The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) has collected annual sales and distribution data for all approved animal drugs since 1972. In 2009, CVM began publicly summarising this information for antimicrobials approved for food-producing animals.

Sales/distribution data are limited to total annual quantities of active ingredient marketed, thus it is not possible to determine usage by species or to assess the extent of use such as the duration of therapy or the proportion of animals treated.

The FDA recently solicited comments from the public on possible enhancements to the existing data collection requirements, as well as alternative methods for monitoring antimicrobial use in food-producing animals. A better understanding of the extent of use of medically important antimicrobial drugs in food-producing animals is needed to better support the implementation of the judicious antimicrobial use policy.

The collection of more detailed food animal use data also will assist FDA’s evaluation of antimicrobial resistance trends identified by the National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System (NARMS) for enteric bacteria. Coupled with NARMS data, more detailed use information would help better quantify the risks associated with different antimicrobial use practices in food-producing animals, and identify interventions to limit the development and spread of resistance in the food chain.