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CATERING COMPANIES – FEEDING THE ANTIBIOTIC CRISIS?

POLICIES FOR ANTIBIOTICS IN FOOD SERVED BY CATERING COMPANIES,
INCLUDING IN SCHOOL AND HEALTHCARE SETTINGS



ALLIANCE TO
SAVE OUR
ANTIBIOTICS



CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
Key findings.....	5
Assessment questions.....	6
Summary table.....	7
INTRODUCTION	8
WHY THE CATERING INDUSTRY HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE	10
Areas covered by the industry.....	11
Healthcare, care homes and educational establishments.....	11
Other public and private sector areas of work	13
WHY ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE IS SO IMPORTANT	14
HOW FARM ANTIBIOTIC USE IS LINKED WITH ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE IN HUMAN INFECTIONS	16
The history of antibiotic use on farmed animals	16
Reductions in UK farm antibiotic use	18
Proposals for legislative change in the UK and the potential impact.....	18
Farm systems.....	20
CONSUMER VIEWS AND SHAREHOLDER PRIORITIES	22
METHODOLOGY	24
Contact / support	24
How we conducted the research	24
Areas we researched and why these questions are significant	24
Assessment questions.....	25
OVERALL RESULTS	26
Summary table.....	26
Level of engagement.....	27
INDIVIDUAL COMPANY RESULTS	29
apetito.....	30
Aramark.....	32
CH&CO	36
Compass Group.....	39
Elior	43
ISS.....	47
Newrest	49
OCS	51
Sodexo	54
WSH	57
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	60
APPENDICES	63
Appendix 1 Sector Summary	64
Appendix 2 Company Summary	65
Appendix 3 The work of the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics.....	67
Appendix 4 Assured schemes and commitments	68
GLOSSARY	73
REFERENCES	75

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the first-ever comprehensive assessment of the antibiotic policies of the UK's leading catering companies. All ten of these companies supply healthcare institutions or educational establishments in or outside of the UK, with eight out of ten supplying both.

It might be expected that in light of the growing threat from antibiotic resistance such suppliers would have exemplary policies in this area, but our assessment finds that most catering companies are failing to take their responsibility to minimise antibiotic use in their supply chain sufficiently seriously.

Antibiotic resistance is a global health crisis, responsible for about 1.27 million deaths a year (more than HIV or malaria).¹ This includes 7,600 deaths per year in the UK and is estimated to cost the NHS £95 million per year.² The World Health Organization (WHO) describes antibiotic resistance as "one of the biggest threats to global health, food security, and development today".³

The WHO further states that "Antibiotic resistance occurs naturally, but misuse of antibiotics in humans and animals is accelerating the process."³ The spread of resistance from farm animals to humans through the food chain is known to be a contributing factor to antibiotic resistance,

so it is essential that antibiotic use in farming be kept to a minimum.

In the UK, around 30% of antibiotics are used on farmed animals.⁴ Although this is better than the global average of approximately 66%⁵, this still equates to 212 tonnes of antibiotic active ingredient sold in the UK for use on farmed animals.⁶ With global levels of resistance increasing there is no place for apathy or complacency in addressing this issue.

The UK contract catering industry is big business, with a market value of £4.4 billion.⁷ The companies surveyed supply food to NHS hospitals, schools, colleges and universities, and to Government departments and the military. They also cater for large-scale events at Twickenham, Wimbledon, the Royal Opera House, and Royal Botanic Gardens (Kew Gardens), and at venues like Olympia London, QEII centre, the O2 arena, London Zoo, and Edinburgh Castle. Some also supply staff canteens or high-street brands like Costa, Subway and M&S.

They are involved in serving some of the most vulnerable people in society, including young people.

Every year, 140 million inpatient meals are served in NHS hospitals⁸, where staff are already dealing directly with difficult to treat infections, deaths and financial pressures caused by antibiotic resistance and over 600 million meals are served to children in UK schools.

Three of the companies assessed served thousands of meals to military personnel as part of the recent coronation of King Charles III. Two of the companies served up almost 100,000 meals to the military between them.

In most cases, food produced by catering companies is served unbranded, and their policies are less frequently scrutinised than those of supermarkets. It is therefore important that pressure is applied to these food suppliers to ensure they play their part in creating a safer future.

In this report The Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics looked at the publicly available antibiotic policies of ten leading contract-catering companies. We wrote to all the companies several times over the past 18 months to inform them of our plans and to offer support on how to develop an antibiotic policy. Unfortunately, only two companies, CH&CO and Compass Group actively engaged with us and took advantage of our offer of free support.

In April, May and August 2023, we searched for policies on responsible antibiotic use on the consumer-facing websites of the ten companies.

Unfortunately, our research shows that:

- 5 out of 10 catering companies surveyed have no antibiotics policy.
- None of the companies currently prohibit their suppliers from using antibiotics for routine disease prevention.
- None of the companies collect any data on their antibiotic use.

KEY FINDINGS

We assessed: apetito (apetito Limited), Aramark (Aramark Ltd), CH&CO (CH&CO Group), Compass Group (UK & Ireland), Elior (UK), ISS, Newrest (Group), OCS (OCS Group UK Limited), Sodexo (Sodexo United Kingdom) and WSH (WSH Investments Ltd). We searched for antibiotic policies relating to the UK. Some of the policies that we found were on local websites, others on global websites.

All ten of the companies that we assessed mention supplying either healthcare establishments (including hospitals and care homes) or educational premises on their websites. Nine out of ten supply healthcare establishments (eight in the UK), nine supply educational establishments (eight in the UK), eight of the organisations supply both healthcare and educational locations. Eight companies mention supplying events or working with high-street brands (all eight in the UK) or workplaces (seven mention the UK).

Further details of the areas served by the companies can be found in Appendix 1.

- Only five companies (Aramark, CH&CO, Compass, Elior and Sodexo) have a published antibiotic policy. Five companies have no antibiotic policy (apetito, ISS, Newrest, OCS, and WSH).
- None of the ten companies currently have a policy banning routine preventative antibiotic use in their supply chain.
- None of the ten companies collect any data on antibiotic use in their supply chain.
- Only Aramark, CH&CO, Compass and Sodexo have a strategy aimed reducing the antibiotics in their supply chain.
- Only Elior has any restrictions on the use of antibiotics classified as highest-priority critically important in human medicine.
- None of the companies have a ban on the use of the antibiotic colistin which is used as a last resort in human medicine for treating life threatening infections. Only CH&CO has made a commitment to ban colistin by 2024
- One of the companies, ISS, recently secured a catering contract with Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), despite having NO antibiotic policy.⁹

ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

The following criteria were used for assessing the publicly available antibiotic policies of the catering companies.

1. Does the company have a publicly available policy on farm antibiotic use on its website?
2. Does the policy ban the routine preventative use of antibiotics in the company's supply chain?
3. Does the company collect data on antibiotic use in your supply chain?
4. Does the policy include an antibiotic-use reduction strategy?
5. Does the policy include antibiotic-use reduction targets?
6. Is the policy clear about the coverage?
 - 6a. Does the policy cover all UK-produced freshly cooked/prepared meat, fish, dairy, and eggs served?
 - 6b. Does the policy cover all UK-produced food, including frozen, pre-packaged and branded items?
 - 6c. Does the policy cover all food sold/served in outlets, including all imported produce?
7. Does the policy restrict the use of the 'highest-priority critically important antibiotics' across the supply chain?
8. Does the policy completely ban the use of the antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?
9. Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?
10. Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data by farming system?

SUMMARY TABLE

Red indicates an area that is lacking, green a positive and amber where there is some information or a future commitment

	 APETITO	 ARAMARK	 CH&CO	 COMPASS	 ELIOR	 ISS	 NEWREST	 OCS	 SODEXO	 WSH
1. Policy publicly available	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
2. Bans routine prevention	✗	—	—	—	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
3. Collects usage data	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
4. Reduction strategy in place	✗	✓	✓	—	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
5. Reduction targets are set	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
6. Clear about coverage	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
6a. Includes all UK-fresh produce	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
6b. Includes all UK-produce	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
6c. Includes all produce	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
7. Restricts HPClAs	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
8. Bans colistin	✗	✗	—	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
9. Publishes usage data	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
10. Collects usage by farm system	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

These are very disappointing results. Going forward, the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics calls for catering companies to engage with us and avail themselves of our free support to discuss how they can develop policies and align them with our recommendations. More importantly, we hope that they will improve their policies significantly.

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization describes antibiotic resistance as “one of the biggest threats to global health, food security, and development today”.³

A study published in the Lancet medical journal estimated that in 2019 alone, antimicrobial resistance was directly responsible for the deaths of 1.27 million people globally and was associated with the deaths of 4.95 million people.¹ If insufficient action is taken, it has been projected that by 2050, antimicrobial resistance could be the cause of ten million deaths a year¹⁰. The Covid pandemic, for comparison, has killed an estimated 6.9 million people, in total, since it began in 2020¹¹.

It's not surprising, therefore, that antimicrobial resistance is frequently referred to as the “silent pandemic”, as awareness about the scale of the impact the diminishing effectiveness of antibiotics will cause is still nowhere near where it should be.

Faced with such a large death toll, it is imperative that action is taken by all sectors where antibiotics are currently overused. This should include both human medicine and livestock farming.

UK farm antibiotic use has fallen by 55% since 2014, due to farmers taking voluntary action and this is welcome progress, but much more needs to be done. About 75% of British farm antibiotic use is still for group treatments.⁶ This suggests that, even after the reductions that have been achieved, a lot of antibiotic use is still not targeted at individual sick

animals. Instead, antibiotics are still being used for mass medication to control diseases which inevitably occur on many intensive farms.

Very belatedly, the UK Government is proposing to introduce new rules, which would ban all forms of routine antibiotic use, limit preventative use to exceptional circumstances where there is a high risk of infection, and prohibit using antibiotics to compensate for poor hygiene¹².

These rules would be a very welcome step in the right direction, however, they unfortunately do not go as far as EU rules that came into force last year¹³, as no ban on preventative group treatments is proposed. Furthermore, it is still unclear when or if these new rules will come into force.

Because of the slow pace of action from the Government in responding to the antibiotic-resistance crisis, the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics has attempted to ensure that action is also taken by the private sector.

We have previously reported on the antibiotic policies of the UK's leading supermarkets. Our series of reports found some significant differences between the policies of different supermarkets, but by 2021 all supermarkets had a ban on most or all of the UK own-brand suppliers from using antibiotics for routine disease prevention¹⁴.

Much more work needs to be done by supermarkets, since their policies frequently don't apply to the imported, branded or processed food they sell. But it is clear that the action that supermarkets have taken has contributed to UK reductions in farm antibiotic use¹⁵.

This report takes a similar approach to our work on supermarkets, except this time the focus is put on catering companies. Unlike supermarkets customers, those who eat the food produced by catering companies, be they hospital patients, school children, people at work or those attending events, frequently have limited or no choice when it comes to their meals. The origin of the ingredients used, and how they were produced, is also often unclear.

For this reason, catering companies may be less aware of, or responsive to, the needs and wishes of those who ultimately eat their food. This is why it is particularly important to highlight and challenge their current practices.

It is also essential that organisations like hospitals and schools look closely at the production standards of the food they serve to patients and young people. It cannot be acceptable, for example, that hospitals focus on minimising their own antibiotic use, while at the same time facing the possibility that superbugs may be introduced to hospitals in food.

Unfortunately, the findings of this report show that most catering companies are not taking the issue of antibiotic resistance seriously and are failing to ensure that antibiotics are not misused in their supply chain. This means that food served in many hospitals or schools may still be produced with irresponsible antibiotic use, resulting in a higher risk of antibiotic

resistance being transferred to the consumer of the food.

Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services are also failing in this respect. Proposed changes to the public-sector food and catering policy, which were published for consultation last year, make no mention of any need for controls on antibiotic use.

Yet, sourcing food produced without routine farm antibiotic use is already achievable. Various assurance schemes, like organic, RSPCA Assured or Pasture for Life, avoid routine antibiotic use. Furthermore, animals raised outdoors or according to the standards of the Better Chicken Commitment are likely to result in lower antibiotic use. Routine antibiotic use is now prohibited in the European Union, and UK supermarkets are showing that it is possible to source significant amounts of British meat, dairy and eggs that have not been produced with routine preventative antibiotic use.

Companies can also engage with, or join, the Food Industry Initiative on Antimicrobials, which aims to develop common antibiotic policies for the food industry and focuses on collaborative working and the coordination of relevant initiatives. Currently, none of the companies that we assessed are members.

Catering companies have a duty to take action against the misuse of antibiotics, as supermarkets, farmers and others are beginning to do. It is hoped that shining the spotlight on these companies will create immediate and much needed action.



