



Recommendations for the AMR High-Level Meeting Declaration, September 2024

Strengthening animal health systems is essential to preventing and containing anti-microbial resistance (AMR). Yet underinvestment in and lack of attention to these systems has led to critical shortages in animal health workforces, medicines and vaccines, barriers to service delivery and access, poor disease surveillance, and poor animal husbandry.

This underinvestment leads to the overuse and misuse of antimicrobials (AMs), which is propping up poor animal health systems.

The WHO lists AMR as one of the top 10 threats to global health. Its emergence and spread are accelerated by human activity, mainly the misuse and overuse of AMs to treat, prevent or control infections in humans, animals and plants.

Estimates suggest that 66% of antimicrobial use is in animals. AM-resistant bacteria originating in animals can be transmitted to people through the environment, food products, or by direct contact. As well as the impact on people, new resistant strains of bacteria in animals cause untold animal suffering and economic losses for livestock keepers.

Our asks

1) The declaration should affirm the need for overall strengthening of animal health systems

Robust animal health systems - including access to services, regulated and well-trained animal health professionals, integrated surveillance, and access to vaccines and medicines - are key to AMR prevention.

2) The declaration should call for better training of practitioners, and legislation, regulation and implementation of animal health services for AMR prevention

All levels of animal health practitioner are vital in the fight against AMR. Veterinarians are scarce in many lower-and-middle-income countries, with agrovets, community animal health workers, and veterinary paraprofessionals filling the gap in animal health service.

Agrovets are often the first port-of-call for farmers when their animals are sick. They are widespread, accessible, and affordable compared to qualified animal health practitioners. However, the industry faces challenges, such as inadequate training, weak regulation, and non-evidence-based practices. Whilst filling a vital gap in animal health services, community animal health workers and veterinary paraprofessionals can also be poorly regulated and have varying levels of training - some with none.

3) The declaration should call for member states to develop, update, and implement an essential veterinary medicines list (EVML)

Action for Animal Health members report major challenges with access to safe and effective veterinary medicines such as pain killers and vaccines, making it difficult for animal health practitioners to do their job. Yet antimicrobials are readily available, meaning that agrovets, veterinary paraprofessionals, and veterinarians will use them often when not appropriate.

EVMLs will improve access to efficacious safe and cost-effective medicines for priority conditions. Action for Animal Health members Brooke and the World Veterinary Association are creating the first-ever list of essential veterinary medicines for food producing animals and are advocating for its adoption to curb AMR.

4) The declaration should endorse targets in the Muscat manifesto to reduce use of antimicrobials in agri-food systems - such as prophylactic use and as growth promoters - and should call upon member states to promote good animal husbandry in their place

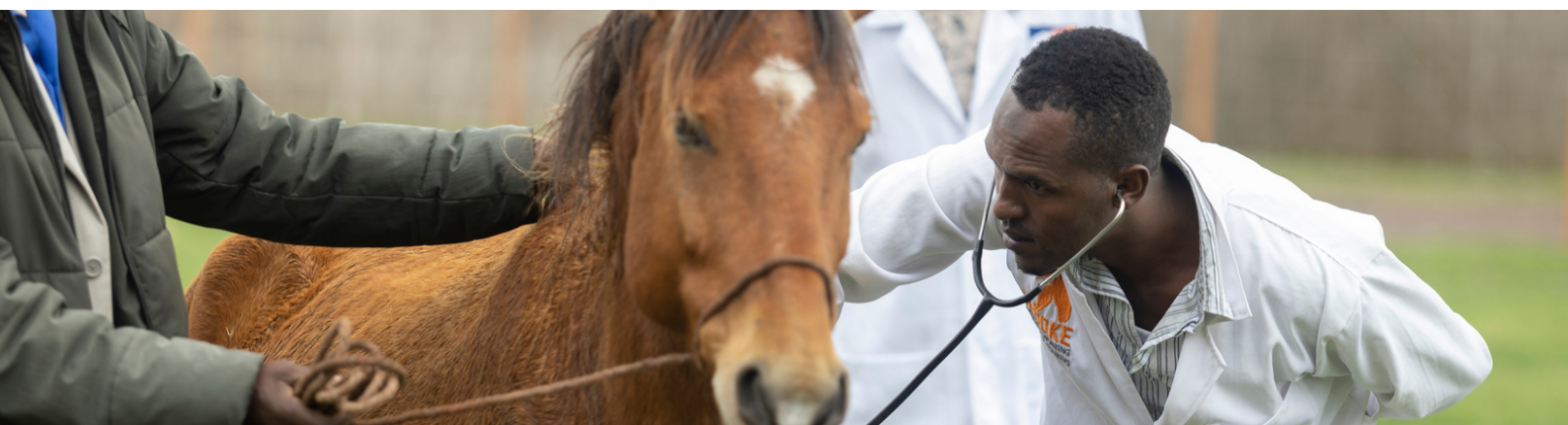
Antimicrobials should not be used in place of implementing good animal husbandry in any animal setting. The declaration should commit to the gradual phasing out of the use of AMs in this manner, giving farmers time to adjust their practices.

Livestock keepers should be supported to implement the five domains of animal welfare (health, nutrition, environment, behaviour, mental state) through improved animal husbandry, working towards all animals having 'a good life'. Good animal welfare helps maintain natural resistance against disease, meaning less need for AMs in the first place.

Final remarks

Strengthening animal health systems will have a cascading effect on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

As well as preventing AMR, investing in animal health systems will have knock-on benefits for food security, nutrition, food safety, zoonotic disease spillover prevention, climate resilience and income security of some of the poorest people on our planet and communities that depend on livestock.



Action for Animal Health is a coalition of 14 civil society organisations, who advocate for investment in animal health systems for sustainable development and to combat some of the biggest global health threats of our time. Our members have exceptional expertise in animal health and One Health and implement animal health-related programmes across Africa and Asia. The coalition is hosted by Brooke, Action for Working Horses and Donkeys, who work towards strengthening animal health systems to ensure sustainable change for animals and people who rely on them.



**Action
for Animal
Health**

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