



Resistance AND Responsibility

2024

Antibiotic use in supermarket supply chains

ALLIANCE TO
SAVE OUR
ANTIBIOTICS



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1. Executive Summary

This is the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics' fourth assessment of the antibiotics policies of major UK supermarkets. This report finds that no supermarkets have policies that are strong enough to ensure that their suppliers are fully compliant with new UK legislation prohibiting the use of antibiotics to compensate for poor animal welfare.

Most supermarket antibiotics policies still only cover own-brand foods and little or no progress has been made towards covering branded products. The scope of the policies needs to be extended to branded foods and to imported food in order to protect consumers and ensure that British farming standards are not undermined by imports.

The assessment criteria used in this report take into account new veterinary medicines legislation which came into force on 17th May 2024¹. The new legislation bans farmers from using antibiotics routinely. It also prohibits the use of antibiotics to “compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices”.

In line with the legislation, many supermarkets say that their suppliers must use good animal husbandry and farm management practices to achieve good animal health and welfare and to minimise the need for antibiotics.

Unfortunately, in practice low minimum husbandry standards in supermarket supply chains are resulting in excessive antibiotic use. The very intensive conditions in which most pigs and poultry in supermarket supply chains are kept result in poor hygiene, high levels of stress and avoidable disease. The use of very fast-growing breeds of broiler chickens, the early weaning of piglets and routine tail docking of piglets are all factors which are known to contribute to higher levels of antibiotic use.

The new legislation does not apply to imported food, which means that meat, fish, eggs and dairy imported into the UK can be legally produced with routine antibiotic use, including the use of antibiotics for growth promotion. Despite the potential for imported foods to be produced with irresponsible antibiotic use, few supermarkets include all imported foods in the scope of their antibiotics policies.

1.1 Criteria used for assessing supermarket policies

Does the
supermarket monitor
antibiotic use in their
supply chain?




1. Is the supermarket's publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?
 - 1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?
 - 1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients?
 - 1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients?
 - 1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?
2. Does the policy restrict the use of the "highest-priority critically important antibiotics" (fluoroquinolones and 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins) across the supply chain so that they are never used for prevention or for group treatments?
3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?
4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?
5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?
6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system?
7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets?
8. NEW: Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices, in line with the latest UK and EU legislation?



Does the
supermarket have
antibiotic-use
reduction targets?









1.2 Assessment table

 Yes, achieved.

 Partly achieved.

 No, not achieved.

	1. Publicly available policy is clear about coverage	1a. Policy covers all own brand products	1b. Policy covers all branded products	1c. Policy covers all UK sourced products and ingredients	1d. Policy covers all imported products and ingredients	2. Policy restricts the use of HPCIA's	3. Policy bans Colistin	4. Supermarket monitors antibiotic use in the supply chain	5. Supermarket publishes antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually	6. Supermarket publishes antibiotic-usage data by farm system	7. Supermarket has Antibiotic use reduction targets	8. Policy in line with the latest UK and EU legislation
	✓	—	✗	—	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	—
	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	—	—	—	✗	✗	✗	—
	✓	✓	✗	—	—	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	—
Iceland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
	✓	✓	✗	—	—	✓	—	✓	✗	✗	✓	—
MARKS & SPENCER	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	—
	✓	✓	✗	—	✗	✓	✓	✓	—	✗	✓	—
Sainsbury's	✓	✓	✗	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✗	✓	—
	✓	✓	—	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✗	✓	—
WAITROSE & PARTNERS	✓	✓	—	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✗	✓	—

1.3

Key findings:

