno de Colombia](#)).
- Colombia analyzes foodborne AMR strains (i.e. *Salmonella*) using multiple monitoring programmes ([MINSALUD, Gobierno de Colombia](#)).

Project target audience

The ACT project assists Colombia in working with various stakeholders, such as government authorities, professionals and technicians from the food and agricultural sector, as well as farmers involved in livestock production in the milk, meat, pig and poultry sectors.

Expected results

- Strengthened governance under the One Health approach to address foodborne AMR.
- Increased awareness among relevant stakeholders about antimicrobial resistance and appropriate use of antimicrobials.
- Improved monitoring and surveillance system on antimicrobial resistance.
- Adopted good practices and responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials to reduce foodborne AMR.

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.



CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

What is being done in Colombia under the ACT project?

- Collaborating with public and private sector partners to tackle foodborne AMR throughout the food chain, such as various ministries, the Colombian Institute of Agriculture, the Colombian Agricultural Research Corporation, the National Institute of Food and Drug Surveillance, the National Health Institute, food producers, veterinary and animal production associations and others.
- Raising awareness among veterinarians and farmers about the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials, as well as Codex texts in the food and agriculture sectors.
- Strengthening the national AMR surveillance system.
- Promoting good practices for the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials in animal production.
- Identifying and assessing regulations related to the implementation of Codex AMR texts to identify existing gaps in addressing the issue.
- Collaborating with partners under projects such as “Working together to fight antimicrobial resistance”, funded by the European Union (EU) and administrated by the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

For more information, please visit:



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FUNDED BY



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