Pic: Pexels

WHY THE CATERING INDUSTRY HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

Contract catering is big business. In the UK, the contract-catering market experienced steady growth prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic led to closures, restrictions, and reduced demand for catering services. According to a Mintel 2022 report, the UK contract catering market value is £4.4 billion. This was reported as being 25% lower than its pre-pandemic size.⁷

We have found that the contract-catering industry is lagging behind the supermarkets with regards to antibiotics-use policies. Catering contractors are rarely public-facing businesses. Their relationship to the place where food

is being served is normally obscured through layers of subcontracting, multiple brands and the food often being served unbranded. This means that the companies remain largely out of public view and thus cushioned from public scrutiny of their menus and ingredient sourcing.

AREAS COVERED BY THE INDUSTRY

The catering industry serves meals to public sectors and private sectors. For example:

PUBLIC SECTOR

- Hospitals and hospices (for patients, staff and visitors).
- Meals on wheels, care homes, retirement villages.
- Schools, universities and colleges.
- Government sites, for example Ministry of Defence sites.
- Local authorities.
- Prisons.

PRIVATE SECTOR

- Workplace cafés, restaurants and vending machines.
- Corporate fine dining and hospitality.
- Event catering.
- Sport venues and stadiums.
- Rail, in-flight and airports.

HEALTHCARE, CARE HOMES AND EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

In 2021, the UK Government reported that “the public sector in England spends over £2 billion on food and catering services annually”¹⁶.

This money is spent on providing meals in schools, hospitals, prisons, and many other public bodies. It also pays for catering companies to operate cafés, coffee shops and restaurants for staff and visitors at public sector organisations.

In the public sector a caterer may win a service contract for an entire hospital or prison for several years before having to reapply to a competitive tender process. During this time, they have almost a monopoly on providing meals and snacks to cater to the staff and visitor footfall in that institution.

In 2011, the UK Government introduced buying standards for food and catering

services. The aim was to ensure that public food procurement is underpinned by evidence-based dietary recommendations, so that the public sector can lead by example ensuring a healthy food environment for those who live and work in it. Unfortunately, these buying standards make no mention of the need to minimise antibiotic use in the food chain. In June to September 2022, Defra consulted on proposed changes to public sector food and catering policy, which aimed to promote local, sustainable, healthier food and catering. Again, these standards made no mention of the need to avoid routine antibiotic use in food production.¹⁵

An independent review of the NHS in 2020 stated that “In 2018 to 2019, the NHS spent £634 million on hospital food, representing approximately 6.7% of the total costs of running the NHS estate or 0.6% of the total £114 billion 2018 to 2019 NHS budget. It is the second biggest provider of meals in the UK public sector, serving 141 million inpatient meals last year alone, to about 125,000 patients a day. This compares to 602 million school lunches and 93 million prison meals.”¹⁶

The report also says “With a median spend of £4.56 per patient meal (including labour costs and overheads), exceeding the budget of meals offered by other UK public services, the NHS should be demonstrating best practice in safely delivering nutritious, quality food to patients, and ensuring the least possible impact on our environment with best possible outcomes.”¹⁶

Hospitals, other healthcare and educational establishments are particularly significant in addressing the issue of antibiotic misuse. In the case of healthcare, medical teams are dealing with the challenges posed by antibiotic resistance every day. In 2016 The Imperial College reported that a “Superbug outbreak costs an NHS hospital one million pounds”¹⁷.

The 2018 House of Commons Health and Social Care Select Committee Report on antimicrobial resistance stated that “mortality rates and costs of treatment are likely to be approximately double for a drug-resistant infection, generating an estimated cost to the NHS of £180 million per year”.⁸

Over 600 million meals are served each year in schools to children⁸ who risk suffering most from the “end of medicine”

and “antibiotic apocalypse” that experts have been warning us of¹⁸.

Procedures that incorporate antibiotic use and are seen today as relatively straightforward, will become increasingly fraught with risk for our children.

All ten of the companies we assessed mention supplying hospitals, healthcare establishments, care homes or educational establishments. Nine of the organisations mention supplying both.

Some websites are clearer than others as to whether this relates to the UK and/or other countries.

OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR AREAS OF WORK

The policies of these organisations also impact food served at government sites, for example Ministry of Defence sites serving military personnel, Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), local authorities and prisons.

In the private sector their contracts include workplace cafés, restaurants and vending machines, corporate fine dining and hospitality, event catering, sport venues stadiums, and airports.

Nine of the companies assessed mention workplaces, events events and/or working with high-street outlets.

The companies surveyed highlight supplying venues like Olympia London, QEII centre, the O2 arena, London Zoo, Edinburgh Castle, the Royal Opera House, the Royal Botanic Gardens (Kew Gardens), National Theatre and the Science Museum.

They cater for sports events at Twickenham, Wimbledon and racecourses like Ascot and work with high-street brands like Costa, Subway and M&S.

Many of the organisations surveyed supply workplaces via company restaurants, coffee bars, vending machines and takeaways. They supply food for company meetings and events and provide corporate hospitality.

The reach of these corporate organisations is large and significant. The vast majority of the public will have eaten food supplied by these companies on many occasions. Consumers have a right to expect that these companies are looking at sustainability, safety and the long-term impacts of their food.

It is important that scrutiny and pressure are applied to contract caterers- they have a responsibility to play their part in creating a safer future for us all.



Pic: Adrian Lange/Unsplash

WHY ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE IS SO IMPORTANT

Antimicrobials – antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals and antiparasitics – are medicines used to prevent and treat infections in humans, animals and plants. Antibiotics are medicines used to prevent and treat bacterial infections.

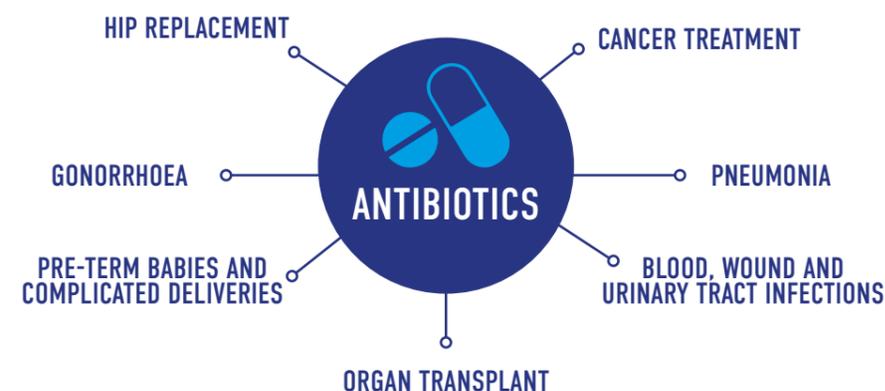
Antibiotics are used as part of surgical interventions, cancer treatment, in early and complicated births and to treat bacterial infections.

Government statistics have shown that in England somewhere in the region of 1 in 3 people in hospital will be on antibiotics at any one time and that 1 in 3 of us will take at least one course of antibiotics in a year.¹⁹



1 IN 3 OF US WILL TAKE AT LEAST ONE COURSE OF ANTIBIOTICS IN A YEAR

AREAS IN HUMAN MEDICINE WHERE ANTIBIOTICS PLAY A KEY ROLE.



When antibiotics are overused, in human or veterinary medicine, bacteria can evolve resistance, and are no longer killed by the antibiotic. This makes treating previously simple infections increasingly difficult, particularly since no new classes of antibiotics have been discovered since the 1980s²⁰.

The World Health Organization describes antibiotic resistance as “one of the biggest threats to global health, food security, and development today”³ and has said it “threatens to unwind a century of medical progress”²¹.

WHO also says that: “Antibiotic resistance leads to higher medical costs, prolonged hospital stays, and increased mortality. When infections can no longer be treated by first-line antibiotics, more expensive medicines must be used. A longer duration of illness and treatment, often in hospitals, increases health care costs as well as the economic burden on families and societies. Antibiotic resistance is putting the achievements of modern medicine at risk. Organ transplantations, chemotherapy and surgeries such as caesarean sections become much more

dangerous without effective antibiotics for the prevention and treatment of infections.”³

In January 2022 the Lancet reported that globally there were 1.27 million deaths directly attributable to bacterial antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and 4.95 million deaths associated with bacterial AMR in 2019.¹ This is more than the deaths caused by HIV or malaria. Furthermore, a review commissioned by the UK government has projected that if nothing changes antibiotic resistance will claim ten million lives globally per year by 2050. That is more than the current number of deaths caused by cancer and equates to one death per three seconds.¹⁰

The impact can be seen clearly by drawing on just one piece of relevant medical research – a study by British researchers on hip replacement surgery with and without the use of preventative antibiotics. With preventative antibiotics infection rates were a maximum of 2% and nearly all infected patients recover after treatment, without antibiotics, the infection rates were estimated to be 40-50% with 30% of infected patients dying.²²

HOW FARM ANTIBIOTIC USE IS LINKED WITH ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE IN HUMAN INFECTIONS

The link between farm antibiotic use and antibiotic resistance in human medicine has often been a controversial topic, with various vested interests having often denied that such a link exists.

However, while it is true that most resistance in human infections is linked with antibiotic use in human medicine, it has long been clear that farm antibiotic use does also contribute to the resistance problem in human medicine.

The World Health Organization says that “Antibiotic resistance occurs naturally, but misuse of antibiotics in humans and animals is accelerating the process.”³

THE HISTORY OF ANTIBIOTIC USE ON FARMS

It is 95 years since microbiologist Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin in 1928. By the 1940s penicillin “the wonder drug” was being mass produced. Yet as early as 1945, Fleming himself was giving stark warnings about the threat of antibiotic resistance²³.

Despite this warning, in the 1950s it became common practice to give low dose antibiotics to farmed animals to accelerate their growth.

In the UK, antibiotic growth promoters were licensed for pigs and poultry in 1953, and by the late 1950s scientists were finding evidence that antibiotic-resistant salmonella were spreading from farm animals to humans. It took until 2006 for antibiotic growth promotion to be fully banned in the EU, and the practice continues in about 40 countries around the world.

Although many countries have now banned this practice, it is estimated that globally 66%⁵ of antibiotic use today is in farmed animals, much of it for routine disease prevention in groups of healthy animals using the same antibiotics and doses as used previously for growth promotion.

“The thoughtless person playing with penicillin treatment is morally responsible for the death of the man who succumbs to infection with the penicillin-resistant organism.

I hope this evil can be averted.”

SIR ALEXANDER FLEMING 1945



Pic: Creative Commons



Pic: CDC/Unsplash

A review commissioned by the UK Government, the O'Neill Review, found that the overwhelming majority of published scientific papers provide evidence that, or state that, farm antibiotic use contributes to resistance in human infections.¹⁰

Resistant bacteria can pass from farmed animals to humans via close contact, in the food chain when raw meat is handled or undercooked meat is eaten, or via vegetables and in water when manure is spread on the land and leaches into waterways.

Examples of this occurring are Salmonella and Campylobacter, where most of the resistance in human infections comes from the farm use of antibiotics.²⁴ In particular, the misuse in poultry of fluoroquinolone antibiotics, which are classified by WHO as Highest-priority critically important antibiotics in human medicine, has led to high levels of fluoroquinolone resistance in human Campylobacter infections.^{25,26,27}

Other examples include the emergence of livestock-associated strains of the superbugs MRSA (methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus) and Clostridium difficile, which have spread from farm animals to humans and caused infections, including deaths^{28,29,30,31,32}.

Another serious problem associated with farm antibiotic use has been the emergence of resistance to the antibiotic colistin. Colistin is now used in human medicine as a last resort for treating life-threatening infections, but it has been used for mass medication in farming. In 2015, resistance to colistin was first found in China, in pigs and chickens, in retail meat and in human E. coli and Klebsiella infections.³³ Since colistin was being used as a growth promoter in China in livestock and was not licensed for use in humans in China at the time, it is clear that the resistance developed because of the farm use of the antibiotic.

REDUCTIONS IN UK FARM ANTIBIOTIC USE

In the UK, farm antibiotic use has been cut by about 55% between 2014 and 2021.⁶ Several factors have contributed to this fall, including voluntary action taken by farmers and farming organisations, improved industry data collection, the setting of reduction targets, the expectation of tighter regulation and the introduction of new supermarket policies. In May 2016 the 'Review Of Antimicrobial Resistance'¹⁰ chaired by Lord Jim O'Neill was published and had a significant influence on the UK Government approach to AMR as a One Health issue.

Despite the welcome reductions, overall use remains far too high. Approximately 75% of UK farm antibiotics are administered in animal feed or drinking water and are for group treatments.⁶ This indicates that antibiotic use is still not targeted enough and is instead being used to prevent or control infections caused by stressful and unhygienic conditions in which many intensively farmed animals are kept. While some countries in Europe have an even higher percentage of farm antibiotic use that is used for group treatments, other countries, such as Iceland, Norway and Sweden use most of their antibiotics for individual treatments,³⁴ indicating that far greater reductions are still achievable in the UK.

Some use of antibiotics on farms is a necessity for animal welfare but this use should be measured and responsible. Antibiotics should not be used to compensate for poor husbandry for example, and it is important that everyone involved in the production of animal-based products plays a part in reducing antibiotic use, whether the legislation demands it or not.

