The Japanese Veterinary Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System (JVARM) was established in 1999 in response to international concerns about the impact of antimicrobial resistance on human and animal health. The objectives of JVARM are to monitor the occurrence of antimicrobial resistance in bacteria in food-producing animals and the consumption of veterinary antimicrobials.

Pharmaceutical companies that produce and import veterinary antimicrobials are required to submit sales figures of the veterinary antimicrobials to the National Veterinary Assay Laboratory (NVAL) annually in accordance with the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law. The reported data include the names of antimicrobials, the routes of administration, the concentration of the active ingredient in each product and the target animal species for which the products are used. NVAL subsequently collates and evaluates the data.

The sales volume of veterinary medical products varied between 750 tonnes and 892 tonnes in 2006-2010. Total antimicrobial consumption was the highest in 2006 and decreased gradually thereafter. Antimicrobials were most frequently used in pigs, compared with cattle and poultry. Among the antimicrobials, tetracycline had the highest sales volume, accounting for 43-47% of total sales, whereas fluoroquinolones (0.6-0.8%) and cephalosporins (0.4-0.6%) were less used. In the last decade, there were no remarkable changes in the number of animals slaughtered for meat in slaughterhouses. Therefore, it is speculated that not only antimicrobial consumption but also biomass decreased gradually in 2006-2010.

In Japan, antimicrobials are either administered or sold to the end user by veterinarians, or purchased by farmers/animal owners based on veterinary prescriptions. Veterinarians are required to submit their prescriptions to the local prefectural government, but are not required to report antimicrobials sold or administered. Therefore, the Japanese government determines the total annual sales from data released by pharmaceutical companies.