On the use of antibiotics in animals

We recommend prevention of overuse of antibiotics in all animals to be achieved by:

- A global ban on the use of all antibiotic growth promoters.
- Minimizing the prophylactic and metaphylactic use of antibiotics in all animals.
- Enhanced surveillance of animals for both animal and human infectious and commensal bacteria so as to provide an evidence base on resistance genes and their transmission within animal populations, and between animals and humans.
- Employing effective infection control measures to prevent dissemination of resistance genes between animals and humans, and within and between animal populations (e.g. farms, kennels etc).
- Increased research investment into animal husbandry and disease prevention in livestock and aquaculture systems.
- Fluoroquinolones, 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins, and colistin only to be used in animals after showing a definite therapeutic need.
- Not using any new classes of antibiotic in animals; reserving them for human use only, unless they are found to only be safe in animals, not used in people and do not cause resistance to medicines used in people.
- Increased monitoring of animal husbandry practices through enhanced quality assurance schemes, and the promotion of best practice to optimise animal welfare and minimize the need for therapeutic medication in livestock.
- Food buyers, processors and retailers to promote evidence-based practice in animal welfare and the use of antibiotics in all parts of their supply chains. They should provide information on packaging to allow consumers to identify when antibiotics have been used in food production.
- Enhance data collection on antibiotic prescribing by all veterinary practitioners and usage of antibiotics on every farm. Consider benchmarking of antibiotic use at the farm level and publishing benchmarking data on open-access websites.
- Funding for research into diagnostic techniques for bacterial infections in animals should be increased.
- Vaccination to become the primary means of preventing animal infectious diseases especially in agriculture and aquaculture. Increased funding is vital to facilitate research into the development and delivery of new vaccines.