MRSA: The need for a comprehensive and global approach by Neil Cutler

FVE- European MRSA Conference 8 April 2008
INTRO

What is COPA-COGECA

The role of EU livestock farmers

How can farmers help in reducing antimicrobial resistance

What farmers expect from partners

The need to coordinate efforts
What is COPA-COGECA

- 76 Member organisations
- Representing EU farming community and farm cooperatives in 27 Member States
- Created in 1958 (celebrating 50th this year !)
- Aim at promoting a sustainable EU agriculture
The role of EU livestock farmers

- EU livestock farmers want to keep their animals healthy, ensure their welfare, market safe products and make a living through productive and efficient farming.
- The farming community is very well aware of antimicrobial resistance in general and with MRSA in particular and is ready and willing to play its role in reducing this resistance.
How can farmers help in reducing antimicrobial resistance (1)

COPA-COGECa has been involved for many years in analyzing what role farmers can play in helping to minimize antimicrobial resistance.

For COPA-COGECa a prudent use of antimicrobials aims at

- Preserving the ability to treat microbial infections in man and animals now and in the future
- Preventing the development and transmission of resistant bacteria from animals to humans through the food production chain
- Avoiding dissemination of resistant genes in the environment.
How can farmers help in reducing antimicrobial resistance (2)

- Farmers can contribute to achieve these aims through prevention of disease.
- Good husbandry practices are key to prevention.
- This is by far the best option for sanitary and economical reasons.
- Farmers should be encouraged to work with a team of experts (veterinarians, agriculture advisors.....) so as to raise their general competence.
What farmers expect from their partners

- COPA-COGECA is also of the opinion that the improvement in a prudent use antimicrobial use concerns all of their partners: From the veterinary pharmaceutical industry to the research industry not forgetting decision makers veterinarians, distributors and feed companies.

- And further down the chain: the processors and retailers....
The need to coordinate efforts

EU livestock farmers are willing to be proactive and contribute to the overall debate.

This is why they have engaged:

- at national (UK RUMA) and
- at EU level in many initiatives, just to name one the EPRUMA initiative with IFAH-Europe and FVE

Should we be going out and engage in partnerships at international level?
CONCLUSION

- **Mutual understanding** is key as it prevents unintended consequences of single actions.
- EU livestock farmers want to be a part of the solution but are not THE solution. It would be wrong to believe that if you stop giving antibiotics to animals that you will solve the problem.
- Need to extend synergies: in particular in communication strategies (EP RUMA ?)