PROPOSALS FOR LEGISLATIVE CHANGE IN THE UK AND THE POTENTIAL IMPACT

Voluntary action is unlikely to be sufficient to achieve the goal of responsible and targeted antibiotic use in farming, and improved legislation is also needed. Far too much antibiotic use is currently aimed at whole herds or flocks, and this needs to be drastically reduced.

In 2018 the House of Commons Health and Social Care Select Committee Report on Antimicrobial resistance stated that: "Antibiotic use in farming is an important contributor to AMR and DEFRA must ensure that progress in reducing the use of antibiotics in animals is embedded and, in some areas, extended, including keeping targets under close review. Serious concerns remain about the prophylactic or metaphylactic use of antibiotics in animals, and the use of antibiotics of last resort that may as a result lose their effectiveness for humans more quickly. Strict controls on these practices are essential and attention must be paid to this following the UK's departure from the EU."⁸

Whilst in the European Union important new rules came into force on 28 January,¹³ which ban all forms of routine use, ban preventative group treatments and restrict metaphylactic use, the UK Government has been slow to act.

Nevertheless, in February 2023, the government published proposals for new legislation, and a consultation was undertaken.¹² The Government's proposals include some, but not all, of the new EU restrictions on farm antibiotic

use. In particular, the UK's new rules, if implemented, would include a ban on routine farm antibiotic use, a restriction on preventative (prophylactic) use to exceptional circumstances where there is a high risk of disease, and a prohibition on using antibiotics to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry and a lack of care.

These new restrictions would be a welcome improvement on the current rules, which allow antibiotics to be used routinely. But they do not go as far as the EU's new legislation.

Unfortunately, the UK proposals do not include a ban on using antibiotics for group prevention nor any specific restrictions on metaphylactic use. Furthermore, while EU member states are required to begin collecting antibiotic-usage data by animal species in 2023, the UK government is proposing to rely instead on voluntary industry efforts to collect this data.

Depending on the Government's response to the consultation, it is still possible that the British legislation will include some of these missing rules already implemented in the EU. Table 1 sets out the similarities and differences between the EU legislation and the proposed UK legislation.

TABLE 1

EU legislation compared with proposed UK legislation

EU LEGISLATION JANUARY 2022	UK PROPOSALS 2023
No routine use	Similar
No use "to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate husbandry or lack of care to compensate for poor farm management"	Similar
Prophylactic use only in exceptional circumstances where there is a high risk of disease	Similar
Prohibits antibiotic use for prophylaxis of groups	Restricted, needs a review if done. No outright ban
Restricts metaphylaxis	No specific restrictions proposed – the general ban on routine use means that routine metaphylactic treatments won't be permitted
From 2023, requirement to collect antibiotic use by species for pigs, poultry and cattle, with data collection for other species, including sheep, beginning in 2026	No statutory data collection is proposed. The proposals would allow the Secretary of State to require vets, manufacturers, marketing authorisation holders or wholesale dealers to provide sales/usage data, if the voluntary model fails to deliver
Importation of animal foods produced with antibiotic growth promoters will be banned in 2025/2026 via secondary legislation	Not mentioned

Regardless of what legislative changes the UK introduces it is important that the catering companies address their own policies.

As Jim O'Neill said in his review recommendations "Food producers and retailers to take steps should improve transparency for consumers regarding the use of antibiotics in the meat that we eat, to enable better informed decision-making by customers. As part of this we call on major producers, retailers and regulators to agree standards for 'responsible use', to be used as the basis for an internationally recognised label, or used by existing certification bodies".³⁵

Pics: Compassion in World Farming, Bureau of Investigative Journalism, Soil Association

FARM SYSTEM

The introduction of antibiotics to farming has enabled widespread intensification of livestock production to occur. Animals are kept in far greater numbers, usually indoors in cramped and sometimes unhygienic conditions. Animal breeds are frequently selected for productivity, rather than for disease resilience.

In the UK alone, over a billion chickens and 25 million pigs, sheep or cattle are reared each year.^{36 37} About 90% of chickens are raised on intensive farms, with pigs being the next most intensively farmed species.³⁸ The disease risks and reliance on medication are clear to see.

For example:

- The average **meat chicken** (broiler) has less space than an A4 sheet of paper and up to 50,000 chickens can be kept in a single shed. Broilers are bred to grow quickly and are slaughtered at just five weeks old. In the 1950s, it took four months to get to the same weight.



These conditions can lead to high levels of medication, including the use of medically important antibiotics, as well as very high levels of use of non-medically important ionophore antibiotics.

- **Piglets** are weaned very early, so the sow can produce more litters, and often develop diarrhoea as a result. Medication such as antibiotics or zinc oxide are used to control the diarrhoea. Piglets often have their tails docked to reduce tail biting caused by the stressful conditions.
- **Dairy cows** now produce three times as much milk as they did in the pre-antibiotic era - causing more mastitis, and their abnormally large udders mean they struggle to stand straight, causing foot problems. These problems are often treated with antibiotics.

Less intensive farming systems, with higher welfare and husbandry standards, usually require far fewer antibiotics.

Data shows that organic livestock farms certified by the Soil Association have on average four times lower antibiotic use than the average levels previously found in national monitoring of all UK livestock farming.³⁹ Other studies have found that, compared with standard intensive systems, antibiotic use is lower for pigs raised in free-range systems, for cattle raised on pasture, or for slower-growing breeds of chickens raised indoors.^{40 41}

Catering companies aiming to minimise antibiotic use in their supply chain should try, where possible, to obtain their meat, dairy and eggs from farming systems which have higher minimum animal-welfare standards, and which have restrictions on routine antibiotic use. Such systems could include organic, free range, pasture-fed or higher-welfare indoor production, such as RSPCA Assured. See Appendix 3 for details about assurance schemes.

CONSUMER VIEWS AND SHAREHOLDER PRIORITIES

CONSUMER VIEWS

There is growing consumer awareness on the overuse of antibiotics in food animals. The Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics' work on supermarket antibiotic policies has shown that consumers and the British media really care about responsible antibiotics use in food supply chains, with 74% of respondents to a survey believing that supermarkets should publish antibiotic use data.¹⁴

We have published three evaluations of supermarket antibiotic policies between 2017 and 2021, and these have achieved widespread media coverage. These evaluations have shown that significant progress has already been achieved in this sector. Our 2021 supermarket research found that all ten of the UK's leading supermarkets included a ban on most, or all, of their UK own-brand suppliers from using antibiotics for routine disease prevention in their antibiotic policy.¹⁴ In 2019, only six supermarkets had such a ban. The Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics will continue to campaign for further changes to supermarket policies, while turning our attention to also look at the antibiotic policies of contract caterers.

SHAREHOLDERS

The FAIRR Initiative helps investors integrate risks and opportunities into their investment decision-making.⁴² One of their key areas of focus for 2022/2023 is the overuse and misuse of antimicrobials in the food sector. According to FAIRR, the problem of antibiotic resistance is at a critical point. The estimated cost in terms of lost global production could reach \$100 trillion by 2050 if action is not taken. This matters to investors.

As a result, shareholders are pushing companies throughout the animal-based product supply chain to put in place policies to limit the use of antibiotics and thus lessen their exposure to regulatory and reputational risks and help to reduce the growing risk of antibiotic resistance.

This is already having an impact. When FAIRR began engaging with 20 of the largest restaurant companies such as McDonald's and Yum! brands in 2016, only one company had a policy on antibiotic use. By 2019 - because of the ongoing work from FAIRR, Business Benchmark on Farm Animal Welfare (BBFAW)⁴³, and other engagement initiatives - 19 companies had antibiotic use policies and one was in the process of developing a policy (this is for at least one species and geographical area).



METHODOLOGY

CONTACT / SUPPORT

We assessed: apetito (apetito Limited), Aramark (Aramark Ltd), CH&CO (CH&CO Group), Compass Group (UK & Ireland), Elior (UK), ISS, Newrest (Group), OCS (OCS Group UK Limited), Sodexo (Sodexo United Kingdom) and WSH (WSH Investments Ltd). We searched for antibiotic policies relating to the UK. Some of the policies that we found were on local websites, others on global websites. Further details about these companies and their areas of work are shown in Appendix 1.

We first contacted the catering companies in 2022. We gave warning of our intentions to produce a report based on desktop research of their websites. We offered the opportunity to attend a free webinar and receive free individual support to help them improve their policies.

Once we passed the deadline for support that we had provided, we began to research the websites of the companies. In April 2023 we sent a final email to the companies we have researched in this report, highlighting the questions and websites we would be exploring. We explained that we were now completing our desktop research, and that we would be happy to include any updates on their company policies up and until May 19th, 2023, but that it was the responsibility of the company to alert us to subsequent updates.

HOW WE CONDUCTED THE RESEARCH

We visited websites and used the Google search function looking for reference to either antibiotic or antimicrobial using the following format: Antibiotic site:companyURL and Antimicrobial site: companyURL

AREAS WE RESEARCHED AND WHY THESE QUESTIONS ARE SIGNIFICANT

The following table shows the questions we used for making our assessments and their significance. We also gave the criteria a basic, intermediate or advanced status. The basic level criteria are those areas we believe all catering companies should have as a minimum, with advanced levels being the ultimate position we would like to see.

ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

QUESTION	BASIC INTERMEDIATE OR ADVANCED	SIGNIFICANCE
Does the company have a publicly available policy on farm antibiotic use on its website?	Basic	If a company is committed to reducing antibiotic use in its supply chain, we would expect them to make this commitment publicly.
Does the policy ban the routine preventative use of antibiotics in the company's supply chain?	Basic	With proper husbandry and appropriate use, antibiotics should not be needed to prevent illness on a routine basis. Antibiotics should primarily be used for treating individual sick animals, are not routinely used for prevention like vaccines.
Does the company collect data on antibiotic use in your supply chain?	Basic	If antibiotic use is to be reduced, then it is essential that there is good data available to monitor progress and set targets.
Does the policy include an antibiotic-use reduction strategy?	Basic	It is important that there is a clear intention to reduce use by eliminating that which is unnecessary. Such a policy should include a focus on good animal husbandry and welfare aimed at reducing disease incidence and the need for antibiotics.
Does the policy include antibiotic-use reduction targets?	Advanced	It is important to have a clear set of targets to provide a measurable focus to help reduce antibiotic use. These should be at least as ambitious as targets set by the industry group RUMA ⁴⁴
Is the policy clear about the coverage?	Basic	
Does the policy cover: all UK-produced freshly cooked/ prepared meat, fish, dairy, and eggs served?	Basic	i.e., does it cover fresh, frozen, pre-packaged, ingredients, UK produced, imported produce, all species? We have seen many examples of unclear wording. We are looking for clear and specific information as to the coverage.
all UK-produced food, including frozen, pre-packaged and branded items?	Intermediate	
all food sold/served in outlets, including all imported produce?	Advanced	
Does the policy restrict the use of the 'highest-priority critically important antibiotics' * across the supply chain?	Intermediate	These antibiotics should be restricted so they can only be used where sensitivity testing shows that other treatments would not be effective. Fluoroquinolones and modern cephalosporins are classified as HPClAs. Highest-priority critically important antibiotics should never be used for prevention or for group treatments. *See glossary for how the World Health Organization (WHO) defines HPClAs
Does the policy completely ban the use of the antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?	Intermediate	Colistin is a HPClA and is used as a last-resort antibiotic in human medicine It is used for multidrug-resistant infections including pneumonia.
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?	Intermediate	Regular data publication shows an ongoing commitment to monitor use and be transparent.
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data by farming system?	Advanced	Obtaining good data by farming system provides important information on the link between husbandry, animal health and antibiotic use.

OVERALL RESULTS

Red indicates an area that is lacking, green a positive and amber where there is some information or a future commitment

										
	APETITO	ARAMARK	CH&CO	COMPASS	ELIOR	ISS	NEWREST	OCS	SODEXO	WSH
1. Policy publicly available	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
2. Bans routine prevention	✗	—	—	—	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
3. Collects usage data	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
4. Reduction strategy in place	✗	✓	✓	—	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
5. Reduction targets are set	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
6. Clear about coverage	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
6a. Includes all UK-fresh produce	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
6b. Includes all UK-produce	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
6c. Includes all produce	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
7. Restricts HPClAs	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
8. Bans colistin	✗	✗	—	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
9. Publishes usage data	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
10. Collects usage by farm system	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗



Pic: Adobe Stock

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

Despite us sending multiple emails, providing a free toolkit of information and offering free webinars and support, only two of the catering companies we approached chose to engage with us to any meaningful extent. These companies were Compass and CH&CO. Both CH&CO and Compass attended our webinar and asked follow-up questions. Additionally conference calls were also carried out with both CH&CO and Compass.

All companies were provided with the opportunity to send us links and discuss our assessments although it was frequently difficult to identify the right person to contact.

Some of the other organisations replied with brief emails – giving the name of the person we needed to contact for example - but there was no further engagement or discussion around their specific antibiotic policies. This lack of engagement could be seen as being symptomatic of a worrying apathy in the industry.

