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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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PROGRAMME FOR THE SURVEILLANCE OF ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

COMMUNICATION FROM ARGENTINA

The following communication, received on 28 October 2019, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Argentina.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Executive Report – National Programme for Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Surveillance in animals for human consumption

1.1. Since the Joint Ministry of Health/former Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Resolution Nos. 834/2015 and 391/2015 were signed respectively, approving the Argentinian Strategy for the Control of Antimicrobial Resistance, the National Service of Agro-alimentary Quality and Health (SENASA) has been working on various strategic directions for the surveillance and control of AMR in animal health as elaborated on below.

1.2. The National AMR Surveillance Programme was approved through SENASA Resolution No. 591/2015 as part of the National Strategy. Its purpose is to determine and monitor sustainably over time the prevalence of resistance to different antimicrobials in commensal and zoonotic bacteria with a view to assessing possible measures aimed at delaying or impeding the emergence and spread of resistant bacteria and thus minimize its risk to public human and animal health.

1.3. To date 1,200 samples have been processed, with 200 taken from broilers, 200 from pigs and 200 from cattle in 2017 and 600 from broilers in 2018, all taken in refrigerated storage centres in line with OIE guidelines.

1.4. For the period underway (June 2019 – June 2020) the processing of 600 samples from pigs has been foreseen.

2 INTERACTION WITH OTHER NATIONAL AGENCIES

2.1 Interaction with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the National Laboratories and Health Institutions Administration (ANLIS), and the Carlos G. Malbrán Institute

2.1. Training of SENASA officials is carried out by professionals from the Antimicrobial Service at the Carlos G. Malbrán Institute.

2.2. This Institute has been working uninterruptedly on monitoring antimicrobial resistance since 1986. Currently, it coordinates WHONET Argentina, which is composed of 96 laboratories attached to health institutions throughout the country.

2.3. WHONET is a global surveillance network developed by the World Health Organization (WHO), whose aim is to analyse resistance data obtained across the world in order to predict the behaviour of the factors determining resistance in the world.

2.4. Based on its experience, this Institute acts as an AMR reference centre for the WHO and conducts training for professionals throughout the region.

2.2 Participation in the National Commission for the Control of Antimicrobial Resistance (CoNaCRA)

2.5. SENASA, through the AMR Surveillance Programme, participates in CoNaCRA meetings. CoNaCRA was established by virtue of Article 2 of the Joint Ministry of Health/former Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Resolutions No. 834/2015 and 391/2015 respectively.

2.6. CoNaCRA's mission is to verify compliance with Argentina's Strategy for AMR Control along the following lines:

1. AMR surveillance in human and animal health, agri-food production and use of antimicrobials;
2. Regulation of use of antimicrobials in human and animal health and in agri-food production;
3. Prevention and control of infections associated with human health care, animal health and agri-food production.

3 DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND TIMELY DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

3.1. SENASA, through the Coordination Agency for Institutional Communication, produces on an ongoing basis advertising spots that are carried on digital media, in addition to radio and TV interviews on programmes related to agricultural activities, and participates as a presenter in different forums, conferences and related events targeting the production sector and health professionals.

3.2. It is currently developing a web page for the Programme, on which recommendations, outreach materials, and other types of information aimed at the production sector, industry professionals and consumers is posted:

<https://www.argentina.gob.ar/senasa/micrositios/resistencia-antimicrobiana>.

4 RISK MITIGATION MEASURES

4.1. Through the Under-Secretariat for Livestock of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, and with the collaboration of the Department for Veterinary Products (Coordinator of the Surveillance Programme), 2017 and 2018 results were presented to business chambers that bring together the productive sectors with a view to presenting the "problem" looking to the future and proposing medium-term mitigation policies.

4.2. In this context of discussion and premised on real data on resistance levels in our productive system obtained through the surveillance system, all the stakeholders involved in the production chain evaluated the potential impact of withdrawing the use of colistin from veterinary medicine.

4.3. Therapeutic alternatives, good agricultural practices and animal welfare measures were proposed and in January this year, the decision was taken via SENASA Resolution No. 22/2019 to prohibit the use of colistin in veterinary medicine.

5 USE OF ANTIMICROBIALS AS GROWTH PROMOTERS IN ANIMALS

5.1. Currently, the use of antimicrobials as growth promoters is allowed. However, as part of the national ARM control strategy, it is foreseen in the medium-term that use of antimicrobials for this purpose will be prohibited.

5.2. While no specific date has been set for implementation of said ban, there is sufficient consensus among all sectors to work towards this objective.

5.3. The ban will be applied gradually by category of antimicrobials depending on their importance for human health (using as a baseline the WHO classification of antibiotics), based on risk and impact

assessment, so as to allow the productive sector sufficient time to make the necessary adjustments depending on adaptation possibilities or flexibilities within the system to forego growth promoters without affecting production. Dialogue and information exchange with the productive sector are key to aligning positions.

6 RESEARCH

6.1. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Development of Argentina and the United Kingdom in 2018, both countries promoted international cooperation in the area of AMR.

6.2. As part of this initiative, last year a joint invitation was issued to support research projects between the National Council of Scientific and Technical Research of Argentina (CONICET) and the Global Antimicrobial Resistance Innovation Fund of the UK Department of Health and Social Care through the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC).

6.3. In this context, five projects were presented – selected for funding – that involve officials from SENASA, the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA), the National Laboratories Administration, Dr Carlos C. Malbrán Health Institutions (ANLIS) and CONICET, as well as national universities such as La Plata University (UNLP); Córdoba University (UNC) and Buenos Aires University (UBA), and the Province of Buenos Aires Centre (UNICEN).

6.4. Research is aimed at determining patterns in the use of antimicrobials; know-how, attitudes and practices in livestock rearing; structures and skills of veterinarians and vets' assistants; water, waste and sanitation management systems; the behaviour and movement of antimicrobial-resistant organisms in food systems and other fundamental elements in animal husbandry.

7 FO.AR COOPERATION

7.1. In the context of the Argentine Fund for South-South and Triangular Cooperation (FO.AR) and Argentina's strategic association with the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), the first phase of the triangular project to enhance surveillance and integrated detection of AMR in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was completed.

7.2. In July last year, Lisandro Ruiz, a veterinarian with the Department of Veterinary Products, SENASA, together with officials from the Antimicrobial Service at ANLIS, conducted training days in health centres and national laboratories in Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica.

7.3. The second phase of this collaboration project will be rolled out in October, when eight officials from Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana and Suriname visit our country to receive laboratory and sampling training for implementation of the ARM surveillance programmes.
