EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT VOTES FOR BETTER ANTIBIOTICS REGULATION

CALL FOR ACTION TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM

MANDATORY ORIGIN LABELLING FOR FOODS

INFORMATION ABOUT EU PROJECTS AND EVENTS

SAFE Safe Food Advocacy Europe
Striving for Safer Food for European Consumers

NEWSLETTER

Dear Members,

In our May Newsletter we share with you latest news and developments from the European Parliament's vote on a **better antibiotics regulation,** the **SAFE call for action for a sustainable food system** and the report from the **European Commission on mandatory origin labelling for foods.**

On the last pages you'll find again an overview of **EU projects & events.**

Enjoy reading.

We are looking forward to receiving your feedback.

Yours,

Floriana Cimmarusti
Secretary General of SAFE

European Parliament vote for a better regulation on antibiotics

On 19 May 2015 the European Parliament has adopted a Resolution concerning the struggle against antibiotic resistance in Europe. It was adopted by MEPS with 637 votes in favour, 32 against and 10 abstained.

Tighter rules in prescribing antibiotics, a ban of the use of antibiotics without prescription, deterring conflict between prescribers and pharmaceutical

manufacturers, more surveillance and monitoring are included in the Resolution text. Through the recommendations contained in the Resolution, MEPs (Members of European Parliament) aim to safeguard patients and animal health from drug resistance in Europe by reducing and optimizing the use of antibiotics.

Antibiotic resistance

The antibiotics, as defined by the European Centre for Disease Control, are substances that kill or slow the growth of bacterial infections in both humans and animals.

The problem is that they are becoming less and less effective as microbes have steadily become resistant to antibacterial medicine. This has given way to an unprecedented global public health crisis. In fact in Europe 25,000 people die of antibiotic resistant infections each year according to 2009 estimates and €1.5 billion is lost to the economy as a result.

Though antibiotic resistance had been foreseen years ago, the overuse and misuse of antibiotics in healthcare and farming as well as the strong lack of regulatory frameworks, have largely increased bacterias' exposure to antibiotics and accelerated the occurrence of an otherwise natural phenomenon.

The farming sector's use of antibiotics exceeds human usage, comprising over 50% of worldwide use. Besides therapeutic purposes, antibiotics are routinely given to buffer the impact of intensive animal farming conditions. This is done through illness prevention in healthy animals (prophylaxis) and control and prevention of illness in herds (metaphylaxis).

It is increasingly acknowledged by bodies like the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) and the European Food and Safety Agency (EFSA) that large scale use of antibiotics in farming may be a pivotal driver of the rise of drug resistance.

Bacteria find ways to outlive antibiotics when repeatedly exposed to them (natural selection). This allows them to thrive, effectively turning animals into drug resistant bacteria reservoirs.

This is not only problematic for animal health, as they become more vulnerable to the assault of antibiotic resistant infections, but it is also potentially harmful for consumers as some classes of antibiotics are used for humans and animals and developing evidence points to possible transmission of antibiotic resistance from livestock to humans.

Indeed, consumers have been shown to be at risk of antibiotic resistant microbes through consumption of meat whilst contact with contaminated feces manure or water on farms also exposes humans to this threat. To support this, several studies have to date revealed prevalence of drug resistant bacteria from food producing livestock in agricultural environments, retail/butcher meat products, and as the cause of infections or colonization of human adapted bacteria through the sharing of resistance genes in humans.

In light of the above, the extensive reliance on antibiotics in food animals production causesconsiderable danger to consumers' health. This is all the more worrying since some bacteria in livestock are beginning to develop resistance against agents classified as "critically important" for humans (cephalosporins, fluoroquinolones etc) in fighting against serious life threatening illnesses. For instance, there have been reports of extended spectrum beta lactamases (ESBL) resistance in E. coli and Salmonella. It would have devastating repercussions if bacteria became increasingly resistant to these vital medicines. Resistance to antibiotics is projected to kill an estimated 300 million people worldwide by