- Supermarkets are failing to ensure that their suppliers are fully compliant with new legislation prohibiting the use of antibiotics to compensate for poor hygiene and inadequate animal husbandry². Most supermarkets continue to sell fast-growing breeds of broiler chickens, which require six to nine times more antibiotics per bird than slower-growing breeds³. Only M&S sells only slower-growing broilers, and Waitrose has committed to doing so from 2026.
- Supermarket antibiotics policies frequently only cover their own-brand ranges, and so branded products and imported foods can still contain animal products that have been produced on farms with irresponsible antibiotic use.
- M&S is the best-performing supermarket in terms of responsible antibiotic use policy. M&S's policy covers its full supply chain, as they do not stock branded animal products and apply their policy to imported goods. Tesco and Waitrose are the next-best performing supermarkets.
- M&S and Morrisons are the only supermarkets to have a full ban on the use of the antibiotic colistin, which is used as a last resort in human medicine.
- Only Aldi, M&S, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose publish good or acceptable data on their antibiotic use. ASDA, Coop, Iceland and Lidl publish no information on their antibiotic use.
- Iceland has a particularly weak antibiotics policy. It does not monitor antibiotic use in its supply chain and has no specific restrictions on the use of the highest-priority critically important antibiotics.
- Iceland and Lidl claim their prohibition on routine antibiotic use extends to imported food. However, Iceland, Lidl and ASDA have all been sourcing frozen chicken and turkey products from a Polish meat supplier that was the source of a major outbreak of antibiotic-resistant Salmonella in the UK⁴.
- The online supermarket Ocado is the only supermarket with no antibiotics policy. Ocado has told the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics that it is developing a policy and will publish it later this year. Ocado was not included in earlier Alliance assessments, and has not had as long to develop antibiotics policies and to benefit from advice and guidance from the Alliance. As a result, we have not included Ocado in the overall assessment table this time but will include it in our future assessments.

2.

Farm antibiotic use and the antibiotic-resistance crisis

Antibiotic resistance is a global crisis that threatens to undermine much of modern medicine, including procedures such as hip replacements, cancer chemotherapy, organ transplants, the treatment of pre-mature babies and caesarean sections^{5,6}.

This is not just a threat for the future. Antibiotic resistance is already here and having a major impact in the UK and around the world. Scientists estimate that around 7,600 deaths in the UK are caused by antibiotic resistance each year and 35,200 deaths are associated with antibiotic resistance^{7,8}. Globally, the statistics are 1.27 million deaths and 4.95 million deaths a year respectively⁹. In 2014, the Review on Antimicrobial Resistance (O'Neill Review), which was commissioned by the UK government, forecast that, if business as usual continued, by 2050 10 million people a year would die worldwide because of antibiotic resistance¹⁰.

In most cases, the overuse of antibiotics in human medicine is the main cause of resistance in human infections. However, it is widely accepted that the excessive use of antibiotics in farming is also contributing to the problem. According to the WHO, antibiotic use in humans

medicine, animals, and sometimes even on plants, are all drivers of antibiotic resistance¹¹.

Resistant bacteria can spread from farm animals to humans through the food chain. When farm animals are slaughtered, contamination of the carcasses can occur at the abattoir, and resistant bacteria can end up on meat. Resistant bacteria can also spread through direct contact with animals and via environmental spread. The Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics 2022 report into environmental pollution found that antibiotic-resistant bacteria, antibiotic-resistance genes and antibiotic residues were present in the soil and waterways near pig and poultry farms¹².

Globally, approximately 66 per cent of antibiotics are used to treat farm animals rather than people¹³. Most farm antibiotic use worldwide is routine and given as mass medication, to help fend off illness when animals are kept in in unhygienic

and stressful conditions that would otherwise cause disease.

In at least 36 countries antibiotics are still being given to animals just to fatten them up for slaughter more quickly¹⁴. Using antibiotics for growth promotion has obvious financial benefits for the producer but is a terrible use of a precious and finite medical resource. Since 2006, it has been illegal in the UK and the EU to use antibiotics for growth promotion, but unfortunately it remains legal in the UK to import animal-based foods produced with antibiotic growth promoters.

