

Healthy livestock for healthy food

The decisive question with regard to healthy food from livestock is: Have the animals been in good health themselves?

To allow for a positive reply at all times, it is an essential prerequisite that livestock is taken care of responsibly and that veterinary medicines are used when and as needed. Not only humans can get infected and become ill at times; also livestock can be subject to diseases and pathogens from time to time. As in human medicine, safe veterinary products must therefore be available at all times. Only healthy livestock can contribute to supplying consumers with high quality meat, eggs and dairy products.

Both farmers and veterinarians play a crucial role in preserving the controlled use of veterinary products. For example, all treatments must be documented. Furthermore, very strict rules and procedures with regard to post-treatment intervals have to be followed prior to bringing produce to the market.

There is a close-mesh net of controls which in Germany are comprised, evaluated and published by the Federal Agency for Consumer Protection and Food Security (BVL) in the National Residue Control Plan (NRKP).

In Germany, almost 600,000 risk-oriented analyses of more than 56,000 samples from livestock or products originating from livestock were conducted in 2010. On average, one out of 2,000 pigs was analysed. This amounted to about 30,000 animals, out of which roughly 13,500 were analysed with regard to forbidden anabolic substances or un-registered substances, about 9,500 for antimicrobial substances, roughly 11,600 for other veterinary products and 3,500 for environmental influences. These samples have either been taken on the farms or in the slaughterhouses. Accordingly, the net of these controls is very dense, and the results achieved are excellent.



With regard to antimicrobial substances for example, the results of the screening revealed only 5 samples with slightly higher values – which means as little as 0.05 percent of all animals checked. Besides, there has been a clear tendency to less and less positive samples over the last years.

Together with comparable data from other livestock species, these results give scientific evidence that food from livestock in Germany is practically residue-free with regard to antimicrobial substances.