



ANTIBIOTIC USAGE POLICY IN M&S SOURCED LIVESTOCK AND AQUACULTURE

At M&S, our ongoing commitment is to source our raw materials for meat, poultry, dairy, wild and farmed fish products, from the most sustainable sources possible.

Through our Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries Programme, we are working with farmers and suppliers to ensure the welfare of the animals and staff is safeguarded and the impact on the environment is minimised, as well as ensuring the efficiency and safe food production.

As part of this programme, we are actively addressing the use of antibiotic medicines in all our livestock and aquaculture supply chains. Due to increasing concerns regarding the emergence of antimicrobial resistant bacteria affecting human health, and the links to the use of medicines in livestock, we fully support the need to safeguard our antimicrobial medicines¹ and reduce the threat of antibiotic resistance to global human health. We also recognise the importance of responsible veterinary care and the role that antimicrobial use plays in protecting the health and welfare of the animals in our supply.

Our policy for antibiotic usage in M&S sourced livestock has been developed in consultation with our sustainability advisors, veterinary staff and suppliers. The European Medicines Authority (EMA)² have classified antibiotics in terms of their importance to human and animal health. Our definition of critical antibiotics that must be restricted in our livestock and aquaculture supply chains, is an antibiotic that is defined as a 'highest priority critically important antimicrobials' by the European Medicines Authority (EMA). These categories include the 3rd and higher generation cephalosporins, fluoroquinolones and colistin. In line with the EMA, we believe these medicines should be particularly safeguarded for use in people.

The following policy outlines our approach to responsible antimicrobial use across all livestock and aquaculture species. The core actions have been embedded in our raw material sourcing of all proteins through our livestock Codes of Practice and Select Farm Assurance documents, which set

¹ Antimicrobial medicines are substances that kill or inhibit the growth of micro-organisms (including bacteria, parasites, viruses and fungi). However, in line with OIE and EFSA, we are limiting the term to describe antibacterial agents used for the treatment of bacterial infections. We therefore use the terms 'antimicrobials' and 'antibacterials' interchangeably, unless clearly explained otherwise.

² https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/report/categorisation-antibiotics-european-union-answer-request-european-commission-updating-scientific_en.pdf

the standards that all our Select Farm suppliers must adhere to, and our Farming For the Future (FFTF) Outcome Measures, which provide independently collected data on the welfare and sustainability of animals in our supply chains.

Our Approach – the 4Rs Framework

1. Record: the use of antimicrobial agents per unit of livestock at the time of treatment, on all farms in the M&S supply, reliably and robustly;
2. Reduce: the annual usage of antimicrobial agents in our supply chains, by discontinuing unnecessary use, whilst ensuring animal health and welfare is preserved;
3. Replace: the use of antimicrobial agents where possible with evidence-based and sustainable solutions to disease prevention;
4. Refine: the use of antimicrobial agents, by ensuring the responsible and informed selection and correct administration of products to animals that require treatment.

Further details on how we are implementing this approach across our supply is provided below. Appendix 1 outlines the specific actions to support the 4Rs policy approach in each livestock species.

1. Recording antimicrobial use for livestock in the M&S supply

All our farmers already record antimicrobial use for all animals through documentation in a manual or electronic medicine book. To allow us to better understand antimicrobial usage within our supply chains and support monitoring initiatives at a wider national level, we will require our farmers to record and report more comprehensive usage data, reliably and accurately. We will require our farmers to record the following information on all animals/groups of animals sourced for M&S. For each treatment administered, the following information will be required:

1. The name of the antibiotic active ingredient used for each treatment;
2. The total quantity of antibiotic used (mg) for each treatment; and
3. The number of animals produced.

To monitor antibiotic usage over time, for each of our species supply chains, we will use the following measures:

Total antibiotic usage = Total milligrams (mg) of active antibiotic used / number of Population Correction Units (PCU)³

Total 'highest priority critically important antibiotic' usage = Total milligrams (mg) of active 'highest priority critically important antibiotic' used / number of Population Correction Units (PCU)

For some species, other units of measurement will also be used. For example:

Total percentage of flocks receiving antimicrobial courses, for chickens (critical and non-critical courses defined)

Total percentage of bird days medicated, for laying hens (critical and non-critical treatments defined).

A measure of total animal courses is included alongside total quantity used for some species, to discourage behaviours such as not completing a course, under-dosing, or using a higher potency (often critically important) antibiotic to reduce the dose rate, as this could lead to an even greater risk of antimicrobial resistance developing.

As national and international policies evolve, we will revise our policy to report antimicrobial use in line with standardised approaches and the leading veterinary authorities on medicine usage.

2. Reducing antimicrobial use of livestock in the M&S supply

Through independent monitoring and review of the antibiotic usage in each livestock and aquaculture sector and engagement with our suppliers and associated veterinary advisors, we will seek to reduce unwarranted antimicrobial use.

Our current actions to reduce antibiotic usage that apply to all livestock and aquaculture species include:

- a. Prohibition in the use of antimicrobials deemed by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) as highest priority critically important for use in human medicine, including 3rd and higher generation cephalosporins, fluoroquinolones and colistin, other than as a last resort supported by diagnostic testing and a written veterinary recommendation to protect animal welfare. All treatments must be notified to M&S via the supplying processor. In addition, we are working with our suppliers to cease all use of highest priority critically important antibiotics.
- b. Ensure licensed antibiotics are always prescribed by a veterinarian for metaphylaxis⁴ or treatment of specific diseases, and cessation of routine prophylactic⁵ treatment.

³ Population Correction Unit (PCU) is a technical unit of measurement representing the estimated weight of livestock when they are most likely to receive antibiotic treatment. 1 PCU = 1kg of bodyweight of the animal at the time of treatment.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/580710/1101060-v1-Understanding_the_PCU_-_gov_uk_guidance.pdf

⁴ Metaphylaxis is the treatment of a group of animals in which one or more of the animals, or previously 'in-contact' animals, are showing clinical signs of a disease.

⁵ Prophylaxis is the treatment of a healthy animal or group of animals, to prevent infection before an expected disease challenge.

3. Replacing antimicrobial use of livestock in the M&S supply

We require all our producers to implement a Herd Health and Welfare Plan that is developed in conjunction with a veterinary surgeon and reviewed and updated on a minimum annual basis. The plan must cover key disease and welfare challenges specific to the farm, a review of existing antimicrobial use and opportunities to replace usage with alternative management, breed and infrastructure solutions.

At the supplier level, in each livestock sector we will support leading initiatives to tackle the key disease challenges with practical and evidence-based solutions that can replace the need for medicine use, including vaccinations, improved management strategies, genetics, nutrition, biosecurity and novel technologies.

4. Refining antimicrobial use of livestock in the M&S supply

We are working with our suppliers and veterinary associates to ensure that when animals do require treatment, the correct drug and dosing regime is correctly given to the animals requiring treatment only. We encourage the use of diagnostic testing, when recommended by veterinary surgeons, to ensure that the most effective antibiotic is selected to target the infection and optimise the treatment outcome.