Livestock is raised around the world for the benefit of people. Animal species and systems of production vary widely around the world. However, all production systems, no matter how different they are have one thing in common: animals can and will get sick. In consequence, animal producers and veterinarians strive to limit animal disease through a range of measures.

This presentation will review the different animal production systems with a focus on livestock around the world, the major species, their relevance in terms of percentage of global production, but also in terms of percentage of national gross domestic product (GDP).

Then this will be put in relation with available information on antibiotic use practices in different production systems. Where available, information on quantities of antimicrobials, mostly amount of antimicrobials sold, will be presented. However, for some regions, only information on the economic value of the market segment of veterinary antimicrobials is available.

This highlights a challenge that exists with the currently available information on antibiotic usage in animals: different methods of data collection and presentation are employed in different countries, rendering the information difficult to compare between systems. Sometime sales data in amounts sold are used as a surrogate for antibiotic use, sometimes sales data in terms of monetary value, and sometimes use data at a level closer to the farm are collected.

A call is made for the development of a simple data collection system geared at providing comparable usage information, focusing on comparable amounts of product sold (on the basis of activity) as a first step.