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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Antibiotic Use in Farm Animals Does Not Threaten Human Health, A New Study Suggests

Visby, Sweden, 13 June 2001: The use of antibiotics in farm animals has little connection with the emergence of so-called "super-bugs," a new study by the European Federation of Animal Health (FEDESA) suggests.

The study — which was released here today during a European Union conference on the threat of antimicrobial resistant bacteria — estimates that farm animals consumed only 35% of all the antibiotics administered in the EU during 1999 while humans consumed 65%.

"By showing that farm animals account for only one-third of the antibiotics used in the European Union — even though their combined liveweight is three times greater than the human patient population — this study suggests that treating sick animals with modern medicine can only be a very small contributing factor to the problem of antimicrobial resistance, if it's a factor at all," said Dr. Johan Vanhemelrijck, secretary general of FEDESA. *"The study should make government officials pause before jumping to the*

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erroneous conclusion that they can stop the emergence of new bacteria by over-regulating the use of antibiotics and restricting the proper treatment of farm animals."

The study comes at a time when the scientific community is debating the role that antibiotic use plays in the emergence of so-called "super-bugs," new disease-carrying microorganisms that have developed a resistance to the latest human medicines.

Although there is no evidence that the use of antibiotics in farm animals represents a risk to human health, some government officials have suggested that the EU limit the medications that can be administered to treat sick cows, pigs, horses, sheep, goats, chickens and rabbits as a way to stop the spread of these new bacteria. The new analysis by FEDESA undermines those arguments because it illustrates that farm animals consume far less antibiotics than people.

According to the study, an estimated 13,216 tonnes of antibiotics were used in the European Union and Switzerland in 1999. Of that, people consumed 8,528 tonnes, or about 65% of the total, while animals consumed 4,688 tonnes, or just 35%.

Of the antibiotics that were given to animals, 3,902 tonnes (or 29% of the total usage) were administered to help sick animals recover from disease while only 786 tonnes (or 6% of the total usage) were given to farm animals in their feed as growth promoters.

The survey estimates that the amount of antibiotics used as growth promoters fell by 50% since 1997, when animals consumed 1,599 tonnes in their feed, or 12% of total usage. The

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report attributes this drop partially to a decision by the European Council to ban the use of four antibiotics in animal feed, but it goes on to say that “the reduction is considerably greater than might have been expected from the effect of the EU ban...”

The survey is the second analysis of the volume of antibiotics consumed by animals in Europe since 1997 and covered all 15 EU member states and Switzerland. It was conducted for FEDESA by Boatman Consulting and was commissioned by the animal health industry. The authorities have called upon the animal health industry to monitor the volume of antibiotics used in the EU as one way to develop strategies to stop the spread of super-bugs.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

FEDESA, the European Federation of Animal Health, represents the animal health industry in Europe. Its membership comprises 15 national associations and 15 companies active in the research, development and marketing of veterinary medicines. FEDESA works towards a European environment where the value of safe and effective animal health products is recognised and where these high-quality products can be developed, registered and provided quickly and economically.

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Antibiotic Volume Use Study Results

Use of antibiotics	1999	1997	Change from 97-99
Total volume	13,216	12,752	3.6 % increase
Human therapy	8,528 (65 %)	7,659 (60 %)	11.3 % increase
Animal (therapy)	3,902 (29 %)	3,494 (27.5 %)	11 % increase
Animal (growth promoters)	786 (6 %)	1,599 (12.5 %)	50 % decrease

Volumes measured in tonnes.