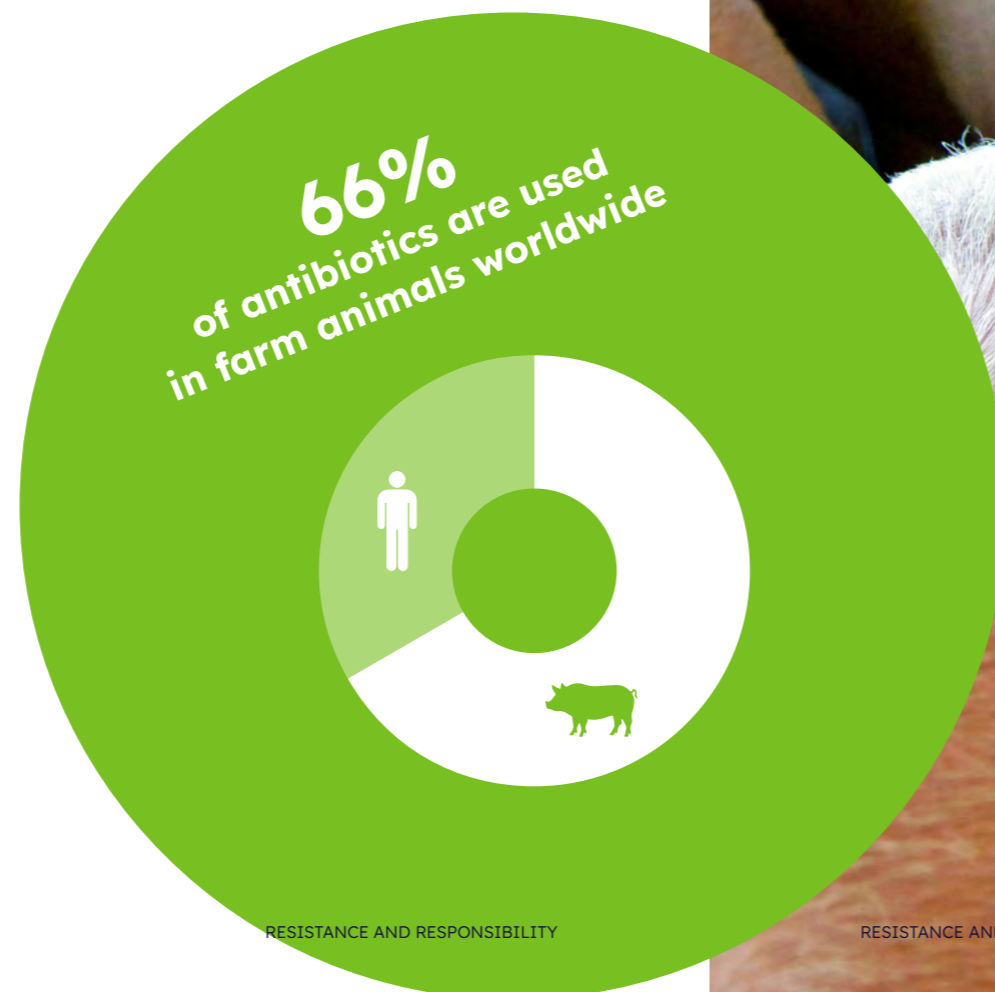
In the UK the on-farm use of antibiotics is lower than in many other countries, with data published in 2023 showing that animals account for about 30 per cent of antibiotic use¹⁵. However, use in the UK still isn't as targeted as it should be, as around 75% of antibiotics used in farming are still being used for group treatments, rather than to treat individual sick animals.

Fortunately, since 2014 UK farm antibiotic use has been cut by 59% and European farm antibiotic use has been cut by 53% since 2011^{16,17}. However, worldwide, farm antibiotic use continues to increase. The latest World Organization Animal Health report on farm antibiotic use estimates that, globally, use has gone up by 2% between 2019 and 2021¹⁸. Scientists have forecast that global farm antibiotic use will rise by a further 8% by 2030¹⁹. This rise is likely to be driven by the continued growth in consumer demand for livestock products in middle-income countries and a shift to large-scale, intensive pig and chicken farms where antimicrobials are

frequently used routinely.

