

# McDonald's Global Policy on Antibiotic<sup>1</sup> Use in Food Animals<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

McDonald's recognizes that the use of antibiotics in food animals is under active review by scientists and regulators around the world, and we support these transparent, science-based processes. We also recognize the importance of combating antibiotic resistance, and believe that voluntary, market-based actions can complement ongoing activities to address the issue of antibiotic resistance. McDonald's policy represents one such complementary step and provides the foundation for further work on the sustainable use of antibiotics. McDonald's policy was formed with input from a variety of experts, including physicians, suppliers, animal welfare scientists, retail representatives, and environmental experts. We know that scientific understanding of antibiotic resistance continues to grow, and we will update our policy as necessary to remain consistent with available scientific information.

## Executive Summary

- All uses of antibiotics in food animal production should follow the Guiding Principles for Sustainable Use. Sustained reductions in the total use of antibiotics belonging to classes of compounds currently approved for use in human medicine are encouraged and will be considered a favorable factor in supply decisions.
- The use of those antibiotics belonging to classes of compounds currently approved in one or more countries worldwide for use in human medicine is prohibited when used solely for growth promotion purposes<sup>3</sup>.
- McDonald's Antibiotics Use Policy applies to all global suppliers where McDonald's has a "direct relationship" in the meat purchasing supply chain process. For suppliers with whom McDonald's does not have a "direct relationship", compliance with this policy will be a favorable factor in supply decisions.
- McDonald's Antibiotics Use Policy will be enforced through supplier certification and assurance programs or regular audits. This policy is to be phased in by the end of 2004.

## Rationale

McDonald's is committed to a global policy on the sustainable use of antibiotics because:

1. Antibiotics are important for maintaining health and welfare and reducing morbidity and mortality of food animals.
2. Antibiotic use contributes to the selection of antibiotic resistance in disease causing bacteria.
3. Antibiotic-resistant bacterial pathogens are a risk to human and animal health because they compromise the effectiveness of antibiotics used in human and veterinary medicine.
4. All users of antibiotics, including those who supervise use in animals and those who supervise use in humans, must work to sustain the long-term efficacy of antibiotics for human and veterinary medicine.

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<sup>1</sup> The term antibiotic is used in this policy to refer to both antibiotics (as defined in the Definitions section below) and synthetic agents that have an antibiotic effect (commonly referred to as antimicrobials). This policy allows the use of ionophores and other anticoccidials for the treatment and prevention (as defined by this policy) of coccidiosis. The use of anticoccidials from classes of drugs not approved for use in human medicine is permitted for other purposes as approved by applicable regulatory authorities. Use of these compounds is not linked to the development of resistance in bacteria that cause disease in humans.

<sup>2</sup> The term food animal is used in this policy to refer to all species of farmed animals including cultivated fish and shellfish.

<sup>3</sup> When drug combinations are used, this policy applies to every antibiotic in the combination.

## McDonald's Global Antibiotic Policy

All uses of antibiotics in food animal production should follow the Guiding Principles for Sustainable Use.

McDonald's prohibits the use of antibiotics belonging to classes of compounds approved for use in human medicine when used solely for growth promotion purposes. Growth promotion is defined as the use of antibiotics for any purpose other than disease treatment, control or prevention (as defined in the Definitions section below).

### Guiding Principles for Sustainable Use of Antibiotics

Sustainable use of antibiotics is the foundation of McDonald's Antibiotic Policy.

The concept of sustainability is based on conserving natural and social resources in the present and future while creating economic value. The following principles of sustainable use draw from existing frameworks including the World Veterinary Association's *Prudent Use of Antibiotics Global Basic Principles* and the American Veterinary Medical Association's *Judicious Therapeutic Use of Antimicrobials General Principles*.

