

Less resistance to antibiotics among farm animals

Gut bacteria in farm animals have become less resistant to antibiotics over the past 10 years.

This finding comes from the 'NethMap/MARAN' report produced by the National Institute for Public Health & the Environment, Wageningen Bioveterinary Research and Utrecht University. The government has tasked these institutes with monitoring antibiotic resistance in humans and animals and in food products.

In broiler chickens, antibiotic resistance has fallen to its lowest level since 1998. That reflects the big drop in the use of antibiotics for these birds: down 30 per cent in 2021 compared with the previous year, according to data from the

Decrease reflects big drop in the use of antibiotics for these birds

Netherlands Veterinary Medicines Institute.

This institute also reported a fall in the sale and use of antibiotics for farm animals across the board. There has been a decrease of 70.8 per cent compared with the reference year

2009. This decline can be explained partly by the introduction in 2015 of stricter rules for antibiotics that are crucial in treating infections in humans. Such antibiotics can now only be used for animals in exceptional circumstances.

Public health

Antibiotic resistance in farm animals is monitored annually. The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority takes random samples from broiler chickens, pigs and veal calves, which Wageningen Bioveterinary Research then tests for antibiotic resistance. 'In that monitoring programme, we examine *E. coli*, *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* bacteria. They cause food infections and therefore need to be monitored carefully for public health reasons,' explains Kees Veldman, who works at Wageningen Bioveterinary Research as the head of the National Reference Laboratory for antibiotic resistance in animals. ME