DAIRY SECTOR INITIATIVES

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The International Dairy Federation (IDF) represents the dairy sector at the international level and provides expertise and scientific knowledge globally to support high quality milk and milk products. As part of the collaboration with international organisations and in consultation with its members the IDF has actively pursued many initiatives that contribute to the prudent use of antimicrobial agents in dairy farming and assist in the management of antimicrobial resistance.

Antimicrobial agents are essential veterinary medicines used to treat bacterial infections in dairy cattle. Their use is needed to keep animals in good health and to prevent or reduce as far as possible the transfer of microorganisms within animal populations. Maintaining animals in good health also contributes to preventing the transfer of pathogens to humans in food. Responsible use of these powerful modern medical tools is critical to ensure they continue to be effective by minimising antimicrobial resistance and managing their use avoids any adverse consequences from antimicrobial residues.

In collaboration with OIE and FAO the IDF has published a Guide to Prudent Use of Antimicrobial Agents in Dairy Production. The principles underpinning the IDF prudent use guidelines involve; production of milk and meat from healthy animals, the adoption of accepted agricultural practice, and the minimum and controlled use of antimicrobial agents.

The guide provides a framework for the dairy industry to manage food safety risks on a coordinated ‘whole of chain’ approach. The dairy sector guidance includes desired outcomes and provides examples of recommended practices.

The dairy sector recognises that every effort needs to be taken to minimise the need for the use of antimicrobial agents in dairy farming. On-going access to effective antimicrobial agents is critically important for dairy farmers to prevent or effectively treat infections and disease for good animal health and welfare as well as for food safety outcomes.