

The Need for a One Health and Welfare Approach to Industrial Animal Farming

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Abstract : Industrial animal farming contributes to numerous problems that humans face, and among these, antimicrobial resistance (AMR) has been identified by the World Health Organisation as a real possibility for the 21st Century. While numerous factors contribute to AMR, one of them is industrial animal farming and its effect on the food chain and environment. In 2017, livestock were given around 73% of all antibiotics worldwide to make them grow faster for profit purposes, to prevent illness caused by unhealthy living conditions, and to treat disease when it breaks out. Many of the antibiotics used provide little benefit to animals, and most are the same as those used by humans - including many deemed critical to human health that should be used sparingly. AMR contributes to millions of illnesses, and in 2019 was responsible for around 4.95 million deaths worldwide. It costs Europe around nine billion euros per year, while it costs the United States (US) around 20 billion dollars per year. While not a simple or quick solution, one way to begin to address the challenge of AMR and other harms from this type of farming is to focus on animal welfare as part of a One Health and Welfare approach, as better welfare requires less antibiotics usage, which may begin to break the cycle.

Keywords : animal and human welfare, industrial animal farming, antimicrobial resistance, one health and welfare, sustainable development goals

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