



Use of antimicrobials in New Zealand sheep and beef farming

1. Beef + Lamb New Zealand (B+LNZ) believes that disease **prevention** through good biosecurity and animal husbandry is preferable to disease management.
2. B+LNZ supports the responsible use of antimicrobials to manage the impacts of disease on animal health and welfare, as part of a One Health approach to considering human and animal health and environmental impact.
3. Stringent regulations on the use of antimicrobials in agriculture are in place in New Zealand under the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act (1997), and these are supported by the Ministry for Primary Industries' (MPI) oversight of registration and prescribing of veterinary medicines. Use of antimicrobials on farms requires strict adherence to withholding periods and associated record keeping is audited by MPI and meat processor customers.
4. In New Zealand:
 - I. use of antimicrobials in animals must only occur under veterinary supervision.
 - II. use of antimicrobials as growth promotants is not permitted.
 - III. veterinary use of many antimicrobials required for difficult-to-treat human infections is not permitted.
5. Animal products are tested by MPI to verify the effectiveness of systems at preventing the occurrence of unacceptable residues of veterinary medicines, including antimicrobials¹.
6. As a result of historically strong regulatory and on-farm stewardship practices, NZ agriculture has been acknowledged as having one of the lowest rates of antimicrobial use in the world².
7. In New Zealand, our extensive pastoral farming system means that our animals experience very limited levels of diseases. As a result, antimicrobials are seldom used in sheep and beef cattle³:

"As per previous years, sales of antibiotics intended for use in the sheep and beef sectors remain very low, likely attributable to lower disease pressures in pastoral farming systems" (p66)

For further information, please contact:

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¹ For more information, please consult: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/food-safety-home/safe-levels-of-chemicals-in-food/fertilisers-pesticides-hormones-and-medicines-in-food/introduction-to-agricultural-compound-residues-in-food/>

² Antimicrobials in Agriculture and the Environment: Reducing Unnecessary Use and Waste, 2015. Available from: <https://amr-review.org/sites/default/files/Antimicrobials%20in%20agriculture%20and%20the%20environment%20-%20Reducing%20unnecessary%20use%20and%20waste.pdf>

³ 2023 Antibiotic Agricultural Compound Sales Analysis, NZ Food Safety, September 2024
<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/65187-2023-Antibiotic-Agricultural-Compound-Sales-Analysis>

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