The ongoing use of antibiotic growth promoters in some countries, weak international regulations on farm antibiotic use, and growing use of antibiotics in world livestock production are all threats to the health of British consumers, as resistant bacteria can be present on imported meat, dairy, fish and eggs.

This is why stricter government regulation of food imports is needed. It also means that supermarkets must take responsibility for their foreign supply chains and ensure that their antibiotics policies also apply to imported food.



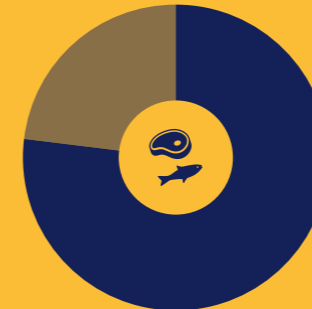


Box 1

Food Industry Initiative on Antimicrobials

Food Industry Initiative on ANTIMICROBIALS

77% of people in the UK buy their meat and fish from a supermarket



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 aquaculture²⁴. Nine of the supermarkets assessed in this report are members of the FIIA. Only Iceland and Ocado are not currently members.

The FIIA makes four main commitments:

- Restrict the use of the highest-priority critically important antibiotics, so that they are only used as a last resort and when alternative treatments of equal efficacy do not exist.
- Stop routine preventative use. Preventative use must not be used to compensate for poor hygiene or in place of improvements to husbandry that could reduce the need for treatments.
- Measure antibiotic use. Farm-level data to be submitted to a centralised system within each sector.
- Support of the farming supply base. Members will ensure that the farming supply base understands what responsible antibiotic use is and how collecting data contributes to achieving it.

These are welcome commitments, although it is disappointing that the FIIA does not encourage members to publish antibiotic-usage data.

3. Why supermarkets?

The supermarkets assessed in this report have a combined share of the UK grocery market estimated at 96.7%²⁰. The market dominance of UK supermarkets means they are hugely influential in how farm animals are raised.

Indeed, according to a 2024 YouGov poll, 77% of people in the UK buy their meat and fish from a supermarket, either online or in-store²¹. This is why the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics is assessing the major UK supermarket antibiotics policies, for the fourth time, to see to what extent antibiotics are being used responsibly in supermarket supply chains.

Supermarkets are the gatekeepers for animal-based products in the UK, standing between the shopping public and the farmers supplying the primary ingredients. Supermarket antibiotics policies dictate whether, or not, the farms used to source our meat, dairy, fish and

eggs contribute to the growing global crisis of antibiotic resistance or whether they help preserve our vital antibiotics into the future.

Our past assessments have shown supermarkets making some significant progress with the introduction, or improvement of their antibiotics policies. For our first assessment, published in 2017, only five of the supermarkets had policies banning routine preventative antibiotic use, but when we published our third assessment, in 2021, all ten supermarkets had this ban, although it generally only covered own-brand products of UK origin²².

The strengthening of supermarket policies, including the introduction of greater restrictions on the use of antibiotics which are classified by the World Health Organization as highest-priority critically important in human medicine (HPCIA), has undoubtedly made a significant contribution to reductions in antibiotic use that have occurred in the UK over the past decade. Total farm antibiotic sales have been cut by 59% since 2014, and the use of the HPCIA has been cut by 82% over the same period. In 2022, there was no use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin, for the first time since data on the use of this antibiotic began to be published²³.

It has also been encouraging to see that the supermarkets, together some other members of the food industry, have come together to establish the Food Industry Initiative on Antimicrobials, in an attempt to develop coherent minimum standards for the entire industry (see Box 1).

Despite the progress being made, most supermarkets are still not achieving truly responsible antibiotics policies, as the scope of their policies often omits imports and fails to sufficiently address the need to improve animal husbandry.

3.1

Supermarkets need to take action on animal husbandry

New Veterinary Medicines Regulations, introduced on 17 May 2024, say that antibiotics can no longer be used “to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices” (see Box 2).