INDIVIDUAL COMPANY ASSESSMENTS

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

- NHS hospital meals.⁴⁵
- UK Meals on wheels⁴⁶.
- UK Care home meals⁴⁷.
- UK Nursery⁴⁸ and independent school⁴⁹ meals.
- According to a 2022 article, "ISS UK has chosen apetito as its main provider of delivered-in meals across its healthcare business, which serves about 8.5 million meals a year. The healthcare business is the largest of ISS's business-to-business divisions. Over the next five years, the contract, which began on 1 October, will enable both partners to continue to meet the needs of NHS patients while developing systems and processes to reduce waste, labour and costs."⁵⁰
- apetito accounts for 2021 filed with Companies House show a profit of £26 million and report that "apetito Limited ("apetito") is proud to serve some of the most vulnerable people in society. We supply into both the Health and Social Care sector and Educational Sector through our Wiltshire Farm Foods national network. apetito is organised into six profitable Business Units (Wiltshire Farm Foods, Healthcare, Care home meals, Meals on Wheels, Nursery, Independent Schools, Education and Food Service". The accounts also describe apetito as "the UK's leading food producer for the Health and Social Care sector".⁵¹

OUR ASSESSMENT

Does the company have a publicly available policy on farm antibiotic use on its website?	✘
Does the policy ban the routine preventative use of antibiotics in the company's supply chain?	✘
Does the company collect data on antibiotic use in your supply chain?	✘
Does the policy include an antibiotic-use reduction strategy?	✘
Does the policy include antibiotic-use reduction targets?	✘
Is the policy clear about the coverage?	✘
Does the policy cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all UK-produced freshly cooked/prepared meat, fish, dairy, and eggs served? 	✘
all UK-produced food, including frozen, pre-packaged and branded items?	✘
all food sold/served in outlets, including all imported produce?	✘
Does the policy restrict the use of the highest-priority critically important antibiotics across the supply chain?	✘
Does the policy completely ban the use of the antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?	✘
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?	✘
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data by farming system?	✘

OVERALL COMMENT

It was disappointing to find nothing on their websites relating to antibiotic resistance.

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

None.

KEY POSITIVES

None.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

We urge apetito to engage with us in the future and, more importantly, produce an antibiotic policy.

WEBSITES EXAMINED

<https://www.apetito.co.uk>
<https://wiltshirefarmfoods.com>

ASSESSMENT / EVIDENCE

- Last assessment on 11/08/2023 no policy found.
- There was no mention of antibiotic or antimicrobial on the websites.
- The website does say that "100% of the beef (excluding corned beef) we use in our kitchens at Trowbridge is sourced from Farm Assured British and Irish farms". It is not clear which assurance scheme they are referring to but, in any case, this report focuses on antibiotic use policies that are specifically expressed.
- The website also states that "All the fish we use in our Wiltshire kitchen is sustainable, as specified by the Marine Conservation Society, also, 100% of the wild fish we source comes from Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified fisheries". Neither of these organisations require specific antibiotic use policies (see Appendix 3).
- We also found an apetito "Guide to managing food risks to protect pupils & reputation" online booklet – but this does not mention antibiotics.⁵²

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

- Healthcare.⁵³
- Educational locations, including schools, colleges and campuses (for example UK University sites).^{54, 55}
- Business and industry.⁵⁶
- According to their website “Aramark is a leading service and solutions provider within the Northern Europe region. We proudly support clients, partners and customers in food, facilities management, property services, and retail solutions. Our work strives to contribute to a better world for both people and the planet, including commitments to engage our employees; empower healthy consumers; build local communities; source ethically, inclusively and responsibly; operate efficiently and reduce waste. Aramark employs over 16,000 people throughout Northern Europe.”
- Aramark accounts say that their principal activity is “the management and provision of a range of food, vending and refreshment services for clients operating in the following sectors of the UK economy – Business and Industry, Education
- Campuses (including UK universities), colleges and schools, Healthcare, Defence, Judicial and Offshore Oil exploration”.⁵⁷
- Aramark delivered 46,000 meals as part of the King Charles III coronation. Aramark’s Side by Side teams prepared and delivered 30,000 meals to military personnel. They also provided 16,000 enhanced packed meals for military personnel as they began rehearsals for the Coronation from 2nd May.⁵⁸

OUR ASSESSMENT

Does the company have a publicly available policy on farm antibiotic use on its website?	✓
Does the policy ban the routine preventative use of antibiotics in the company’s supply chain?	–
Does the company collect data on antibiotic use in your supply chain?	✗
Does the policy include an antibiotic-use reduction strategy?	✓
Does the policy include antibiotic-use reduction targets?	✗
Is the policy clear about the coverage?	✓
Does the policy cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all UK-produced freshly cooked/prepared meat, fish, dairy, and eggs served? 	✗
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all UK-produced food, including frozen, pre-packaged and branded items? 	✗
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all food sold/served in outlets, including all imported produce? 	✗
Does the policy restrict the use of the highest-priority critically important antibiotics across the supply chain?	✗
Does the policy completely ban the use of the antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?	✗
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?	✗
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data by farming system?	✗

OVERALL COMMENT

Aramark has a published policy which explicitly states that antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest global threats to human health, food security and development. Unfortunately, the wording used in the policy (like “recognises”, “commits to”, “believes”) provides little evidence that Aramark has already taken significant actions. We explained in our correspondence with the company that clearer wording was needed, and that if changes were not made that it would impact on their assessment, but the company did not engage with us.

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

No replies to our emails other than an automated response promising contact.

KEY POSITIVES

Aramark has a published policy which mentions many key areas for action, such as ending routine preventative use and the development of systems to collect data on antibiotic use and antibiotic resistance. Some of the wider company policies, such as increasing their offerings of vegan, vegetarian, plant-based and plant-forward menu options, should reduce antibiotic use and it would be good to see the inter relationship of commitments translated into specific antibiotic-use policies.

The Responsible Progress Priorities report shows some key achievements in the US and it would be good to see similar positives both reported in the Northern European division, and formed into specific policy asks.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The policy talks about what the company believes, recognises and commits to rather than what it is doing. The areas mentioned need to be firm and obvious policies.

The policy talks about ensuring “that antibiotics are only used for the treatment of sick animals or control of an identified disease outbreak as deemed by veterinarians to ensure their appropriate and judicious use.” This is a legal requirement and thus is not anything of additional value to the policy. The policy should furthermore include action to restrict the use of the highest-priority critically important antibiotics, ban the use of colistin, and focus on collecting and publishing antibiotic-use data.

WEBSITES EXAMINED

<https://northerneurope.aramark.com/>
<https://www.aramark.com/>

RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS EXAMINED:

Aramark Sustainable Sourcing Policy.⁵⁹
 Responsible Progress Priorities report October 2021.⁶⁰

ASSESSMENT / EVIDENCE

Last assessment of policy on 11/08/2023.

Page 5 of the Sustainable Sourcing Policy says

- “At Aramark, we believe protecting the efficacy of antibiotics and preventing the development of antibiotic resistant bacteria is imperative to the wellbeing of our global community. We recognize that antibiotics, used responsibly, along with good animal-care practices, help improve food safety, animal health and welfare and sustainability. Aramark accepts the One Health approach which recognizes the importance of considering the relationship between human, animal and environmental health. This approach is defined by a commitment to collaboration across sectors which reaffirms our commitment to engage diverse stakeholders including suppliers, industry, non-governmental organizations and global quasigovernmental organizations.” These are good statements but do not make it clear what actions are being taken.
- “We are committed to phasing out the routine use of antibiotics for use as growth promoters or disease prevention across poultry, beef, pork and seafood categories in our supply chain.” This is a good commitment however, the policy is not clear about whether any action has been taken so we have assessed this as an amber.

- “We seek to ensure that antibiotics are only used for the treatment of sick animals or control of an identified disease outbreak as deemed by veterinarians to ensure their appropriate and judicious use.” Veterinary involvement is a legal requirement not a differentiating policy.
- “We encourage the development of surveillance systems for the usage of antibiotics to monitor trends in resistance and effectiveness of prescribed antibiotics in livestock production.” It is positive that the company is encouraging such surveillance, but the collection of antibiotic-use data does not appear to be a requirement yet.

The following statements indicate that Aramark does have an antibiotic reduction strategy:

- “We are on a journey of continuous improvement and are prioritizing the reduction of antibiotics that are medically important to human health.”
- “We review our poultry purchases annually to ensure we’re making progress against our goal of protecting the efficacy of medically important antibiotics.”
- “We also recognize the inherent challenges in reducing or phasing out the use of antibiotics across beef, pork and seafood categories and remain committed to working with our suppliers to understand, evaluate, and prioritize how to drive continued improvement across these categories while caring for the health of both animals and humans”.
- “We will continue to prioritize working with suppliers that demonstrate responsible and judicious use of antibiotics and overall reduction.”

Other points of interest regarding Aramark sourcing:

- The Responsible Progress Priorities report says: “The following demonstrates our contracted sourcing progress in the U.S.:
 - Our primary broiler chicken supplier continues to reduce the use of antibiotics important to human medicine and in 2019 reported less than 1% of broilers raised were treated with shared class antibiotics.
 - During the 2019-2020 school year, nearly 100% of our contracted chicken products supplied across our K-12 business were raised with No Antibiotics Ever (NAE), increased from 24% in 2017.
 - 100% of our contracted turkey products do not use antibiotics critically important to human health”.
- According to their sustainability report, “100% of our milk in the UK is Red Tractor”.⁶¹ Although Red Tractor certification is used, this report focuses on specific policies.
- Marine Conservation Society and Marine Stewardship Council are mentioned in the same report. Neither of these organisations require specific antibiotic use policies (see Appendix 3).
- Founding member of Global Coalition for Animal Welfare but this does not require specific antibiotic use policies (see Appendix 3).

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

- Pupil and staff feeding at: state and independent schools, university cafés and restaurants.⁶²
- Hospital staff and visitor restaurants.⁶⁶
- Hospices.⁶²
- Event catering.⁶²
- Workplace cafés and restaurants.⁶²
- Corporate fine dining and hospitality.⁶²
- Visitor attraction catering.⁶²
- Livery hall catering.⁶²
- The CH&CO website says “Our expertise and enthusiasm span the hospitality sector and our talented teams operate across the UK and Ireland in workplaces, schools, venues, visitor attractions, healthcare, stadia and events.”⁶³
- Brands:
 - Company of Cooks
 - Concert Group Ltd
 - Create, Eve
 - Gather and Gather
 - Vacherin

OUR ASSESSMENT

Does the company have a publicly available policy on farm antibiotic use on its website?	✓
Does the policy ban the routine preventative use of antibiotics in the company’s supply chain?	–
Does the company collect data on antibiotic use in your supply chain?	✗
Does the policy include an antibiotic-use reduction strategy?	✓
Does the policy include antibiotic-use reduction targets?	✗
Is the policy clear about the coverage?	✓
Does the policy cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all UK-produced freshly cooked/prepared meat, fish, dairy, and eggs served? 	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all UK-produced food, including frozen, pre-packaged and branded items? 	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all food sold/served in outlets, including all imported produce? 	✓
Does the policy restrict the use of the highest-priority critically important antibiotics across the supply chain?	✗
Does the policy completely ban the use of the antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?	–
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?	✗
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data by farming system?	✗

OVERALL COMMENT

CH&CO is the only company which has stated that its antibiotic commitments will apply to all meat, fish, dairy and eggs served in their restaurants. The policy sets some clear 2024 targets for ending routine preventative antibiotic use, monitoring antibiotic use and ending the use of colistin in their supply chain. However, at present, none of these policies are applied to CH&CO’s supply chain.

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

Staff attended an Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics webinar, asked for advice, clarification and input. CH&CO also organised a webinar and invited us to speak at it.

KEY POSITIVES

A clear policy and easy to find.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Some of the considerations are targets that show a clear commitment and we hope to see these- and a wider range of key areas - in place when we repeat the assessment in the future.

WEBSITES EXAMINED

<https://www.chandcogroup.com/>
Brand websites were not examined in detail as the policy the company pointed us to was on the group website.

RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS EXAMINED:

CH&CO Procurement & Supply Chain Policy.⁶⁴

ASSESSMENT / EVIDENCE

Last assessment of policy on 11/08/2023. This is the relevant excerpt from their policy section 4.8.2

- “CH&CO only permit the use of healthy, quality livestock grown to the high welfare and quality standards that our customers expect”. This is a good commitment but not specific in terms of what that means.
- “It is our target that by 2024 we will ensure that there is no routine preventative use of antibiotics permitted in all meat, fish, dairy, and eggs served in all our operating sites, and the use of colistin will be banned”. This is a welcome target but isn’t current policy, so we have judged this as amber.
- “To assist this goal, all fresh meat will be of UK origin by the end of 2023, and for 2024 and beyond we are looking to procure higher welfare such as RT enhanced, and RSPCA assured certifications”. “In particular, all our suppliers provide higher welfare products, meeting RSPCA Assured,

Free Range, or Organic standards. The company is committed to increase the purchases of higher welfare meat by 20% within our business by the end of 2023. By 2026, the company will meet the European Chicken Commitment, which requires the use of lower stocking densities and slower growing breeds. Finally, by 2026, the company will only use higher-welfare pork, with no mutilations permitted and with enrichment provided". It is good that the company recognises that improving animal husbandry and animal health and welfare is the best way of achieving reduced antibiotic use. The company also makes several other important commitments on animal welfare, which it could link to its antibiotic-reduction strategy, since they are also likely to reduce antibiotic use.

