

Canada should ban off-label antibiotic use in agriculture: CMAJ

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Canada should ban off-label use of antibiotics in farm animals because it contributes significantly to antibiotic resistance in humans, states an editorial in *CMAJ* (*Canadian Medical Association Journal*).

Off-label use means using antibiotics for purposes other than those indicated on the label.

"Of greatest concern is the promotion of resistance to antibiotics that may currently represent the last resort for treating some highly resistant infections in humans," writes Barbara Sibbald, Deputy Editor, CMAJ.

Other countries and regions are far ahead of Canada in limiting the [use of antibiotics](#) in animals. By 2005, the European Union had phased out antibiotics used to enhance growth in livestock and those from classes prescribed for humans. The US [Food and Drug Administration](#) has asked food producers to voluntarily stop using antibiotics for nonmedicinal purposes in farm animals.

Some drugs, such as those in classes used as a last defence against vancomycin-resistant pathogens, are used in farm animals.

Canada should stop using antibiotics in food production, support producers who are trying to improve conditions for raising animals, and institute measurement and reporting systems to track usage.

More information: www.cmaj.ca/lookup/doi/10.1503/cmaj.120561

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