There is a large body of evidence linking husbandry methods, animal health and welfare and the use of antibiotics. A report published in February 2024 by the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics found that many of the practices of modern intensive farming are putting animals under excessive stress, causing poor health and leading to unacceptable antibiotic use²⁵.

After reviewing a large amount of scientific evidence, and data on antibiotic use from the UK and elsewhere, the Alliance’s report found that practices linked with increased antibiotic use include the early weaning of piglets, tail docking of piglets, low space allowances, and a lack of enrichment (such as straw bedding) for animals kept indoors and lack of access to the outdoors. Furthermore, the breed of animals used is particularly important: very fast-growing broiler chickens can receive six to nine times more antibiotics per bird than slower-growing breeds²⁶, and hyper-prolific sows, which can give birth to an average of 37 piglets a year²⁷, can struggle to produce enough milk for all

their piglets^{28,29}, making early weaning necessary, and dairy cows genetically selected for extremely high milk production can suffer from more health problems³⁰ and need greater antibiotic use.

Considering the new legislation, it is therefore important that supermarkets improve husbandry practices and use slower-growing breeds on their supplier farms to ensure that these farms are not using antibiotics to compensate for poor husbandry methods.

Importantly, how animals are reared matters to the UK public. Despite pressures on household budgets and price, a recent ethics study run by retail analysts IGD found that 84% of shoppers see animal welfare as an important factor when making purchasing decisions and that 79% thought that method of production was important³¹. UK Government data from 2022 also backs this up, showing that animal welfare was amongst the top ten concerns of respondents in the UK, with 50% concerned about this.

Box 2

New regulations on farm antibiotics for Great Britain

On 17 May 2024, new Veterinary Medicines Regulations (VMR), which introduce important restrictions on the use of antibiotics in livestock, came into force in England, Scotland and Wales³².

The new VMR contain some very welcome measures, aimed at reducing or eliminating antibiotic overuse in farming, including:

- Antibiotics may not be “used routinely”.
- Antibiotics may not be “used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices”.
- Antibiotics may only be prescribed for prophylactic purposes “in exceptional circumstances where the risk of an infection or of an infectious disease is very high and where the consequences of not prescribing the product are likely to be severe”.
- The use of antibiotics for group prophylaxis will only be allowed when: “(a) the rationale for prescribing the product to the group of animals is clearly recorded by the veterinary surgeon prescribing it; and (b) a management review is carried out by a veterinary surgeon at, or as soon as reasonably practicable after, administration of the product in order to identify factors and implement measures for the purpose of eliminating the need for any future such administration.”

The new British rules are based on regulations the European Union (EU) introduced over two years earlier, on 28 January 2022³³, but unfortunately not all of the EU’s regulations have been adopted in the UK³⁴.

In addition to the laws now in force in the UK, the EU has banned all preventative treatments of groups of animals and has introduced a requirement for all Member States to collect antibiotic-use data by farm-animal species. The first EU-wide report providing farm antibiotic-use data will be published in March 2025³⁵.

These strong EU rules make it much easier for supermarkets to extend their antibiotics policies to EU imports, and in particular to collect antibiotic-use data for all of their European suppliers. Unfortunately, the failure to introduce mandatory antibiotic-use data in the UK, and to rely instead on voluntary industry data collection, makes it more difficult for supermarkets to collect data from their UK suppliers, as many dairy, beef and lamb farms are not currently participating in data collection³⁶.

Government figures show that annually the UK imports



3.2 Supermarkets need to extend the scope of their policies

Many supermarket antibiotics policies apply only to UK-produced own-brand ranges, as retailers tend to have greater control over the methods of production used in these supply chains.