- "Partnering with Authenticate, we have a clear and transparent view of our supply chain which enables us to effectively mitigate risk and be able to report efficiently on all inputs from our suppliers". This is welcome, but it is not explicitly stated that data on antibiotic use is collected.
- "Our commitments are:
 - By 2024 we will ensure that there is no routine preventative use of antibiotics permitted in all meat, fish, dairy, and eggs served in cafes and restaurants, and the use of colistin will be banned." This is a good target but isn't current policy.

Compass has a dedicated procurement brand, Foodbuy.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

- NHS trusts⁶⁵ and hospitals and, according to the company website, "The UK's leading provider of food, hospitality and support services in acute hospitals, Private Healthcare and Senior Care markets"⁶⁶. And also states that "The Compass Healthcare team provide hospital food at 23 NHS Trusts across the UK, through the Steamplicity offer. The team also work with 75 NHS Trusts operating over 200 retail outlets and visitor restaurants."⁶⁷
- Hospital cafés, restaurants and retail outlets.⁶⁸
- Private healthcare.
- Care homes. One of their brands, White Oaks, states that "We are partnered with over 25 senior care homes nationwide, providing food to over 1,400 residents and tenants each day."⁶⁹
- Schools, colleges and universities. According to their website, the Chartwells brand supplies 1,800 primary schools and 400 secondary schools and academies, colleges, universities and independent schools.⁷⁰
- Sports and leisure events- operating under several sub brands like The Jockey Club_to provide food at sports and other large venues like: Twickenham, Wimbledon, QEII centre, 02 arena, football clubs, racecourses, Brit awards and National Theatre.⁷¹
- High-profile sites across central government, police and secure environments. ⁷² The ESS brand supplies the Department of Work & Pensions, Department of Health, Welsh Government, and City of London, Thames Valley Police, Bedfordshire Police, City of London Police, Kent Police, Surrey Police, Sussex Police, the Metropolitan Police Training Centre and Hertfordshire Constabulary,⁷³ the Ministry of Defence and military bases. According to the website the ESS brand "has been the market leader in Defence & Government support services for over 40 years" and states that "we feed thousands of people every day". The website further states that "Last year, we served 12.4 million meals to our Defence customers."^{74, 75}
- Energy. The ESS brand supplies gas plants, heliports and airline lounges, platforms, FPSOs, floatels and drilling rigs.⁷⁶
- Corporate offices and boardrooms, workplace cafés, food courts and restaurants.⁷⁷
- Distribution centres and other large-scale operators.
- Coffee and café services, micromarkets, vending machines⁷⁸, the delivery app Time2eat, Wellspring restaurants, Coffee House cafés and Amigo outlets.
- Working with high street brands like Costa, Subway, Greggs and M&S. The company website states: "As the largest partner of Costa, we currently operate over seventy high street Costa stores within hospitals, serving over ten million NHS customers a year. Our experience shows that over 50% of sales through

our Costa Coffee shops within hospitals are from staff, demonstrating that Costa Coffee is a real benefit to staff onsite.”⁷⁹ “Our on-trend menus and famous high-street brand partnerships with Leon, Tortilla, Pizza Pilgrims, Subway, Costa, Greggs and more ensure we’re always delivering dynamic experiences for students”.⁸⁰ “M&S approached One Retail, a division of Compass Group UK&I, as its leading partner in M&S stores to get involved in its new programme”.⁸¹

- Fine dining events.
- Historic and cultural venues.
- Hospitality.

- According to the Compass website “For over 75 years, Compass UK & Ireland’s contract catering brands and food service companies have helped shape how millions of people eat. From fuelling futures in schools, colleges and universities, to helping hospital patients recover, we pride ourselves in delivering the best food services in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland”⁸²
- A Public Sector News item reports that “ESS, part of Compass Group UK & Ireland, has formed part of a successful bid by Landmarc Support Service. The new seven-year contract, awarded by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), will see ESS delivering catering and

retail services at 32 camps across the UK, serving up to 4m meals a year. ESS also provides a retail service across 29 sites, giving customers access to high-street products. In recent months, the sites have supported service personnel in training for the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II and the Coronation of King Charles III.”⁸³

- Brands:
 - Eurest
 - Levy
 - Medirest
 - White Oaks
 - Chartwells
 - ESS
 - Payne and Gunter
 - 14forty
 - Leiths
 - Restaurant Associates

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

Staff attended a webinar, asked for our input and held an information session with their suppliers. At this webinar they highlighted that the first step Compass will be taking towards improving their own policies is to collect data from suppliers about their own supply-chain policies.

KEY POSITIVES

Compass staff were keen to engage with us, ask questions and motivate suppliers to help drive improvements forward.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

We look forward to the plans Compass expressed to us being implemented and a full clear policy being produced. Some of the wider company policies, like a commitment to reduce animal protein products should reduce antibiotic use and it would be good to see the interrelationship of commitments translated into specific antibiotic use policies.

WEBSITES EXAMINED

www.compass-group.co.uk
<https://www.foodbuy.co.uk/>
<https://eurest.co.uk/>
<https://levy.co.uk>
www.compass-healthcare.co.uk
<https://www.chartwells.co.uk>
www.payneandgunter.co.uk
<https://14forty.co.uk/fm-services/food-services/>
<https://restaurantassociates.co.uk>

OUR ASSESSMENT

Does the company have a publicly available policy on farm antibiotic use on its website?	✓
Does the policy ban the routine preventative use of antibiotics in the company’s supply chain?	–
Does the company collect data on antibiotic use in your supply chain?	✗
Does the policy include an antibiotic-use reduction strategy?	–
Does the policy include antibiotic-use reduction targets?	✗
Is the policy clear about the coverage?	✗
Does the policy cover:	✗
• all UK-produced freshly cooked/prepared meat, fish, dairy, and eggs served?	✗
• all UK-produced food, including frozen, pre-packaged and branded items?	✗
• all food sold/served in outlets, including all imported produce?	✗
Does the policy restrict the use of the highest-priority critically important antibiotics across the supply chain?	✗
Does the policy completely ban the use of the antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?	✗
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?	✗
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data by farming system?	✗

OVERALL COMMENT

- Compass expressed their commitment to improve antibiotic usage policies to us in 2022. Their policy previously stated that, “In 2022 we will release a phased commitment to ban prophylactic use of antibiotic entirely.”
- However, it seems these plans did not come to fruition and the target has been moved to 2023. A previous policy dated 2017 had stronger commitments to policy changes.⁸⁴
- It appears that Compass staff are attempting to put in place a better antibiotic policy as they took full advantage of our free support. We look forward to seeing if these efforts deliver significant progress.

RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS EXAMINED:

- Responsible sourcing of animal and fish products.⁸⁵
- Animal Welfare Policy.^{56, 86}

ASSESSMENT / EVIDENCE

Last assessment of policy on 11/08/2023. The policy includes just the two points mentioned below.

- The policy says: “Prophylactic use of antibiotics shall be restricted and only used under direction from the appointed veterinarian and documented in the veterinary health plan”. Veterinary involvement is a legal requirement not a differentiating policy.
- The policy says: “In 2023 we will release a phased commitment to ban prophylactic use of antibiotic entirely.” This is an old promise originally scheduled for 2022 and, whilst it is a good commitment, it is not yet in force. However, this is now a target for 2023 and hence we have assessed this as an amber.
- “Moving to Red Tractor for liquid milk” is mentioned. This is a future commitment and we would like to see the antibiotic requirements contained in the antibiotic policy. We would also need to see all species being covered by the policy.

- Compass’s antibiotic policy does not make any link between animal husbandry and antibiotic use, nor include a specific goal of reducing antibiotic use. However, their overall sourcing policy does make various commitments to improve animal welfare in their supply chain and to reduce the amount of animal protein they serve. These commitments include meeting the Better Chicken Commitment by 2026, 70% of meat and dairy from regenerative sources by 2030, a 25% switch from animal proteins by 2025 and 40% switch by 2030, being a member of the Global Coalition for Animal Welfare and meeting the Marine Conservation Society good fish guide. Since these other policies are likely to contribute to improving animal welfare and reducing antibiotic use, we have assessed them as an amber for antibiotic-reduction policy.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

- Schools, colleges and universities.⁸⁷
- Care homes.
- Retirement villages.
- Visitor attractions.
- Sports venues and stadiums⁸⁸
- Heritage sites.⁸⁹
- Workplace dining:⁹⁰
 - hospitality - running restaurants and cafés
 - hospitality for business meetings, and cloud catering to cocktail bars and 5* hospitality events for thousands of guests.
 - fine dining
- Ministry of Defence sites.⁹¹
- Elior UK has a specialist care catering arm called Caterplus. According to the Caterplus website “Caterplus is one the UK’s leading catering services business specialising in the care and retirement living sector”. Caterplus was recently awarded a £25m contract to supply food to 13 RMBI Care Co. Care homes in England and Wales.⁹²
- According to the Elior UK website, over 10,000 people are employed and working across the company.
- Brands:
 - Elior UK
 - Taylor Shaw
 - Edwards & Blake
 - Lexington Independents

OUR ASSESSMENT

Does the company have a publicly available policy on farm antibiotic use on its website?	✓
Does the policy ban the routine preventative use of antibiotics in the company's supply chain?	✗
Does the company collect data on antibiotic use in your supply chain?	✗
Does the policy include an antibiotic-use reduction strategy?	✗
Does the policy include antibiotic-use reduction targets?	✗
Is the policy clear about the coverage?	✓
Does the policy cover:	✗
• all UK-produced freshly cooked/prepared meat, fish, dairy, and eggs served?	✗
• all UK-produced food, including frozen, pre-packaged and branded items?	✗
• all food sold/served in outlets, including all imported produce?	✗
Does the policy restrict the use of the highest-priority critically important antibiotics across the supply chain?	✓
Does the policy completely ban the use of the antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?	✗
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?	✗
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data by farming system?	✗

OVERALL COMMENT

Elior has an antibiotic policy included in its wider Animal Welfare policy. The policy states that it recognises the link between animal welfare and antibiotic use, and that the company does not “promote” routine antibiotic use. However, there is no indication in the policy that the company is taking any action to improve animal welfare in order to reduce antibiotic use, nor that it is prohibiting routine antibiotic use. The policy states that when antibiotics are used, veterinarians are involved and that records are kept, but these are legal requirements. Elior’s policy does, however, limit the use of the highest-priority critically important antibiotics in human medicine to cases where they are the sole therapeutic option. This goes beyond minimum legal requirements, and they are the only catering company included in this survey that has such a policy.

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

No replies to our emails other than an automated response promising contact.

KEY POSITIVES

The existence of a policy, the restrictions on highest-priority critically important antibiotics, the recognition that husbandry methods and antibiotic use go hand in hand and that routine antibiotic use should be avoided. The policy is also clear that it covers meat, dairy and eggs.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Other than for the highest-priority critically important antibiotics, the policy does not require Elior suppliers to take any action on their antibiotic use which goes beyond minimum legal requirements. Elior should commit to significantly strengthening the policy.

WEBSITES EXAMINED

<https://www.elior.co.uk/>
<https://caterplus.co.uk>

RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS EXAMINED:

- Elior UK Animal Welfare. ⁹³
- Elior UK, Purchasing Sub Policy: Animal Welfare. ⁹⁴
- Elior UK, Responsible Sourcing Charter. ⁹⁵

ASSESSMENT / EVIDENCE

Last assessment of policy on 11/08/2023.

The Animal Welfare Policy states that:

- “Avoidance of the Miss-Use of Antibiotics. Elior UK supports the responsible use of antibiotics and does not promote the routine, prophylactic use of antibiotics across our supplying farms. When antibiotics are required within our fresh meat supply chain they are only administered under professional veterinary supervision and guidance and a record of the type, dose and means of administering the antibiotic are all logged”. Veterinary involvement and the keeping of records are a legal requirement not a policy differentiator. No commitment to ending routine prophylactic antibiotic use is made.
- “Elior recognises the synergy between good animal husbandry and the use of antibiotics as well as the importance of maintaining the integrity of all classes of antibiotics to support human and animal health.” Recognising does not mean that action is being taken.
- “Antibiotics considered to be of critical importance to human health by the World Health Organisation (WHO) are only permitted if they are the sole therapeutic option. These include 3rd and 4th Generation Cephalosporin’s, Macrolides, Glycopeptides and Fluoroquinolones.” This is a clear policy statement.
- Founding member of Global Coalition for Animal Welfare but this does not require specific antibiotic use policies (see Appendix 3).

