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PRESS RELEASE

HOW TO PREVENT ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE ALONG THE FOOD CHAIN

Utrecht, 19 February 2014 – The new project EFFORT will study how to prevent antimicrobials resistance development along the food chain using newly developed molecular and bio-informatics technologies. The 20 European partners have just kicked-off the 5-year project.

The introduction of antimicrobial agents in the 1940s for human clinical medicine and also in animal husbandry was one of the most significant medical achievements of the 20th century. However, the benefits of antimicrobial discovery and their application have become challenging, particularly where overuse could become counterproductive. The use of antimicrobial invariably leads to selection of bacteria that are resistant against the substance used. Resistance can then spread in populations and the environment. The great adaptive ability of bacteria means that resistant bacteria can evolve quickly and then spread rapidly even at a global scale.

The EC-funded project Ecology from Farm to Fork Of microbial drug Resistance and Transmission (EFFORT) will study the complex epidemiology and ecology of antimicrobial resistance and the interactions between bacterial communities, commensals and pathogens in animals, the food chain and the environment. The project outcomes will help the EC to implement strategies to prevent further development of antimicrobials resistance by prioritizing risk management options along the food chain.

On 8-9 January 2014, the kick-off meeting of the 5-year project gathered all partners and streamlined tasks for the duration of the project. The consortium consists of 20 partners from 10 European countries, namely Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain and Switzerland. The project is expected to conduct a combination of epidemiological and ecological studies using newly developed molecular and bio-informatics technologies. In addition, the project will include an exposure assessment of humans from animal and environmental sources. The ecological studies on isolates will be verified by *in vitro* and *in vivo* studies. Moreover, real-life intervention studies will be conducted aimed at reducing the use of antimicrobials in veterinary practice.

More information about the project can be found at: www.effort-against-amr.eu

About EFFORT

The EC-funded project EFFORT deals with ecology of drug resistant bacteria and transfer of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) throughout the food chain. The introduction of antimicrobials in human medicine changed the options for treatment completely. However, the benefits of their discovery were disadvantaged as their use invariably leads to AMR. So far, the different actions taken to address and reduce the emergence and spread of AMR have had limited success. EFFORT studies the complex epidemiology and ecology of AMR using newly developed molecular and bio-informatics technologies.

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