FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN AQUACULTURE PRODUCERS

Position of the FEAP on Antimicrobial resistance

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) including antibiotic resistance, is the resistance of a microbe to an antimicrobial medication that used to be effective in treating or preventing an infection caused by that microbe.

It is recognised that antimicrobial resistance poses a serious risk to both human and animal health, since resistant bacteria can be transferred between animals, animal products and people. The World Health Organisation has warned of a post-antibiotic era, where antibiotic resistance would cause more deaths than cancer. The European Commission sees this risk as a major priority by in its political agenda on food safety and has also been highlighted by the European Parliament's recent work on veterinary medicines. Preventive and innovative actions are being proposed to address the concerns raised by antimicrobial resistance.

The Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP) unites 26 national associations of 22 European countries and continuously supports and promotes the responsible development of the European aquaculture sector. Aquaculture is recognised as being one of the most efficient solutions to feed a growing global population and now provides more fish for food than fisheries. FEAP represents a range of different farmed fish species, including trout, salmon, carp, sea bass, sea bream, turbot, cod and many other new emerging interests. In aquaculture - the farming of fish - health and welfare are of prime importance, as much as the water and environment in which they are raised.

Healthy animals produce safer food

Consumers in the EU and beyond should have access to the finest and safest European farmed fish products on the market. Therefore, European fish farmers and their veterinarians continue to work in concert to develop Veterinary Health Plans, optimised global surveillance and monitoring programmes. No fish farmer wishes to lower growth performance and lose fish through disease and infections. The FEAP strongly supports the improvement of veterinary skills and networking throughout Europe so as to improve and access best on farm practices.

Antibiotics are used to treat farmed and pet animals for the same reasons as they are used to treat people: they are safely freely used to treat and control specific diseases. Responsible prescription and use of antibiotics in all types of food producing animals, including fish, is a key consideration.

The focus for professional fish farming is on **disease prevention** rather than cure: antibiotics are therefore not used unless considered to be essential for disease treatment. The prophylactic use of antibiotics does not occur. Use of good husbandry practices and associate biosecurity measures are thus a priority for fish farmers to assure high levels of health and welfare.

Vaccination at the freshwater stage of the farmed salmon cycle, before fish are exposed to the more open marine environment, has reduced antimicrobial usage at sea to a minimum. Vaccine development for existing and emerging diseases needs to be encouraged.

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