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

- NHS hospitals. ⁹⁶
- According to a news item, “ISS UK has chosen apetito as its main provider of delivered-in meals across its healthcare business, which serves about 8.5 million meals a year. The healthcare business is the largest of ISS’s business-to-business divisions. Over the next five years, the contract, which began on 1 October, will enable both partners to continue to meet the needs of NHS patients while developing systems and processes to reduce waste, labour and costs”.⁴⁶
- ISS recently secured a catering contract with Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), despite having NO antibiotic policy.⁹
- Workplace: company restaurants, coffee bars and takeaways, company meetings and events, corporate hospitality, company vending machines and micro-kitchens.⁹⁷
- Airports.

OUR ASSESSMENT

Does the company have a publicly available policy on farm antibiotic use on its website?	✗
Does the policy ban the routine preventative use of antibiotics in the company’s supply chain?	✗
Does the company collect data on antibiotic use in your supply chain?	✗
Does the policy include an antibiotic-use reduction strategy?	✗
Does the policy include antibiotic-use reduction targets?	✗
Is the policy clear about the coverage?	✗
Does the policy cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all UK-produced freshly cooked/prepared meat, fish, dairy, and eggs served? 	✗
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all UK-produced food, including frozen, pre-packaged and branded items? 	✗
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all food sold/served in outlets, including all imported produce? 	✗
Does the policy restrict the use of the highest-priority critically important antibiotics across the supply chain?	✗
Does the policy completely ban the use of the antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?	✗
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?	✗
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data by farming system?	✗

OVERALL COMMENT

It was disappointing to find nothing on their website relating to antibiotic resistance.

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

No replies to our emails other than 1 early response and an automated response promising contact.

KEY POSITIVES

None other than a division based in Texas having a policy.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

We urge ISS to engage with us in the future and, more importantly, produce an antibiotic policy for the whole organisation.

WEBSITES EXAMINED

<https://www.uk.issworld.com/en-gb/services/services-we-offer/food>

RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS EXAMINED:

- ISS Corporate Responsibility Policy. ⁹⁸
- ISS Supply Chain Policy. ⁹⁹

ASSESSMENT / EVIDENCE

- 11/08/2023 No policy found. No mention of antibiotic or antimicrobial on the website – hence we allocated red across the board.
- ISS does make a general pledge to reduce animal products which should help reduce antibiotic use: “We designed Power Plant to create a more sustainable approach by using more plant-based ingredients and reducing focus on animal products.”¹⁰⁰
- ISS Guckenheimer, a division based in Texas, US, does appear to have a policy: Sustainable Sourcing - Guckenheimer: “The overuse of medically important antibiotics is common in animal food production systems and is a public health time bomb. We buy meat from producers who are actively working toward eliminating medically important antibiotics and have a commitment to do so by 2025 or sooner. We use the WHO definition for medically important antibiotics and buy from producers who understand why the distinction between classes of antibiotics matter. We support producers who use antibiotics judiciously to treat illnesses in flocks or herds to protect small ranchers’ livelihoods and practice good animal welfare”.¹⁰¹

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

- According to the Newrest website, Newrest, is “a specialist in out-of-home food service and a global leader in multi-sector catering. The Group, which reported assets under management of 1682,4 M€ in 2021/22, employs 36,622 people in 54 countries”.
- Meals for patients and staff in hospital centres and clinics, as well as snacks, bars, and cafeterias for visitors.¹⁰²
- Public and private elementary schools, secondary schools and universities.¹⁰²
- Restaurant, cafeteria, or reception lounges of public and private companies, administrations and embassies.¹⁰²
- The defence sector serving soldiers in garrison, manoeuvre or combat and civilians.¹⁰³
- In-flight catering and airport lounges- 5 In-flight catering Units (Heathrow, Gatwick, London City, Birmingham and Manchester). Catering partner to IAG / British Airways for a period of ten years from 2019 servicing up to 65 daily flights from London Gatwick.
- Catering on trains - Serco Caledonian Trains from Euston station and Scotland.
- In the UK, workstreams seem to be restricted to the areas of flight and rail catering. 650 people are employed by Newrest in the UK, and 32,400 meals are served per day. ¹⁰⁴

OUR ASSESSMENT

Does the company have a publicly available policy on farm antibiotic use on its website?	✘
Does the policy ban the routine preventative use of antibiotics in the company's supply chain?	✘
Does the company collect data on antibiotic use in your supply chain?	✘
Does the policy include an antibiotic-use reduction strategy?	✘
Does the policy include antibiotic-use reduction targets?	✘
Is the policy clear about the coverage?	✘
Does the policy cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all UK-produced freshly cooked/prepared meat, fish, dairy, and eggs served? 	✘
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all UK-produced food, including frozen, pre-packaged and branded items? 	✘
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all food sold/served in outlets, including all imported produce? 	✘
Does the policy restrict the use of the highest-priority critically important antibiotics across the supply chain?	✘
Does the policy completely ban the use of the antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?	✘
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?	✘
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data by farming system?	✘

7. newrest

OVERALL COMMENT

It was disappointing to find nothing on their website relating to antibiotic resistance.

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

No replies to our emails other than an automated response promising contact.

KEY POSITIVES

None.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

We urge Newrest to engage with us in the future and, more importantly, produce an antibiotic policy.

WEBSITES EXAMINED

<https://www.newrest.eu/>

RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS EXAMINED:

Corporate Social Responsibility Charter.¹⁰⁵

ASSESSMENT / EVIDENCE

- 11/08/2023 No policy found.
- No mention of antibiotic or antimicrobial on the website – hence we allocated red across the board.
- Newrest are applying the European Chicken Commitment but this does not cover antibiotic use (see Appendix 3).

8. OCS

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

- Healthcare catering, visitor, patient and hospital staff restaurants & cafes.
- Supplies NHS hospitals as confirmed their website.¹⁰⁶
- Central and North-West London NHS Trust, West London Mental Health Trust.¹⁰⁷
- Student campus cafés, restaurants, vending, kiosks, retail shops and hospitality.
- Working with high-street brands like Costa, Starbucks and WHSmiths.^{108, 109}
- The OCS website describes their services as: “From supporting you in implementing COVID-19 safe working practices for your staff canteens or customer restaurants, as you prepare to welcome employees and customers back to your business, to vending and fine dining, we design solutions to suit our customers' requirements. Whether you're catering for patients, students, staff or visitors, we can help”¹⁰⁸
- The website also says “We work with schools, colleges and universities around the world”.¹¹⁰ The UK website mentions colleges and campus food.¹¹¹

OUR ASSESSMENT

Does the company have a publicly available policy on farm antibiotic use on its website?	✘
Does the policy ban the routine preventative use of antibiotics in the company's supply chain?	✘
Does the company collect data on antibiotic use in your supply chain?	✘
Does the policy include an antibiotic-use reduction strategy?	✘
Does the policy include antibiotic-use reduction targets?	✘
Is the policy clear about the coverage?	✘
Does the policy cover:	✘
• all UK-produced freshly cooked/prepared meat, fish, dairy, and eggs served?	✘
• all UK-produced food, including frozen, pre-packaged and branded items?	✘
• all food sold/served in outlets, including all imported produce?	✘
Does the policy restrict the use of the highest-priority critically important antibiotics across the supply chain?	✘
Does the policy completely ban the use of the antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?	✘
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?	✘
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data by farming system?	✘

- Corporate meetings and events – catering for staff and visitors.
- Vending machines.
- Supplying venues like London City Hall.¹¹²
- Brands:
 - Just Deli
 - Just Dine
 - Just Café
 - Just Vend
 - M&S to go

OVERALL COMMENT

It was disappointing to find nothing on their websites relating to antibiotic resistance.

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

No replies to our emails.

KEY POSITIVES

Red Tractor and Soil Association assurance schemes that do have antibiotic usage clauses are mentioned and it would be good to see these restrictions used to form the start of a specific policy. The Soil Association policy has particularly stringent clauses, so it is good to see that some of the suppliers are Soil Association accredited.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

We urge OCS to engage with us in the future and, more importantly, produce an antibiotic policy.

WEBSITES EXAMINED

<https://www.ocs.com/uk/services/catering/>
www.just-deli.com/en/
<https://justdineuk.com>

RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS EXAMINED:

OCS Sustainability Strategy.¹¹³

ASSESSMENT / EVIDENCE

- 11/08/2023 No policy found.
- No mention of antibiotic or antimicrobial on the website – hence we allocated red across the board.
- The website does say that, “Our suppliers are accredited with a number of assurance schemes, including the Red Tractor Assured Food Standards scheme, the Soil Association and Fairtrade” and that the company has adopted the European Chicken Commitment to meet higher welfare standards for 100% of the chicken in our European supply chain by 2026. Sourcing foods from these schemes should help reduce antibiotic use but this needs to be supplemented by a specific antibiotic policy.

For further details on antibiotic policies related to these schemes and commitments, see Appendix 3.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

- Public and private healthcare organisations. Supplies the NHS.¹¹⁴
- Hospitals – patient and staff dining and retail services.
- School meals.¹¹⁵
- University campus food. According to the Sodexo website: “Sodexo feeds students and university staff at nearly 50 university sites across the UK and Ireland, and 1600 sites globally.”^{116, 117}
- Corporate catering – onsite and delivered.¹¹⁸
- Micromarket, smart vending and food lockers.¹¹⁸
- Military, justice and government agencies.¹¹⁹
- Offshore energy and resource companies.
- Ascot Racecourse.¹²⁰
- Sodexo’s teams across five military bases served more than 50,000 meals in the build up to and during the Coronation of King Charles III and his wife Queen Camilla.¹²¹

OUR ASSESSMENT

Does the company have a publicly available policy on farm antibiotic use on its website?	✓
Does the policy ban the routine preventative use of antibiotics in the company’s supply chain?	✗
Does the company collect data on antibiotic use in your supply chain?	✗
Does the policy include an antibiotic-use reduction strategy?	✓
Does the policy include antibiotic-use reduction targets?	✗
Is the policy clear about the coverage?	✓
Does the policy cover:	✗
• all UK-produced freshly cooked/prepared meat, fish, dairy, and eggs served?	✗
• all UK-produced food, including frozen, pre-packaged and branded items?	✗
• all food sold/served in outlets, including all imported produce?	✗
Does the policy restrict the use of the highest-priority critically important antibiotics across the supply chain?	✗
Does the policy completely ban the use of the antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?	✗
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?	✗
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data by farming system?	✗

OVERALL COMMENT

Sodexo has a basic antibiotic policy. The company discourages, but does not prohibit, routine preventative antibiotic use in its supply chain. The policy makes clear that good husbandry and hygiene are key to reducing antibiotic use and it is clearly stated that Sodexo is aiming to reduce antibiotic use by its suppliers. However, there are no significant restrictions on the highest-priority critically important antibiotics, no ban on colistin and no attempt to collect antibiotic-usage data.

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

No replies to our emails.

KEY POSITIVES

Some of the wider company policies, like a commitment to reduce animal protein products and to work with suppliers to achieve certain standards, such as RSPCA Assured, organic or Red Tractor, should help reduce antibiotic use. The commitment to achieve the Better Chicken Commitment by 2026 may also improve chicken health and welfare and reduce antibiotic use. It is good that the company recognises the link between good husbandry and good hygiene, and lower usage of antibiotics.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Sodexo’s policy needs to urgently ban routine preventative antibiotic use by its suppliers. Restrictions on the highest-priority critically important antibiotics are needed, as is a ban on the use of colistin. Sodexo needs to begin collecting antibiotic-usage data.