- 1. Quality and safety:** McDonald's is committed to ensuring wholesome and safe food for our customers. Food safety is McDonald's number one priority and is central to all company operations and supply programs.
- 2. Animal welfare:** Treating animals with care is integral to McDonald's overall quality assurance and animal welfare programs. Disease prevention strategies, such as good husbandry and hygiene, routine health monitoring, and immunization, and other preventative options should be emphasized before the use of antibiotics.
- 3. Antibiotics for animals:** Sustainable use of antibiotics is an integral part of an overall animal care and welfare program. Animals that are ill or at imminent risk of becoming ill must be treated. Sustainable use of antibiotics complements good animal husbandry practices.
- 4. Supervise use:** Antibiotics shall be used in accordance with all applicable regulatory requirements. The use of antibiotics for disease prevention, control or treatment shall occur only under the oversight of a veterinarian who meets all applicable requirements for training and certification. All uses and prescriptions must be based on current pharmacological information and principles. Antibiotics shall be used only in accordance with the product license requirements or as directed by a veterinarian.
- 5. People first:** Antibiotics that are in classes used in human medicine may be used in animals for disease treatment, control or prevention only in accordance with applicable regulatory requirements and after thorough consideration of alternatives, including the use of antibiotics belonging to classes not used in human medicine.
- 6. Limit exposure:** Exposure to antibiotics for disease treatment, control or prevention should be minimized by limiting treatment to ill animals or animals at risk of a specific disease, using the narrowest spectrum antibiotic, treating the fewest animals indicated, and treating only for as long as needed for the desired clinical response. The use of antibiotics for disease control or prevention should be reviewed regularly to determine continued need. Antibiotic use should be confined to appropriate clinical indications. Extra-label therapies should be prescribed only after other treatment options have been exhausted, and should be prescribed in accordance with the most up-to-date laws and regulations that govern drug use and in accordance with McDonald's Antibiotics Use Policy. Dispersal of antibiotics into the environment should be minimized.
- 7. Record keeping:** Suppliers must maintain accurate records of all antibiotic administrations for the purpose of certifying compliance with the policy, including the elimination of growth promotion uses of antibiotics belonging to classes of compounds approved for use in human medicine and compliance with the Guiding Principles for Sustainable Use. Records of extra-label therapies should be delineated.

## Compliance

- **Supplier certification:** Every supplier under this policy must certify in writing their commitment to abide by McDonald's Antibiotic Use Policy in all of their operations that supply McDonald's anywhere in the world regardless of local practices. Certification must include alignment of all policies and practices regarding the use of antibiotics.
- **Assurance:** Suppliers will maintain records of antibiotic use and document compliance through an internal assurance program and by regular audits.

## Implementation

- **Policy applied in "direct relationships":** McDonald's Antibiotic Use Policy will apply and compliance will be assured in those areas of our global supply chain where we have a "direct relationship", defined as facilities dedicated to producing products for McDonald's. The policy will be fully implemented in those areas by the end of 2004.
- **Progress reporting:** Suppliers not currently in compliance with this policy will be expected to share their implementation plans with McDonald's and report annually on progress toward achieving compliance.
- **Supply decisions:** With regards to supply where we do not have "direct relationships" and compliance is not mandatory, compliance will be a favorable factor in supply decisions. Additional measures leading to demonstrated, sustained reductions in the use of antibiotics belonging to classes approved for use in human medicine will also be considered a favorable factor in supply decisions.
- **Regular review:** It is our intention that McDonald's Antibiotic Use Policy does not conflict with government measures and that compliance is consistent with or more restrictive than all applicable laws. This policy will be updated as guided by new scientific knowledge.
- **Minimum global standard:** This policy provides a set of minimum global standards for antibiotic use. Any existing McDonald's policies or standards in individual markets that go beyond these minimum standards remain in effect.
- **Industry advocate:** McDonald's advocates the expansion and adoption of sustainable antibiotic use beyond areas in which we have "direct relationships," both within our supply chain and within the industry as a whole.

## Definitions

**Antibiotic:** This policy uses the term 'antibiotic' to refer to both "Substances of natural origin that are used for treatment of infection or disease that kills or inhibits the growth or multiplication of microorganisms" (*American Veterinary Medical Association Judicious Therapeutic Use of Antimicrobials*, <http://www.avma.org/scienact/jtua/jtua98.asp>), and synthetic agents that have an antibiotic effect (commonly referred to as antimicrobials.)

**Narrow Spectrum Antibiotic:** an antibiotic effective against a limited number of bacterial genera. Often applied to an antimicrobial active against either Gram-positive or Gram-negative bacteria.

**Broad Spectrum Antibiotic:** an antibiotic effective against a large number of bacterial genera; generally describes antibiotics effective against both Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria.

