

Copa and Cogeca's Feedback on EMA advice about Article 106.6 of Regulation 2019/6 on veterinary medicines: oral administration of treatments to animals apart from medicated feed

The EMA advice contains several positive recommendations, which will ensure a safe and efficient use of oral administration of treatments to animals apart from medicated feed. In referencing good practice, the EMA advice is logical.

Oral medication is an important tool to ensure a targeted, low and prudent use of veterinary medicines, especially antimicrobials. Based on the information gathered by ESVAC on the different ways of applying antibiotics in animal production in the 31 ESVAC countries, 51.8% of the medicines are administered to animals via oral solutions.

Livestock

We are happy also to see that the scientific advice from EMA is very much in line with and supports current practices of administering medication via drinking water in some Member States.

Sick animals very often have a reduced feed intake, making it difficult to ensure an appropriate dosage of antibiotics administered through the feed. However, sick animals are more likely to continue drinking.

Administering medicines through the drinking water reduces the carry-over risk of residues. When using the water pipes, the supply of water will clean the pipes and immediately after, the medication is removed from the system.

Finally, we have to take into account that in some particular cases and species, the requirement to treat 'individual animals' via oral administration may raise some practical and logistical issues.

Aquaculture

We are also pleased to see that the EMA recognises the importance of oral administration of treatment in the fish farming industry. On-farm mixing is an important tool in fish farming to secure immediate and accurate treatment, and in many situations a simple on-farm mixing is still an important alternative that can help keep down the amounts of antibiotic needed, fish mortalities, and in turn the development of antimicrobial resistance.