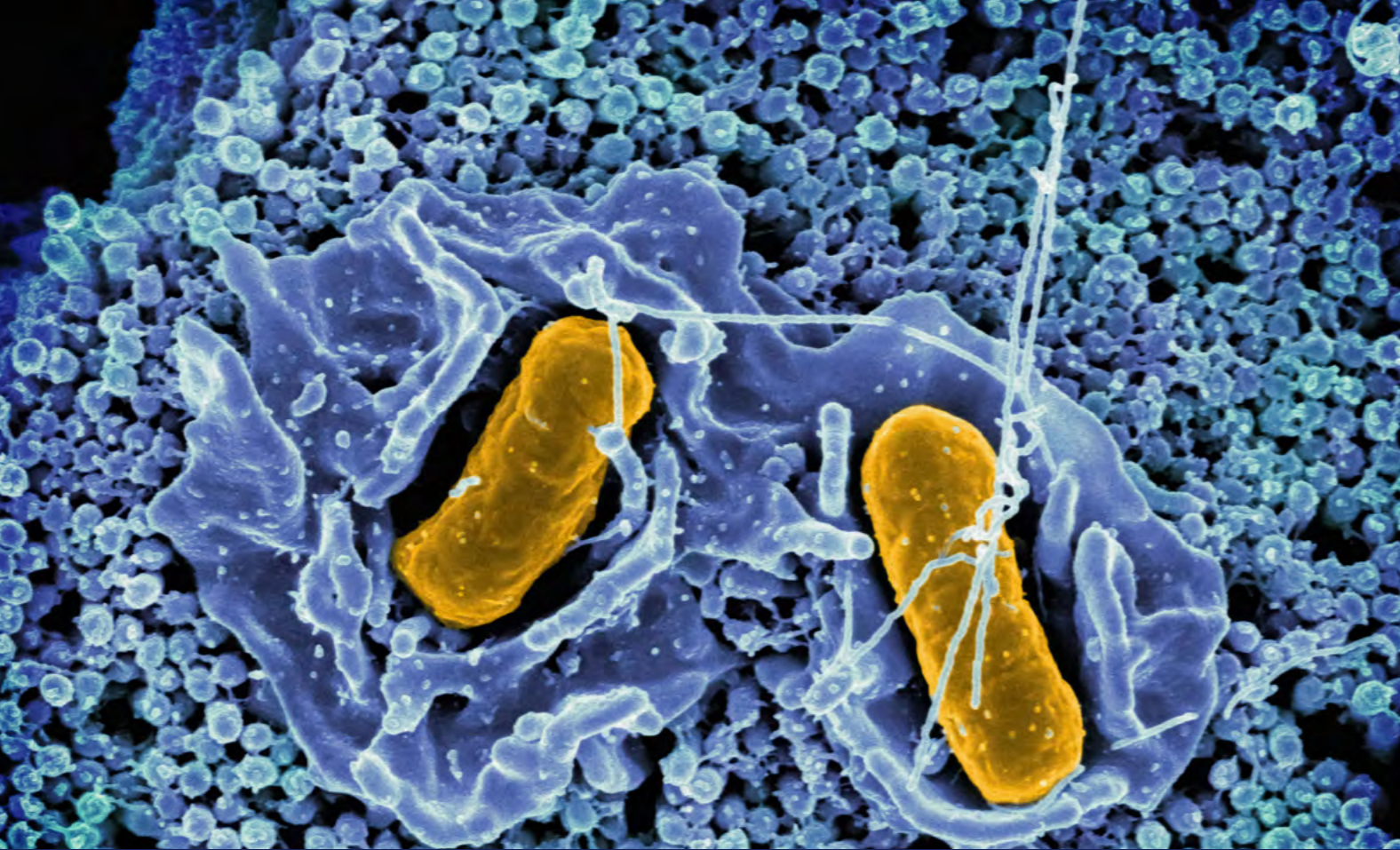
Own-brand lines make up 52% of total grocery spending in Britain³⁷. However, this means that nearly half of grocery spending on branded products are not covered by supermarket antibiotics policies.

Furthermore, most of these policies also don't cover imports despite the fact that the UK imports substantial amounts of meat, fish, eggs and dairy from abroad. Government figures show that the UK imports £5.8bn of meat, £3.1bn of fish and £3.5bn of dairy and eggs each year³⁸. Approximately 46% of the UK supply of "dressed carcass weight equivalent" of pig meat is imported, for beef the figure is 28%, for lamb it is 24% and for poultry 21%³⁹.