**Anticoccidial:** Antibiotics that are used to prevent or treat coccidia, single cell protozoan parasites that attack the intestinal tract and are especially prevalent when animals or birds are grouped together in large numbers.

Anticoccidials are extremely useful in most poultry rearing operations to prevent illness and treat infections.

**Disease Treatment:** Use of antibiotics, under the direction of a certified veterinarian, for the specific purpose of treating animals with an established disease or illness. Once the treatment is over and the animal is cured, the application of the antibiotic ceases. (Adapted from the World Veterinary Association's *Prudent Use of Antibiotics Global Basic Principles* and *Canadian Committee on Antibiotic Resistance*, <http://www.ccar-ccra.org/agriglos-e.htm>.)

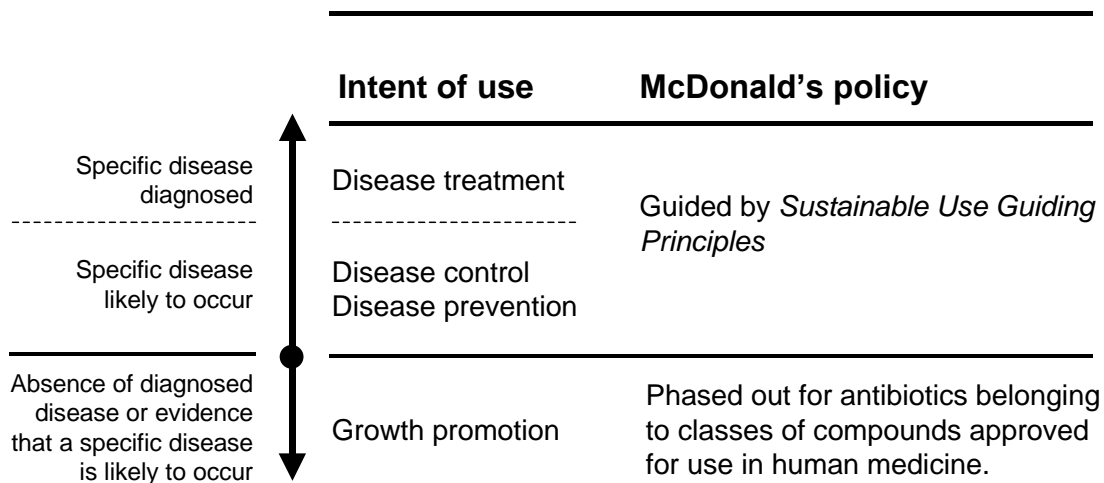
**Disease Control:** Disease control is defined for the purposes of this policy to be the administration of an antibiotic in a herd or flock situation, rather than to an individual animal, for a limited duration with the purpose of reducing incidence of a specific disease following exposure to the related infectious agent. The use of antibiotics for disease control is further described under McDonald's Antibiotics Policy's Sustainable Use Guiding Principle 6 – Limit exposure.

**Disease Prevention:** The administration of an antimicrobial to healthy animals prior to an expected exposure to an infectious agent or, following such an exposure prior to onset of laboratory-confirmed clinical disease. Generally, such usage is in a herd or flock situation and not an individual animal. (*WHO Global Principles For The Containment Of Antimicrobial Resistance In Animals Intended For Food*, [http://www.who.int/emc/diseases/zoo/who\\_global\\_principles/annex\\_1.htm](http://www.who.int/emc/diseases/zoo/who_global_principles/annex_1.htm).)

Use of antibiotics for prevention of disease can only be justified where it can be shown that a particular disease is present on the premises or is likely to occur.

(*WHO Global Principles for the Containment of Antimicrobial Resistance in Animals Intended for Food*, [http://www.who.int/emc/diseases/zoo/who\\_global\\_principles.html](http://www.who.int/emc/diseases/zoo/who_global_principles.html).)

**Growth Promotion:** The use of certain antimicrobials in low concentrations in feed in the absence of diagnosed disease or evidence that a specific disease is likely to occur which results in animals growing faster than animals not given such drugs over the same time period or for the same amount of feed consumed. (adapted from *Canadian Committee on Antibiotic Resistance*, <http://www.ccar-ccra.org/agriglos-e.htm>.)



**Sub-therapeutic Use:** There are many different and conflicting definitions of sub-therapeutic use of antibiotics. Since there is no commonly accepted definition, this policy does not use this terminology.

June 2003