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## Protecting sheep health and preserving antimicrobials

Animal Medicines Australia (AMA) continues to support the responsible use of antimicrobial veterinary medicines with the recent development of prescribing guidelines for veterinarians working with the sheep industry.

The prescribing guidelines, developed by an independent expert panel, will be a valuable resource for veterinarians, building on previously published guidelines for the poultry and pig sectors. The development of antimicrobial prescribing guidelines for livestock is a joint initiative of the Australian Veterinary Association and AMA.

Executive Director of Animal Medicines Australia Ben Stapley said AMA had worked with industry partners to ensure that antimicrobials continue to be available for veterinary use when needed to protect animal health and welfare.

“Antimicrobial stewardship is critical to demonstrating the commitment of the broader animal health industry to livestock production systems that protect animal health and welfare, whilst reducing the risks of antimicrobial resistance to human health and the environment.

“The prescribing guidelines identify the core principles of appropriate use of antimicrobial agents ranging from pre-treatment principles such as disease prevention, to drug selection, drug use and post treatment activities.

“These guidelines are an important resource for veterinarians that will help to reduce inappropriate antimicrobial use, reduce selection pressures favouring resistant organisms and protect the effectiveness of antimicrobials for the future,” Mr Stapley said.

“Research leading to the development of the sheep guidelines found the most common conditions veterinarians prescribed antimicrobial treatments for included kerato-conjunctivitis, foot abscess, pneumonia, virulent ovine footrot and dermatophilosis.

“I would like to thank the expert panel members who have worked on these guidelines to help Australian veterinarians provide best practice care to sheep.”

The expert panel that developed the antimicrobial prescribing guidelines for sheep comprised Dr Ray Batey, Dr Paul Nilon, Professor Jacqueline Norris, Dr Stephen Page, Professor Glenn Browning.

The funding for the prescribing guidelines was provided by Australian Veterinary Association, Animal Medicines Australia, Meat & Livestock Australia, Sheep Producers Australia, Wool Producers Australia and Animal Health Australia.

The antimicrobial prescribing guidelines for sheep can be downloaded [here](#).

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