The Americas region tackles antimicrobial resistance

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Progress in fighting antimicrobial resistance: global strategies

Antimicrobial resistance is a subject of great interest both globally and regionally, encompassing several disciplines and areas within Veterinary Services, as well as other government agencies, industries and stakeholders. Given the extent of the problem, the solution calls for the broadest possible approach and is one of the clearest examples of the need to apply the ‘One Health’ concept.

The role and work of the OIE to promote the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials for terrestrial and aquatic animals in order to preserve their therapeutic efficacy and prolong their use in both humans and animals, together with the promotion of antimicrobial resistance monitoring, has been an issue of interest to the OIE and has led to numerous resolutions by the World Assembly of OIE Delegates.

At its 83rd General Session in 2015, the World Assembly of OIE Delegates adopted Resolution No. 26, entitled Combating antimicrobial resistance and promoting the prudent use of antimicrobial agents in animals, which committed OIE Member Countries to support the ‘Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance’, adopted by the World Health Assembly of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the same year. In fact the Global Action Plan had been rolled out under a tripartite agreement between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), WHO and the OIE, and is based mainly on the development of national action plans on antimicrobial resistance. In addition, Resolution No. 26 proposed the development of a database to collect data on the use of antimicrobials in food-producing animals, which also requires the active participation of OIE Members.

Following on from these actions, antimicrobial resistance featured in the two subsequent General Sessions, resulting in further resolutions: ‘Combating antimicrobial resistance through a One Health approach: actions and OIE strategy’ (84th General Session) and ‘Global action to alleviate the threat of antimicrobial resistance: progress and opportunities for future activities under the ‘One health’ initiative’ (85th General Session).

These resolutions urge OIE Member Countries to fulfill their commitments to the Global Action Plan by implementing OIE standards and guidelines, especially those on the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobial agents. They also provide the basis for the development of an OIE Strategy on antimicrobial resistance and the prudent use of antimicrobials, published in November 2016.

OIE National Focal Points for veterinary products have taken part in OIE capacity-building actions across the world. Their two-yearly training courses have included the issue of antimicrobial resistance, awareness of the prudent and responsible use
of veterinary drugs and training in the collection of quantitative data on the use of antimicrobials for the OIE database.

**Regional action against antimicrobial resistance: case of the Americas**

The various OIE Regional Commissions have played a key role in coordinating the implementation of OIE standards, as well as in the different options for ensuring the proper participation and coordination of the regions in global plans. The OIE Regional Commission for the Americas defined priority actions needed in the region, in a coordinated manner, in line with the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan for the 2016–2020 period.

It was unanimously agreed that active participation in fighting antimicrobial resistance should be a regional priority, for which the following actions were proposed:

- develop a regional approach, based on OIE and WHO standards and recommendations;
- promote the active participation of Member Countries on the issue;
- seek to integrate the participation of different OIE Focal Points with the Codex Alimentarius Contact Points in order to coordinate their work more effectively;
- promote the development and implementation of surveillance systems for the appropriate and responsible use of antimicrobials in accordance with OIE standards.

Some of these actions were made possible by impetus from the tripartite partnership at the global level and its actors at regional and national levels. In the case of the Americas, the Committee of the Americas for Veterinary Medicines (CAMEVET), as a regional project for public-private collaboration, has brought the issue closer to the veterinary product industry and other related sectors (see box above).

**The first success stories in the Americas**

Many countries in the Americas are working to develop national action plans to tackle antimicrobial resistance. Mentioned below are those action plans linking Veterinary Services with public health services and other stakeholders, which are already up and running.

**United States of America**

In December 2014, the United States Department of Agriculture launched its antimicrobial resistance action plan integrating and outlining the activities to be undertaken in three areas: surveillance; research and development; education, extension and outreach.

**Canada**

In March 2015, the Government of Canada launched its ‘Federal Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance and Use in Canada’ in order to start taking action to help prevent, limit and control the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance. The plan identifies priority actions in the strategic areas of surveillance, stewardship and innovation.

**Argentina**

In June 2015, the Argentine programme for the control of antimicrobial resistance in animals intended for human consumption was approved by the Ministry of Health.

The Committee of the Americas for Veterinary Medicines (CAMEVET) is a regional project aimed at facilitating the harmonisation of veterinary drug standards, registration and controls among Member Countries. It is a forum for debate involving both the public and private sectors and provides an extra support tool for coordinating activities in the area of antimicrobial resistance. Since 2014, every annual CAMEVET seminar has included a workshop on antimicrobial resistance to provide technical information and information on OIE standards.

5. www.usda.gov/topics/animals/one-health/antimicrobial-resistance-overview-amr

and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. The strategy nominates a coordinating committee and serves as the basis for developing actions within the National Health and Agrifood Quality Service (SENASA) and the other agencies involved.

The tripartite alliance and support for regional actions

As mentioned earlier, the OIE concluded a tripartite agreement with FAO and WHO in 2010, in which the three organisations undertook to tackle priority issues requiring a One Health approach, including antimicrobial resistance.

In the Americas, in line with OIE standards and the Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance, the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Pan American Foot and Mouth Disease Center (PANAFOSA PAHO/WHO) have served as regional contacts for building relationships, networking and coordination.

As there are other supranational agencies in the Americas with a regional or subregional scope that have ongoing programmes, links have been forged with the regional organisation for plant protection and animal health (Organización Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria – OIRSA), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP). This does not preclude other subregional organisations from joining the partnership.

Future challenges

Much work remains to be done in the region and it is becoming increasingly urgent for countries to implement measures against antimicrobial resistance, with a need to implement an approach based on the One Health concept.

However, Member Countries in the Americas are well aware of the issue and are already working to tackle it. Proof of this is that, to date, around 70% of the 30 OIE Member Countries in the Americas have reported being in the process of developing their national plans, in line with the Global Action Plan. So success stories are set to become commonplace in the region.

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