

Publication of survey of antimicrobial resistance in bacteria in chicken and pork

This survey follows on from an authoritative report by a group established by the Advisory Committee on Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF) to advise us on research questions and potential approaches to AMR in the food chain.

The survey involved the testing of *Campylobacter* in chicken samples and *Salmonella* in pork mince samples for the occurrence of antimicrobial resistant bacteria. The survey also looked for AMR in other bacteria in both types of meat including *Enterococci*, *Klebsiella* and *Escherichia coli*. Read the [final report of the survey](#).

The risk of people developing anti microbial resistant infections from these foods is very low providing that both chicken and pork is cooked thoroughly, until the juices run clear. This will kill off the bacteria that may give you food poisoning including bacteria that are resistant to antimicrobials.

Steve Wearne, Director of Food Policy at the FSA said:

"The emergence and spread of AMR poses a significant global threat both in terms of public health and economic impact and we are determined to play our part in addressing this threat. [The O'Neill report](#) called for urgent action to reduce antibiotic prescriptions, better sanitation and hygiene, reduction of antibiotic use in agriculture and a reduction in environmental pollution. As well as reducing antibiotic use on farms we also need to understand the role that food plays in AMR and we are working with the Quadram Institute in Norwich to understand how resistance arises and how resistant bacteria survive and are transmitted through the food chain.

"I am pleased that the food industry is also taking its stewardship role very seriously and is taking action on the O'Neill recommendations. The use of antibiotics in the poultry meat sector declined by 82% between 2012 and 2017 and antibiotic use in UK pigs has halved between 2015 and 2017. There is still more for industry to do and we are challenging all food production sectors to go further to reduce the levels of antibiotics they use to help with the fight against AMR."

Chair of the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture (RUMA) Alliance Gwyn Jones said:

"Our focus is on reducing, refining or replacing antibiotic use; while some livestock sectors have already achieved extraordinary results, there is definitely more to do in others. We believe the FSA's new research will add to the bank of knowledge and help identify additional interventions that reduce any anti microbial resistant bacteria in food, while safeguarding our continued access to antibiotics that treat disease and prevent pain or suffering in animals."

Georgina Crayford, the National Pig Association's senior policy adviser said:

“The UK pig industry has been working extremely hard to minimise its use of antibiotics, to limit the development of AMR. The results from this survey provide an additional level of detail that will complement the growing amount of data surrounding antibiotic use and presence of anti-microbial resistant bacteria in the pork supply chain. The information will help to inform decisions by pig producers and their vets around managing pig health and will drive continued action towards greater stewardship of antibiotics.”

British Poultry Council’s Chief Executive, Richard Griffiths, said:

“The British poultry meat sector’s drive for excellence in bird health and welfare is delivering responsible use of antibiotics and safeguarding the efficacy of antibiotics. We are upholding the UK’s position at the forefront of international efforts to keep antibiotics effective for future generations and tackling antimicrobial resistance. We’re proud of our commitment to continuously evolve and nurture the trust and confidence that our consumers have in our food. Through the BPC Antibiotic Stewardship, we’re trying to better understand the link between antibiotic use and resistance in poultry production chain. Through more coordinated action between farmers, producers, veterinarians, academics as well as policy makers at local, regional, national and global levels, we will continue preserving the efficacy of our antibiotics and contribute to turning the tide against antimicrobial resistance.”

Our Board will be discussing AMR at its meeting on 19 September in Cardiff.