

Straits Times forum letter: Mar 7, 2023

Title: All hands on deck to combat antimicrobial resistance

We agree with Mr George Martin Jacobs that antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a pressing issue that needs to be addressed (Reduce unnecessary use of antibiotics in agriculture, March 2).

Singapore adopts a One Health approach in combatting the threat against AMR, involving coordinated efforts across the animal, human, food, and environment sectors. The Singapore Food Agency (SFA) works together with government agencies in these sectors, guided by the National Strategic Action Plan on AMR launched in 2017.

Antimicrobials are necessary to treat bacterial infections in animals, and when used appropriately, contribute to the health of animals. SFA has in place a food safety system based on science and risk analysis, which requires all food products (both imported and locally produced) to comply with our food safety standards and requirements.

SFA only allows antimicrobials for treating and preventing diseases in food-producing animals, but not to promote growth. SFA has also banned several antibiotics from use in food-producing animals in our local farms. We regularly conduct tests to ensure food products do not contain residues of banned substances and permissible substances fall below maximum residue limits.

SFA also works with local farmers to implement good animal husbandry practices (for example, vaccinations) to prevent disease incursion and manage diseases, which would reduce the use of veterinary drugs including antibiotics.

SFA will continue to work with relevant agencies, the agri-food industry and consumers to combat the threat of AMR.

Astrid Yeo (Dr)

Senior Director

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Singapore Food Agency

Replies

Food safety • All hands on deck to combat antimicrobial resistance

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