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Forum Origine, Diversité et Territoires
[Workshop n°3], [Session n°2]

[Dairy herd health in a "One Health" approach]

[More than half of all udder infections originate during the dry period. To prevent these infections, the most commonly used method is drying off with antibiotics, regardless of the health of the udder. The high pressure in Switzerland on milk quality, especially for cheese milk, also tends to increase the use of antibiotics. The Swiss Antibiotic Resistance Report 2020 shows that since the adoption of the Swiss Antibiotic Resistance Strategy StAR in 2016, antibiotic sales figures have been on the rise again after a period of decline.

The project is being implemented in the cantons of Jura and Bern, with 60 dairy farms being monitored. A periodic adjustment of the objectives and methods according to the "One Health" approach is planned, as well as the setting up of an interdisciplinary structure to support the farms.

However, thanks to the planned collaboration with Agridea, the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), the University of Applied Sciences for Agriculture, Forestry and Food (HAFL) and the Swiss Animal Health Platform (NTGS), the project's activities will be extended to the whole of Switzerland.

Overall objective

The main objective is to reduce the use of antibiotics in dairy herds, while maintaining or improving the health of the animals, through preventive measures, the application of complementary therapies, and the establishment of a new structure to support the herds, which will ensure a better efficiency of the system in the long term.

One Health" approach

The "One Health" approach is based on the interdisciplinary consultation of all those who are involved in the issue and who have an influence on it. The project started with meetings of all the players in the sector, especially the milk producers. This way of working is effective and gives a great deal of legitimacy to future steps. It has been proven by many projects.

A meeting in French and a meeting in German were organised. The various circles were represented: dairy production, veterinarians, professional defence, agricultural technical-economic advice, cantonal and federal authorities. Many needs and points of attention were raised and priorities were defined. Four important elements emerged from these meetings and will guide the next steps. Firstly, there are many conflicts of interest between, for example, productivity per cow, milk quality and the need to move production systems towards greater sustainability and

less competition with human food. Secondly, a more concerted and interdisciplinary approach is required in the advice and support of farms. The lack of research into the links between the environment and the use of antibiotics was highlighted. External pressures and influences such as fluctuating market prices or food scandals have a significant impact on farm families. The food system needs to be reformed. Finally, possible levers of action to improve these different issues were proposed.

Conclusion and perspectives

The 'One Health' approach is the best way to achieve harmonious collaboration between the people directly concerned, the authorities and research on the issues of antimicrobial resistance and the sustainability of livestock farming. Thanks to its interdisciplinary nature, this approach makes it possible to find possible solutions to these important problems more efficiently. In the Swiss context, it seems that the "One Health" approach can more easily be implemented at the regional level than at the national level.

This project is funded by the Sur-la-Croix Foundation.]

Bibliographic references

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