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**Prepared By:** Carmen Valverde, Agricultural Specialist

**Approved By:** Jennifer Clever

**Report Highlights:**

On May 30, 2019, Spain held the XI Annual Conference on Animal Health in Madrid. Spanish government representatives, expert scientists, and the European Platform of Animal Health discussed Spain's current animal health situation, programs, and challenges. The sector's main areas of focus are lowering the use of antibiotics and avoiding the introduction of African Swine Fever. Implemented since 2014, Spain's National Plan against Antibiotic Resistance has resulted in reductions on the Spanish use of antibiotics for both human and veterinary health. For its 2019-2021 plan, Spain intends to expand its REDUCE programs and further lower its use of antibiotics.

## **An Update on Spain's Animal Health Program**

On May 30, 2019, Spanish government representatives, expert scientists, and the European Platform of Animal Health, AnimalHealthEurope, met for the XI Annual Conference on Animal Health. During the conference, participants discussed two major concerns affecting the sector: the reduction of antibiotics use and the threat of African Swine Fever (ASF). After the eradication of ASF in Spain since 1995, the disease has not resurfaced in Spain. In addition, in response to the last outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease declared in Morocco, Spain has intensified the control measures at Spanish ports including the cleaning and disinfection of trucks to and from Africa to avoid introduction of the disease in Spain. Increasing biosecurity measures and monitoring animal health status in Spain remains a major goal for the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture and Spanish ranchers to ensure domestic and export markets. Currently, Spanish animal health authorities deem its animal health status, prevention, and control plans as one of the best within the European Union. On September 2019, USDA's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Canadian authorities evaluated the status of the Spanish swine production, along with 12 other Member States. A report on their findings is expected before the end of 2019. Conference attendees also learned about the progress of the current national plan against antibiotic residues, the new plan for 2019-2021, and the latest Spanish efforts to address ASF.

### **The Spanish Antimicrobial Resistance Program:**

The Spanish Agency for Medicines and Health Products (AEMPS), under the Spanish Ministry of Health, first implemented Spain's [Plan against Antibiotics Resistance](#) (PRAN) in 2014. The PRAN comprises of eight Spanish Ministries, more than 300 science experts, and more than 70 scientific societies. The PRAN program, reviewed every four years, aims at reducing the use of antibiotics in Spanish animal production and avoiding antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in humans. The PRAN 2014-2018 contains six strategies in both human and animal health: surveillance, control, prevention, research, training, and communication. The strategies are implemented by a system of working groups in the main Spanish animal husbandry, namely swine, cattle, poultry, dairy, and rabbit.

The most significant achievements reached under the 2014-2019 PRAN are related to Spanish consumption of antibiotics. According to the PRAN's estimated data, between 2015 and 2018, Spanish total consumption of antibiotics in human health lowered by 7.2 percent. This reduction represents a pivot from the growing trend recorded since 2012.

In the veterinary area, the consumption of antibiotics also lowered 14 percent between 2014 and 2016, mostly as result of the REDUCE Programs. REDUCE programs are voluntary program for ranchers and animal production companies for the prudent use of antibiotics in different livestock sectors. In the swine farming sector, 55 companies (representing 80 percent of the sector) have joined this program. As a result, total use of colistin – an antibiotic of critical importance for human health— plummeted 85.8 percent. Similarly, in poultry farming, 23 companies joined this program and reduced total antibiotic consumption by 71 percent.

On the other hand, the results of the Eurobarometer 2018 on public awareness about antibiotics and their use demonstrate that the percentage of Spaniards who erroneously think that antibiotics cure a cold has dropped from 45 percent registered in 2016 to 36 percent. This drop is one of the largest decreases registered in the European Union (EU). Nevertheless, Spain remains one of the top EU consumers of antibiotics. Around 3,000 people reportedly die each year as a result of hospital infections caused by resistant bacteria.

The new PRAN 2019-2021 intends to give continuity to the work developed in 2014-2018, applying the "[One Health](#)" approach, with the aim to reduce the growth of resistance to antibiotics and its impact on human health. The One Health concept is a worldwide strategy for expanding interdisciplinary collaborations and communications in all aspects of health care for humans, animals and the environment. In a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) FAO (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization), OIE (World Organization for Animal Health), and WHO (World Health Organization) agreed to strengthen their long-standing partnership. The [PRAN 2019-2021](#) includes two additional new strategies: (1) reduce the consumption of antibiotics; (2) reduce the need to use these treatments in human and veterinary medicine. Its methodology will maintain the six current strategic lines mentioned of the previous PRAN and also the system of working groups.

In the area of animal health, the most important actions under the new PRAN will include improving the surveillance on the consumption of veterinary antibiotics, improving resistance monitoring, and the expansion of the REDUCE Programs. The new PRAN also introduces the operation of a national data collection system on veterinary prescription of antibiotics (PRESVET) which launched on January 1, 2019. With this system, AEMPS hopes to provide real data on the consumption of antibiotics by farm and by species. According to the Spanish veterinary industry, this new data collection system is working well and is helping to trace and monitor all veterinary prescriptions.

### **African Swine Fever:**

Spain is increasing the control measures, monitoring, and biosecurity measures in animal farming to avoid the re-introduction of African Swine Fever (ASF), currently the major global concern in swine farming. To this end, the Spanish government has adopted different procedures such as increased control measures in transport and logistics, movements of animal, border controls, biosecurity in animal farming, prevention and communication, and reduction of population of wild boars. It is important to note that in 1995 Spain eradicated ASF after a 35-year fight against the disease once detected in the Spanish swine herd. This previous work helped the Spanish government and swine industry to get ahead by implementing important biosecurity measures.

The European Commission selected to finance the Spanish VACDIVA project with \$11 million (10 million Euro). Coordinated by the Complutense University of Madrid, the project counts with the participation and experience of global reference laboratories for ASF such as the Center for Veterinary Health Surveillance (Visavet) of the OIE, World Organization for Animal Health, the EU Reference Laboratory located in Spain, and two world leading companies in vaccine production and ASF

diagnostic kits. The objective of VACDIVA is to address the problem of ASF in Europe and in other affected countries through innovative actions. The project intends to evaluate control strategies through vaccination and provide three vaccine candidates against ASF for wild boars and domestic pigs. The vaccines will be administered under field conditions with effective and economic surveillance ([more information in Spanish only](#)).

### **Spanish Government's view on the Current Status of Animal Health:**

Animal and Plant Health authorities at the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food (MAPA) opine that research, technological development, and innovation are crucial to respond to the health challenges faced by different species and existing production models. To facilitate the transfer of knowledge and technology, collaboration between the public and private sector remain critical to improving animal health and animal welfare, food safety, and public health.

In addition, MAPA considers the coordination between animal health and public health to be fundamental to fight against zoonosis and emerging diseases, for which it is also important to carry out a truthful, transparent, and prudent communication. Animal health is also one of the MAPA priorities in order to maintain increasing demand in export markets.

### **Spanish Industry reactions to the new plan**

The Spanish livestock sector is committed to the PRAN program. Hence, the different animal production industries are applying measures to reduce the consumption of antibiotics.

### **Attachments:**

No Attachments.