

Veterinary task force wants antibiotic resistance solutions at top of public health agenda

November 11 2015, by Darrin Pack

A national task force report on the growing problem of antibiotic resistance in animal agriculture spotlights the need to make finding solutions a top public health priority, said Willie Reed, dean of the Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine.

Reed serves on the 14-member Task Force on Antibiotic Resistance in Production Agriculture composed of agricultural educators, industry leaders and animal [health](#) specialists.

In its report released Oct. 29, the [task force](#) recommended that a centralized research organization be created to coordinate public and private efforts to curb antibiotic resistance, which the group says "threatens human, animal and environmental health."

"Our goal is to elevate antibiotic resistance to the top of the national agenda as a [public health threat](#), while leveraging the collective strengths of the nation's educational, professional and policymaking sectors to enhance our knowledge of this biologically complex and poorly understood phenomenon," Reed said.

Reed called antibiotic resistance a worldwide problem.

"Our message is that land-grant universities have the capacity to contribute immensely to solving this problem," he said.

The task force was created last fall as a joint project of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities and the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges after the Obama administration declared that finding a solution to antibiotic resistance was a national security priority.

According to Centers for Disease Control, antibiotic-resistant bacteria cause at least 2 million human illnesses and 23,000 human deaths in the U.S. every year, costing \$20 billion a year in direct health costs and up to \$35 billion in indirect health costs.

The task force report explores the implications of antibiotic resistance and makes several proposals, including:

- Creating a model antibiotic resistance curriculum that could be used for undergraduate, graduate and professional courses in the animal and health sciences.
- Developing training materials for human and animal health professionals.
- Implementing educational programs for producers and farmers.
- Promoting enhanced research efforts to improve understanding of how antibiotic resistance functions.
- Investigating alternatives to current antibiotics.
- Improving detection methods.

To accomplish those goals, the task force plans to create university-based collaborative pilot projects focusing on combatting [antibiotic resistance](#), work with Congress and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to increase access to veterinary care in rural communities and form a national consortium of researchers to conduct in-depth studies and implement possible solutions.

More information: To view the full report and other resources, go to

www.aavmc.org/PressRelease/?id=329

Provided by Purdue University

Citation: Veterinary task force wants antibiotic resistance solutions at top of public health agenda (2015, November 11) retrieved 5 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-11-veterinary-task-antibiotic-resistance-solutions.html>

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