To,

The Commissioner/ Director,
Department of Animal Husbandry,
All State Governments and Union Territories

Subject: Use of antibiotics in food producing animals

Sir/ Madam,

This is in reference to the advisory issued by the department vide letter No.102-74/2014-Trade, dated 3rd June, 2014.

The controversy surrounding the use of growth promoters for animals destined for production of food is longstanding, as overuse of any antibiotic over a period of time leads to local bacterial populations becoming resistant to certain antibiotic(s). Recently, it has come to notice that, the residues of antibiotics like: Oxytetracycline, Chlorotetracycline, Doxycycline, Enrofloxacin, Ciprofloxacin and Neomycin have been detected in the marketed poultry muscle, liver and kidney. It was however also reported that the levels detected were well below the permissible limits prescribed by other international agencies. Nonetheless, there are gaps in structured and focused approach to combat Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR) at the livestock production end, which requires looking in-depth at our preparedness in controlling the same and capacity building.

2. The food producing animals are major protein sources in the human food chain. Therefore, if they are regularly fed with antibiotics, possible outcome may be edible tissue clearance, residue avoidance, and environmental safety concerns. The organisms/ pathogens susceptible to antibiotics may develop resistance against commonly used antibiotics.

3. Therefore, the following guidelines may be used for working out a strategy to ensure judicious use of antibiotics in order to prevent AMR:

a) There is a need to review the Antibiotic/ Antimicrobial Growth Promoters (AGP) usage scenario in food producing animals in your State/UT.

b) Antibiotics should not be allowed in feed and feed supplement as growth promoter of commercial stocks. However, antibiotics/ antimicrobials used in medicated feed, like some coccidiostats, which are not used in humans, need to be considered carefully, taking into account the endemicity and other factors. Though a stricter biosecurity should be encouraged, antibacterial/ antiprotozoal vaccines may be considered in endemic areas.
c) The use of antibiotics for prophylactic, metaphylactic and therapeutic purpose may be based on prescription of veterinarians and/or under their supervision.

d) Whereas antibiotics should be discouraged, alternatives like development, production and use of alternative antibiotic free growth promoters, such as prebiotics, probiotics, and phytotherapeutics should be encouraged.

e) Ensure that licensed antibiotic reaches the registered user through a registered distributor or stockist of veterinary medicine.

f) There should be a system to identify all antibiotics from manufacturer to user. Coordination with the State Drug Controller may need to be maintained in this regard.

The livestock and poultry farms should follow Good Farm Management practices to control infection and stress among the flock. Bio-security guidelines issued by Central Poultry Development Organization should be followed by making it available to all commercial Poultry farms. The Guidelines are available on the website of this Department and can be accessed at http://www.nic.in/dahd/WriteReadData/General%Guidelines%20Final.pdf

g) All the State Governments and Union Territories are requested to educate their veterinarians, farmers and poultry entrepreneurs on the use of antibiotics, their withdrawal period and ill effects of indiscriminate use of antibiotics as well as antimicrobial resistance.

4. It is requested to kindly review the situation on an urgent basis so that antibiotics usage as growth promoter is discontinued and roadmap for pharmacovigilance of Veterinary Medicinal Products like antimicrobials/antibiotics can be developed to ensure that these are not responsible for AMR.

Yours faithfully,

(H.R. Khanna)
Assistant Commissioner

Copy to:-
1. Principal Secretaries, Animal Husbandry of all States/UTs.
2. Chairperson, Food Safety and Standard Authority of India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, FDA Bhawan, Kotla Road, New Delhi.
3. Additional Secretary (Mr. Arun Kumar Panda), Department of Health, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi.
4. Drug Controller General of India, Central Drug Control and Standard Organization, FDA Bhawan, Kotla Road, New Delhi.
5. DDG(Animal Sciences), Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi for necessary inputs
6. Joint Commissioner (Poultry), Room no. 354, Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi for information
7. Directors (l/c), All Central Poultry Development Organizations and Central Poultry Performance Testing Centers for follow-up