WEBSITES EXAMINED:

<https://uk.sodexo.com/our-services/food-services--catering.html>

RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS EXAMINED:

Sodexo Animal Welfare Frequently Asked Questions ¹²²
 All documents listed at <https://uk.sodexo.com/social-impact/partners/human-rights-animal-welfare.html>
 Sodexo Supplier Food Safety Code of Practice ¹²³
 Sodexo’s individual commitments to act4nature international ¹²⁴

ASSESSMENT / EVIDENCE

Last assessment of policy on 11/08/2023. The policy statements and our conclusions on them:

- “Moreover, since 2006, EU banned the use of antibiotics as growth promoters in animal feed. In consequence for Sodexo European countries, our suppliers respect regulation and don’t use growth promoting substances or antibiotics as growth promoters in animal feed. We do not support the use of veterinary medicines with performance-enhancing effects in farm animals for the purposes of growth promotion. We believe that any use of such medicines for purely therapeutic purposes should only be carried out under veterinarian advice”. This is merely stating that Sodexo is complying with the law in European countries, like the UK, where antibiotic growth promotion is banned, and veterinary prescriptions are needed when antibiotics are used.
- “What about use of antibiotics for preventive use? For Sodexo, the routine use of antibiotics is discouraged.” It is good that Sodexo understands that routine preventative antibiotic use should be avoided. However, there is no commitment to ban such use in the policy.
- “Our Charter underlines key aspects for good farming practices as well as good husbandry practice and management, site hygiene... We support a continuous reduction in the use of antibiotics in our supply chain. With regard to farmed fish, Sodexo seeks to source from third party certified farms such as ASC, BAP (minimum 2**) and Global G.A.P. These standards include some supplier requirements in relation to the use of antibiotics as prophylactic use. They don’t accept this practice and only allow the use of antibiotics under the direction of a qualified veterinarian in response to a diagnosed disease.” It is good that Sodexo is clearly stating that it wants to see a reduction in antibiotic use in its supply chain and that it sees good husbandry and good hygiene as key to achieving this.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

- Workplace hospitality.¹²⁵
- Primary, secondary, academy and college clients via the Caterlink brand.¹²⁶
- Independent schools.
- Cafes, restaurants, diners and members rooms in castles, parks, museums e.g. London Zoo, the Science Museum, Edinburgh castle and performing arts venues via the Benugo brand.¹²⁷.
- Bars, cafes, and event spaces across the UK.
- The WSH website says “WSH is the parent company for leading brands operating in the food services and hospitality sectors. We aim to be the very best and set ourselves incredibly high standards because we care passionately about our food, service, people and clients.”
- Brands:
 - Caterlink
 - Benugo
 - Baxter Storey
 - Holroyd Howe
 - Searcys

OUR ASSESSMENT

Does the company have a publicly available policy on farm antibiotic use on its website?	✘
Does the policy ban the routine preventative use of antibiotics in the company's supply chain?	✘
Does the company collect data on antibiotic use in your supply chain?	✘
Does the policy include an antibiotic-use reduction strategy?	✘
Does the policy include antibiotic-use reduction targets?	✘
Is the policy clear about the coverage?	✘
Does the policy cover:	✘
• all UK-produced freshly cooked/prepared meat, fish, dairy, and eggs served?	✘
• all UK-produced food, including frozen, pre-packaged and branded items?	✘
• all food sold/served in outlets, including all imported produce?	✘
Does the policy restrict the use of the highest-priority critically important antibiotics across the supply chain?	✘
Does the policy completely ban the use of the antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?	✘
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?	✘
Does the company publish antibiotic-usage data by farming system?	✘

OVERALL COMMENT

It was disappointing to find nothing on their websites relating to antibiotic resistance.

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

No replies to our emails other than a response copying in the relevant staff member.

KEY POSITIVES

None.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

We urge WSH to engage with us in the future and, more importantly produce an antibiotic policy.

WEBSITES EXAMINED

Westbury Street Holdings
 (wshlimited.com)
 Food – BaxterStorey
<https://baxterstorey.com>
<https://caterlinkltd.co.uk>
www.Benugo.com
www.holroydhowe.com
<https://searcys.co.uk/our-services/>

RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS EXAMINED:

None found.

ASSESSMENT / EVIDENCE

- 11/08/2023 No policy found.
- No mention of antibiotic or antimicrobial on the websites – hence we allocated red across the board.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

The findings of this report suggest that there remains significant apathy in the contract-catering industry regarding the need to restrict and reduce the use of antibiotics in the supply chain.

Some companies are clearly aware of the need to act and are currently reviewing their policies with a view to ending the worst aspects of antibiotic overuse. It is, however, clear that those companies willing to engage with the issue do not yet have the processes in place which would enable them to eliminate all antibiotic misuse by their suppliers.

The contract catering sector is big business and the corporations involved have a responsibility to voluntarily develop effective policies to reduce antibiotic use in their supply chains and help create a safer future for us all.

There is also a need for decisive government action. The Government's delay in implementing new Veterinary Medicines Regulations means that the UK has now fallen behind the EU in terms of regulating the use of farm antibiotics. Government proposals for introducing new restrictions on routine antibiotic use, which underwent a public consultation earlier this year, would be a step in the right direction if implemented, but they do not go as far as EU rules which ban all preventative group treatments. It is also disappointing that proposed new Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services make no mention of the need for controls on antibiotic use.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. As a first step towards meeting their responsibilities for responsible sourcing and avoiding antibiotic misuse, all catering companies should:
 - a. Develop and publish an antibiotic policy, which is clear about coverage and that covers all UK-produced freshly cooked/prepared meat, fish, dairy, and eggs served.
 - b. Include a prohibition on routine preventative antibiotic use in the policy.
 - c. Develop a strategy for reducing antibiotic use in the supply chain, which includes a focus on improving animal husbandry and animal health, in order to minimise the need for antibiotics.
 - d. Begin collecting data on antibiotic use in their supply chains.
2. Catering companies could look to reduce their reliance on animal-based products and source food produced without routine farm antibiotic use. Various assurance schemes, like organic, RSPCA Assured or Pasture for Life, avoid routine antibiotic use. Furthermore, animals raised outdoors or according to the standards of the Better Chicken Commitment are likely to result in lower antibiotic use. Routine antibiotic use is now prohibited in the European Union, and UK supermarkets are showing that it is possible to source significant amounts of British meat, dairy and eggs that have not been produced with routine preventative antibiotic use.
3. Catering companies should also work towards restricting the use of the highest-priority critically important antibiotics, ending the use of colistin, and publishing the antibiotic-use data they are collecting, including by farming system.
4. Catering companies could also consider engaging with, or joining, the Food Industry Initiative on Antimicrobials (<https://fiia.co.uk>), which aims to develop common antibiotic policies for the food industry and focuses on collaborative working and the coordination of relevant initiatives.
5. Catering companies can avail of free advice and a free toolkit from the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics.
6. The Government needs to urgently act to end all forms of routine antibiotic use, including preventative group treatments. It should also introduce statutory antibiotic-use data collection, which would make it far easier for catering companies, and other organisations like supermarkets, to then obtain such data from their suppliers.
7. Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services should include a requirement to source animal foods produced without routine antibiotic use.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 SECTOR SUMMARY

AREAS	NUMBER	COMPANIES	NUMBER OPERATING IN UK	COMPANIES
Healthcare	9 (all but WSH)	apetito, Aramark, CH&CO, Compass, Elior, ISS, Newrest (not UK), OCS, Sodexo	8 (all but WSH and Newrest)	apetito, Aramark, CH&CO, Compass, Elior, ISS, OCS, ISS, Sodexo
Education generally	9 (all but ISS)	apetito, Aramark, CH&CO, Compass, Elior, Newrest (not UK), OCS, Sodexo, WSH	8 (all but ISS and Newrest for education)	apetito, Aramark, CH&CO, Compass, Elior, OCS, Sodexo, WSH
Schools	9 (all but ISS)	apetito, Aramark, CH&CO, Compass, Elior, Newrest (not UK), OCS, Sodexo, WSH	7 (all but ISS and Newrest for education and OCS does not mention schools in UK)	apetito, Aramark, CH&CO, Compass, Elior, Sodexo, WSH
Work with high-street brands	2	Compass (works with Costa, M&S and Subway), OCS (Costa, WHSmith and Starbucks)	2	Compass, OCS
Venues / travel	8 (all but apetito and ISS)	Aramark, CH&CO, Compass, Elior, Newrest, OCS Sodexo, WSH	8 (all but apetito and ISS)	Aramark, CH&CO, Compass, Elior, Newrest, OCS Sodexo, WSH
Gov depts	5	Aramark, Compass, Elior, Newrest (not UK), Sodexo	4	Aramark, Compass, Elior, Sodexo
Workplace	8 (all but apetito and ISS)	Aramark, CH&CO, Compass, Elior, Newrest (not UK), OCS, Sodexo, WSH	7 (all but apetito ISS and Newrest)	Aramark, CH&CO, Compass, Elior, OCS, Sodexo, WSH

APPENDIX 2 COMPANY SUMMARY

COMPANY	BRANDS FOUND	AREA OF WORK AS DESCRIBED ON THE COMPANY WEBSITE	WEBSITES	ANTIBIOTIC POLICY DOCUMENTS FOUND AND ASSESSED
apetito	Wiltshire Farm Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hospital meals meals on wheels care home meals nursery & independent school meals 	https://www.apetito.co.uk https://wiltshirefarmfoods.com	None
Aramark		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> healthcare education locations business and industry sports and entertainment 	https://northerneurope.aramark.com https://www.aramark.com/	Aramark-Sustainable-Sourcing-Policy-May-2022.pdf Responsible Progress Priorities report October 2021. ¹⁴⁴
CH&CO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company of Cooks Concert Group Ltd Create Eve Gather and Gather Vacherin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pupil and staff feeding at: state and independent schools, university cafés and restaurants hospital staff and visitor restaurants hospices event catering workplace cafés and restaurants corporate fine dining and hospitality visitor attraction catering livery hall catering 	https://www.chandcogroup.com/ https://gatherandgather.com www.companyofcooks.com https://www.goaskeve.com/venues/ www.createfood.co.uk https://www.weareultimate.uk (Concerto Group Ltd) www.vacherin.com	CHCO-Sustainable-Sourcing-Policy-2023-Final.pdf (chandcogroup.com)
Compass	Foodbuy is their dedicated procurement brand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eurest Levy Medirest White Oaks Chartwells ESS Payne and Gunter 14forty Leiths Restaurant Associates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hospitals, care homes schools, colleges and universities sports and leisure events oilrigs military bases corporate offices and boardrooms Wellspring restaurants, Coffee House cafés and Amigo outlets. Costa, M&S and Subway Eurest - corporate and office catering, industry catering solutions for warehouses, distribution centres and other large-scale operators, coffee and café services, micromarkets, vending machines, delivery app Time2eat Levy - operating under several sub brands like The Jockey Club to provide food at sports and other large venues like: Twickenham, Wimbledon, QEII centre, O2 arena, football clubs, racecourses, Brit awards and National Theatre. Medirest - NHS trusts. "The UK's leading provider of food, hospitality and support services in acute hospitals, Private Healthcare and Senior Care markets". Hospital cafés, restaurants and retail outlets. Private healthcare White Oaks brand - "We are partnered with over 25 senior care homes nationwide, providing food to over 1,400 residents and tenants each day." Chartwells - 1,800 primary schools and 400 secondary schools and academies, colleges, universities and independent schools ESS - "has been the market leader in Defence & Government support services for over 40 years". "WE FEED THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE EVERY DAY" "Last year, we served 12.4 million meals to our Defence customers." gas plants, heliports and airline lounges, platforms, FPSOs, floatels and drilling rigs, Ministry of Defence, Department of Work & Pensions, Department of Health, Welsh Government, and City of London and Thames Valley Police Payne and Gunter - fine dining events 14forty - workplace cafés, food courts and restaurants Leiths - historic and cultural venues Restaurant associates - hospitality 	compass-group.co.uk https://www.foodbuy.co.uk/ https://eurest.co.uk/ https://levy.co.uk www.compass-healthcare.co.uk https://www.chartwells.co.uk https://14forty.co.uk/ fm-services/food-services/ https://restaurantassociates.co.uk	compass-and-foodbuy-responsible-sourcing-of-animal-and-fish-products-august-22.pdf (compass-group.co.uk) Microsoft Word - Animal Welfare Policy - Compass Group UK&I - July 2017.doc (compass-group.co.uk)

COMPANY	BRANDS FOUND	AREA OF WORK AS DESCRIBED ON THE COMPANY WEBSITE	WEBSITES	ANTIBIOTIC POLICY DOCUMENTS FOUND AND ASSESSED
Elior	Elior UK Taylor Shaw, Edwards & Blake Lexington Independents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> schools, colleges and universities care homes retirement villages visitor attractions heritage sites workplace dining <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hospitality - running restaurants and cafés - hospitality for business meetings, and cloud catering to cocktail bars and 5* hospitality events for thousands of guests. - fine dining Ministry of Defence sites sporting venues and stadiums 	www.elior.co.uk/what-we-do/great-food-service-https://www.elior.co.uk/https://taylorshaw.com/https://edwardsandblake.co.uk/https://lexingtonindependents.co.uk/https://caterplus.co.uk	responsible-sourcing-charter-sept21-1_0.pdf (elior.co.uk) Animal Welfare Elior UK
ISS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hospitals company restaurants, coffee bars and takeaways company meetings and events corporate hospitality company vending machines and micro-kitchens airports 	www.uk.issworld.com/en-gb/services/services-we-offer/food	ISS Corporate Responsibility Policy Revision_1.pdf (issworld.com) ISS Supply Chain Policy Rev_0_October_2017.pdf (issworld.com)
Newrest		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> meals for patients and staff in hospital centres and clinics, as well as snacks, bars, and cafeterias for visitors public and private elementary schools, secondary schools and universities the defence sector serving soldiers in garrison, manoeuvre or combat and civilians restaurant, cafeteria, or reception lounges of public and private companies, administrations and embassies inflight catering and airport lounges- 5 Inflight catering Units (Heathrow, Gatwick, London City, Birmingham and Manchester. Catering partner to IAG / British Airways for a period of 10 years from 2019 servicing up to 65 daily flights from LGW. catering on trains - Serco Caledonian Trains from Euston station and Scotland. <p>In the UK workstreams seem to be restricted to the areas of flight and rail Newrest United Kingdom</p>	www.newrest.eu	Corporate Social Responsibility - test Charter_CSR_EN_BD_NUM.pdf (newrest.eu)
OCS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Just Dine Just Vend Just Café Just Deli 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> healthcare catering, visitor, patient and hospital staff restaurants & cafes student campus cafés, restaurants, vending, kiosks, retail shops and hospitality High-street coffee bars like Costa and Starbucks corporate meetings and events – catering for staff and visitors vending machines 	https://www.ocs.com/uk/services/catering/ www.just-deli.com/en/ https://justdineuk.com	ocs-group-sustainability-strategy.pdf
Sodexo		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> public and private healthcare organisations hospitals – patient and staff dining, retail services school meals university campus food corporate catering – onsite and delivered MicroMarket, Smart Vending and Food Lockers military, justice and government agencies offshore energy and resource companies 	https://uk.sodexo.com/our-services/food-services--catering.html	Human rights, animal welfare and sourcing policies (sodexo.com) – all documents listed Sodexo_Supplier_Food_Safety_Code_of_Practice.pdf SODEXO VA.pdf

APPENDIX 3 THE WORK OF THE ALLIANCE TO SAVE OUR ANTIBIOTICS.

