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AnimalhealthEurope study on EU citizens' attitudes towards animal medicines

AnimalhealthEurope commissioned Produkt+Markt to carry out a study on citizens' attitudes towards animal medicines in 6 EU countries in early 2016. The aim was to get a good understanding of perceptions and attitudes towards medicines and vaccines for both pets and farm animals, as well as societal benefits.

Methodology and topics

Produkt+Markt carried out an online survey among citizens in Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom. The target group was a representative and balanced sample of citizens in terms of regional distribution, gender and age (>18 years), and counted 6,000 respondents (1,000 per country).

The survey focused on topics covering the right to receive medicines, animal welfare, disease prevention and cure, as well as zoonoses, food safety, legal compliance of animal medicines, innovation, and general awareness.

Key findings

Pets versus farm animals: The survey revealed different views on the use of medicines for pets and farm animals.

- **Right to medicines:** 65% of citizens agree that **pets** have the same right to receive medicines as people, while 59% agree for **farm animals**.
- **Animal welfare:** 53% of citizens say that medicines have a positive impact on the welfare of **pets**, and only 40% agree for **farm animals**.
- **Prevention:** 2 out of 3 agree **pets** should be vaccinated regularly just like their children, while 1 in 2 agree for **farm animals**.
- **Zoonoses:** 3 in 5 say that the vaccination of pets helps prevent disease transfer from animals in people, whereas half agree for **farm animals**.
- **Cure:** 3 out of 4 citizens know that **pets** are given medicines to treat them when they are sick, while 2 in 3 are aware of this for **farm animals**.

Food safety and sustainability: Results show a low awareness on the link between animal health and food safety, but a high level of recognition of the benefits of healthy animals to sustainable food production.

- **Food safety:** More than 70% of respondents don't know or agree that medicines given to farm animals make food safer.
- **Food quality:** Over 80% say that a healthy farm animal will produce better quality products, e.g. milk.

- Sustainable food production: **3 out of 4** agree that healthy farm animals enable farmers to produce and supply food in a sustainable manner.

Legal compliance of animal medicines: There is a general lack of awareness about the regulation, licensing and control of animal medicines. But most know that animal medicines are tested and reviewed before being sold, and know about the regulation of antibiotic use in farm animals.

- Safety: **Over 50%** of respondents don't know animal medicines meet the same safety standards as medicines for people.
- Assessment: **More than 50%** of citizens are unaware that animal medicines are assessed by independent scientists before being licensed.
- Prescription and sale: **52%** don't know that the prescription and sale of animal medicines is strictly regulated.
- Legal requirements: **60%** of respondents don't realise that manufacturers of animal medicines need to comply with all legal requirements (production, distribution and sales) before veterinarians can use them.
- Test and review: **62%** know animal medicines are tested and reviewed before being sold.
- Antibiotic use: **46%** are unaware that the use of antibiotics in farm animals is regulated and controlled by national authorities.

Innovation: Most agree to the use of new technologies for developing new animal medicines.

- **53%** agree that all new technologies should be allowed to help develop new medicines for animals.
- **68%** say that scientists should be allowed to use new technologies to develop new medicines.

General awareness: A large majority of EU citizens don't feel sufficiently informed of the use of animal medicines.

- **66%** don't feel well informed by the media in general, **17%** feel well informed, while another **17%** don't know.

Further information

See AnimalhealthEurope's PowerPoint presentation of key findings, press release and infographic at: www.animalhealtheurope.eu

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