

## Inaugural Antimicrobial Stewardship Conference puts surveillance on radar

Representatives from livestock associations and the animal health sector gathered together for the first Australian Veterinary Antimicrobial Stewardship Conference (AVAMS18) on 11-13 November coinciding with World Antibiotic Awareness Week.

Animal Medicines Australia Executive Director Ben Stapley said the conference had heard from international guest speakers and local experts including Australia's Chief Veterinary Officer and Chief Medical Officer.

"Australia has low rates of antibiotic use in animals<sup>1</sup> compared to some other nations but we need to do more if we are to continue to preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics for humans and animals," said Mr Stapley.

"We need a comprehensive resistance surveillance program, so we can ensure that best practice prescribing occurs for livestock and companion animals, food quality and safety is maintained, and the best health outcomes are assured for humans, animals and the environment."

"Resistance surveillance already occurs in human health. There have been targeted surveillance projects undertaken in individual livestock industries and a pilot companion animal program through veterinary practices in Canberra. It is now time to strengthen Australia's One Health approach to antimicrobial resistance, through investment in a comprehensive and independent surveillance program for AMR in animals," Mr Stapley said.

Mr Stapley said that a comprehensive surveillance program for AMR in animals would help to provide an evidence base for better One Health policy outcomes, including:

- identifying potential drivers of resistance;
- monitoring the effectiveness of stewardship policies and practices;
- allowing for timely responses to emerging AMR issues; and
- providing an evidence base for communicating Australia's stewardship credentials and low levels of resistance to consumers and trading partners.

Mr Stapley said that a comprehensive surveillance program would come at a low cost to the Government and would provide the basis for better policy.

"It is time for the Government to allocate the money and work with industry to establish a surveillance system for AMR in animals."

Mr Stapley congratulated the AVAMS18 Committee on organising a successful and productive conference.

"The animal health industry is committed to promoting best practice when it comes to antibiotic use and that is why we are proud to sponsor this event," Mr Stapley said.

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<sup>1</sup> O'Neil, J 2015 '[Antimicrobials in agriculture and the environment: Reducing unnecessary use and waste](#),' The Review on Antimicrobial Resistance.

[Animal Medicines Australia](#) is the peak body that represents the leaders of the animal health industry in Australia. Our member companies are responsible for a range of veterinary medicine products that prevent, control and cure disease across the companion animal and livestock sectors.