Compassion, alongside Sustain and the Soil Association, formed the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics in 2009 to focus on the growing problem of antibiotic resistance. The Alliance is science based and represents 71 medical, environmental and animal-welfare organisations. Our aim is to reduce the overuse of antibiotics in farmed animals and support a One Health approach that recognises that human, animal and environmental health are all interconnected.

Antibiotics are being used not only to treat individual sick animals (as may often be necessary) but to prophylactically treat groups to defend against illnesses that could arise from stressful farming practices like overcrowding, mutilations and the production of unhealthy animals to maximise yield.

The Alliance campaigns on these issues by raising awareness, collaborating with UK and international partners, reporting on corporate antibiotic policies, challenging the government and pushing for better legislation.

Our vision is a world in which human and animal health and well-being are protected by food and farming systems that do not rely on routine antibiotic use.

We want to see:

- Antibiotics used in animals focused mainly on treating individual sick animals, not mass or preventative use.
- Improved animal husbandry to ensure animals are healthier and need fewer antibiotics.
- Greater transparency around antibiotic-use data and animal-sourced food production.

Campaigning by The Alliance ¹⁴ has contributed to many UK supermarkets making significant improvements to their antibiotic policies and we hope that the catering companies will use this assessment of their current policies as a steppingstone to enhance policies and contribute to creating a safer future for us all.

APPENDIX 4 COMMITMENTS / ASSURANCE SCHEME ANTIBIOTIC POLICIES

Various commitments / assurance schemes are mentioned in this report. We cite below their antibiotic policies if they have them.

Some farm accreditation or assurance schemes have specific rules on antibiotic use, or on antibiotic data collection, which go beyond minimum legal standards. Antibiotic rules for the organic sector remain the strictest, although improved antibiotic-use data collection is still needed.

The organic withdrawal period for all antibiotic medication is double the statutory withdrawal period. During the withdrawal period, animals cannot be slaughtered for human consumption and milk and eggs cannot be collected for human consumption.

In addition to these organic rules, Soil Association licensees must abide by the following additional rules:

- No use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin is permitted.
- High Priority Critically Important Antibiotics can only be used as a last resort.



ASSURED FOOD STANDARDS

This is a United Kingdom company which licenses the Red Tractor quality mark, a product certification programme that comprises several farm assurance schemes for food products, animal feed and fertiliser. Antibiotic usage rules for Red Tractor differ by species.¹²⁸

Antibiotic use rules that apply for all species (beef, dairy, lamb, pigs, chickens, turkeys, and ducks) include:

- Antibiotic use data must be collated annually.
- HPClAs can only be used as a last resort.

For poultry (chickens, turkeys and ducks) the following additional rules apply:

- No preventative use of antibiotics.
- No use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin or of the third and fourth generation cephalosporin antibiotics.

For pigs:

- Collated antibiotic-usage data must be uploaded onto the industry e-Medicines book
- Collated usage data must be reviewed annually with a vet.



EUROPEAN CHICKEN COMMITMENT / ALSO KNOWN AS BETTER CHICKEN COMMITMENT

The Better Chicken Commitment - BCC [UK]¹²⁹

This is a welfare related commitment and antibiotics are not mentioned. However, applying these standards should result in a reduction of antibiotic treatments needed.



GLOBAL COALITION FOR ANIMAL WELFARE (GCAW)¹³⁰

The Global Coalition for Animal Welfare (GCAW) is a “global platform uniting major companies and animal welfare experts in advancing animal welfare standards throughout the global food supply chain. Consisting of fourteen member companies, GCAW represents some of the largest names in global food production and food service: 2 Sisters Food Group, Aramark, Compass Group, Elior Group, IKEA Food Services, Maple Leaf Foods, Nestle, Sodexo, Starbucks, Tesco, The Cheesecake Factory, The Kroger Co, Tyson Foods and Unilever.”

Regarding antibiotic use, their policy document on animal welfare¹³¹ says “Antibiotics are used in animal production to treat and cure sick animals (therapeutic use), to control disease from spreading from one group of animals to other groups (metaphylactic use), and to prevent disease or sickness in a group of otherwise healthy animals (prophylactic use). Prophylactic use of antibiotics may be reduced or eliminated through implementing an animal health plan that emphasizes preventative animal care practices. Hormonal, antibiotic or other synthetic growth promoters should not be used”. The GCAW members have identified five initial priority work streams. These focus on: (i) Cage-Free Policies (ii) Improved Broiler Chicken Welfare (iii) Farmed Fish Welfare (iv) Antimicrobial Resistance (v) Global Standards for Transportation & Slaughter.¹³²



MARINE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

The Marine Conservation Society¹³³ is a UK-based not-for-profit campaign organisation to clean and protect oceans. Although they have produced a Good Fish Guide¹³⁴ and the website says “Governments need to ban improper uses of antibiotics and introduce regulations that restrict their availability. Businesses should preferentially source certified farmed seafood where chemical use is monitored and restricted”, the MSC is not in itself an assurance scheme.



MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

The Marine Stewardship Council ¹³⁵ aims to ensure oceans are fished sustainably and run a certified sustainable seafood label, the Blue MSC Label. ¹³⁶ The MSC standards ¹³⁷ do not mention antibiotic use.

PASTURE FOR LIFE



CERTIFIED

PASTURE FOR LIFE

The following Pasture for Life antibiotic standards¹³⁸ apply to all species:

- Prophylactic or sub-therapeutic use of antibiotics is prohibited.
- When antibiotic treatment is required for individual animals, third- and fourth-generation cephalosporin antibiotics must not be used unless the farm's vet states that they are the only suitable option.
- Pasture for Life require written health plans that focus on the prevention of illness or injury - as well as specifying that when animal does get sick or injured it must be treated immediately

ORGANIC FARMING

Rules on antibiotic use in organic livestock farming are strict. A recent Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics study found that antibiotic use in Soil Association certified organic farmers was around four times lower than the national average.³⁹ This is partly because of the stricter rules on antibiotic use, but also because of higher minimum animal-welfare standards which help avoid animals falling sick.

In the UK, different bodies such as the Soil Association¹³⁹ or Organic Farmers and Growers¹⁴⁰ certify organic farmers. All certifiers must meet minimum organic rules although some certifiers have further higher rules.

Rules which apply to all organic farmers:

- No preventative antibiotic use is permitted, except for individual animals undergoing surgery.
- Plant-based medicines, homeopathic medicines, trace elements, vitamins and minerals should be used in preference to antibiotics. If, however, these alternative treatments are inappropriate or ineffective, allopathic medicines or antibiotics must be used.
- Animals cannot be sold as organic if they receive more than three courses of antibiotics in 12 months, or more than one course if their lifecycle is less than one year.



SOIL ASSOCIATION ⁹⁰

- Veterinary medicines for preventative treatment are prohibited in the absence of illness or surgical intervention
- The use of critically important antibiotics is restricted You must not use critically important antibiotics except when no other treatment would be effective.
- The following antibiotics are considered critically important antibiotics (CIAs): • Fluoroquinolone antibiotics • Third and fourth generation cephalosporin antibiotics.
- We will review the list of CIAs regularly and it may change to ensure the most important antibiotics are protected. Where these antibiotics have been used you must have veterinary justification for their use available at inspection in one or more of the following forms:
 - post-mortem reports
 - results from sensitivity tests
 - vet site visit reports
 - veterinary instructions
- The following drugs are commonly licensed fluoroquinolones and third and fourth generation cephalosporins in the UK: enrofloxacin, danofloxacin, marbofloxacin, difloxacin, ceftiofur, cefoparazone and cefquinome. This is not a complete list and the range of drugs may change, you can check on VMD website or liaise with your vet.
- The use of colistin is prohibited
- Number of permitted treatments -you must not sell your livestock or their produce as organic if, within 12 months, you treat them with more than: a) three courses of antibiotics, or b) one course of antibiotics if their lifecycle is less than a year.
- Feeding of waste milk to calves is restricted You must not feed your calves milk taken from dairy cows during the statutory withdrawal period for antibiotic treatments.



RSPCA ASSURED

The RSPCA accreditation scheme for farms does not allow the routine use of antibiotics.¹⁴¹ It also recommends only using HPClAs as a last resort¹⁴², however this recommendation is not part of their standards for any species.

Further antibiotic standards apply for certain species.¹⁴³ For cattle (beef and dairy), sheep and chickens; antibiotic use must be reviewed annually. For cattle and sheep, an action plan must be implemented for reducing antibiotic use through improvements in animal husbandry. For pigs, use of the industry e-Medicines book is recommended.

GLOSSARY

AMR

Antimicrobial resistance

ANTIBIOTIC

A medicine specifically used to prevent and treat bacterial infections.

ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

Occurs when the bacteria evolve and are no longer killed by the antibiotic. This makes treating previously simple infections increasingly difficult.

ANTIMICROBIAL

Antimicrobials – antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals and antiparasitics – are medicines used to prevent and treat infections caused by microorganisms including bacteria, viruses, protozoa, and fungi in humans, animals and plants.

BBFAW

The business benchmark on farm animal welfare (BBFAW) is a leading global measure of farm animal welfare management, policy commitment, performance and disclosure in food companies.

FAIRR

Established by the Jeremy Collier Foundation, the FAIRR Initiative is a collaborative investor network that raises awareness of the environmental, social and governance (ESG) risks and opportunities brought about by intensive livestock production.

FIIA

The Food Industry Initiative on Antimicrobials (FIIA) brings together retailers, manufacturers, processors and food service companies to promote and support responsible antibiotic use in livestock farming and aquaculture – taking collective action on antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

FLUOROQUINOLONES

Fluoroquinolones are antibiotics that are classed as HPClAs by WHO. They are nevertheless licensed for use in farmed animals, including for group treatment. Fluoroquinolones are often used for genitourinary infections for example the treatment of hospital-acquired infections associated with urinary catheters. Fluoroquinolones are used for the treatment of hospital-acquired pneumonia and are classified by WHO as HPClAs (see below).

HPCIA – HIGHEST-PRIORITY CRITICALLY IMPORTANT ANTIMICROBIALS

The World Health Organization developed a classification of antimicrobials used in humans and animals to help governments prioritise which antibiotics needed greater restriction on their use in farming. Classes include Highest-priority critically important in human medicine, Critically important in human medicine, Highly important in human medicine and Important in human medicine.

Highest Priority Critically Important Antibiotics are antibiotics that the World Health Organization believes to be the most important in human medicine and therefore require the greatest restriction in farming.

The World Health Organization defines Highest Priority Critically Important Antibiotics as those that meet all the following criteria:

Sole, or one of limited available therapies, to treat serious bacterial infections in people

Used to treat infections caused by bacteria (1) possibly transmitted from non-human sources, or (2) with resistance genes from non-human sources

Used to treat a large number of people with infections for which limited antimicrobials are available

Used with high frequency in human medicine or in certain high-risk groups

Used to treat human infections for which an extensive evidence exists on the transmission of resistant-bacteria or genes from non-human sources Ref Critically important antimicrobials for human medicine : 6th revision (who.int)

METAPHYLACTIC

Group use when a disease is detected in 1 or a small number of animals

ONE HEALTH

The One Health approach is based on the principle that human, animal and environment health are intrinsically linked. One Health can only be reached when joint efforts are taken in these three areas.

PROPHYLACTIC

The treatment of an animal or a group of animals, before clinical signs of infectious disease, to prevent the occurrence of disease or infection. Also called preventative treatment.

RUMA

The Responsible use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance. RUMA brings together organisations from across the farmed animal supply chain and seeks to promote a co-ordinated and integrated approach to the responsible use of medicines in UK livestock.

SUPERBUG

A strain of bacteria that has become resistant to antibiotic drugs

WHO

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health. The WHO's mandate includes working worldwide to promote health, keeping the world safe, and serving the vulnerable.

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The Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics is an alliance of health, medical, environmental and animal welfare groups working to stop the over-use of antibiotics in animal farming. It was founded by the Soil Association, Compassion in World Farming International and Sustain in 2009. The Alliance vision is for a world in which human and animal health and well-being are protected by food and farming systems that do not rely on routine antibiotic use.



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