

## THE ETHICS OF ANTIBIOTICS USE IN ANIMAL FARMING

**Hypothesis:** Is the use of Antibiotics in animal farming morally justified?

**Background:** The unnecessary use of antimicrobials poses a global threat to human health by contributing to the Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) development. This study evaluates the ethical and scientific implications of non-therapeutic use of antibiotics in animal farming. The report also critiques O'Neill's (2016) Final Report on AMR.

**Method:** The report provides a normative assessment and analysis of scientific evidence and ethical issues involved in farming with antibiotics making use of Mepham's Ethical Matrix.

**Results:** The report makes the case that non-therapeutic use of antibiotics in animal farming contributes to AMR development and that it is not ethically justifiable for farmers to carry on farming with antibiotics non-therapeutically. The study also argues that intensive factory farming poses the greatest risk in the preservation of all classes of antibiotics because it is customary to use antibiotics where a large number of animals are kept in close proximity for example, in poultry farming.

### Conclusion

An immediate ban of antibiotics deemed medically important for humans in animal farming is necessary in order to prevent the spread of antibiotic resistance. This however, must go hand in hand with preparation for abandonment of intensive farming systems in order for a ban to be successful. The study also recommends the adoption of O'Neill's (2016) recommendations on tackling AMR. In addition, a national public awareness campaign is justified by the threat posed by AMR. Governments and other relevant stakeholders involved should formulate policies or frameworks to deal with the problem with the urgency it requires.