Extending antibiotics policies to imported food is particularly important as the new UK regulations on farm antibiotic use (see Box 2) do not apply to imported foods. Most meat, fish, dairy and eggs imported into the UK are of EU origin, and the EU has rules on farm antibiotic use that are even stronger than the UK's,

so in theory it should be possible for supermarkets to avoid importing animal-derived foods produced with excessive antibiotic use.

However, EU data shows that some Member States, like Cyprus, Poland, Italy and Spain still have extremely high antibiotic use, suggesting EU regulations are not being properly followed in these countries. The Polish chicken scandal shows that British supermarkets are selling imported meat produced with irresponsible levels of antibiotic use, with serious, and even fatal consequences (see Box 3).



Box 3

The Polish chicken scandal

ASDA, Lidl and Iceland have been sourcing frozen chicken and turkey products from a Polish meat supplier, SuperDrob, that was the source of a major outbreak of antibiotic-resistant Salmonella in the UK, according to an investigation published in June 2023 by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, ITV and the Guardian⁴⁰. SuperDrob admitted to using fluoroquinolones, which are antibiotics classified as highest-priority critically important in human medicine, and colistin, a last-resort antibiotic in humans, on their farms⁴¹.

Polish poultry products continue to be linked with Salmonella outbreaks throughout Europe, including in the UK⁴². As a result, according to ITV News and the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, UK officials have been considering a possible ban on the importation of Polish poultry products⁴³.

Poland is the second-highest user of farm antibiotics in the European Union, after Cyprus⁴⁴. Despite an EU ban on routine antibiotic use and on preventative group treatments, farm antibiotic use continues to increase in Poland. In 2022, Polish farm antibiotic use was over 7.5 times higher per livestock unit than in the UK, strongly suggesting that the laws on routine use and preventative use are not being properly implemented.

These findings raise serious concerns about the credibility of some supermarket claims that they do not permit routine prophylactic use. Both Iceland and Lidl claim that their prohibition on routine prophylactic antibiotic use applies to imports, and yet both have been importing Polish poultry products.

3.3

Supermarkets' marketing of animal-based foods

Global meat production rose 16% between 2012 and 2022⁴⁵, while dairy production also rose 22% in that time. Increasing meat and dairy production and increasing intensification of production are major causes of increasing global farm antibiotic use^{46,47}.

However, in the UK, there are trends towards more meat-free diets⁴⁸. Government statistics show that meat eating in the UK fell by 14% between 2022 and 2012 and, in 2022, meat eating at home reached its lowest level since records began in 1974⁴⁹. Inflation and the recent cost-of-living crisis have undoubtedly contributed to these reductions, although some people are also reducing or eliminating their meat consumption because of concerns over the environment and animal health and welfare.

Despite this trend, overall UK retail sales of meat and fish remain very high, standing at over £8.5 billion in 2023. In 2023, fresh poultry (chicken, turkey and duck) sales were £2.3bn, sales of other meats were £4.6bn and fish sales were £1.6bn⁵⁰. Data from market-research organisation Kantar shows that 56.9% of

main meals eaten at home contain meat, fish or poultry, this is in comparison to vegetarian meals at 24.8% and plant-based meals at 18.3%⁵¹.

Supermarkets aren't just meeting this consumer demand for animal-based products, they are fuelling it by heavily marketing meat and dairy. In 2023, 21.5% of supermarket multibuy (BOGOF) deals were on meat and dairy foods, compared to just 4.5% of multibuy deals on fruit and vegetables and 4.2% on staple carbohydrates⁵².

In the UK 77% of shoppers buy their meat and fish from supermarkets⁵³, so excessive promotion of meat and dairy products by supermarkets can have a major impact on animal products consumed, and on antibiotic use.

4.

Methodology

Our assessment of supermarket antibiotics policies is desk based and solely reliant on the published and publicly available antibiotics policies of the supermarkets, on their consumer-facing websites.

Searches are carried out for references to antibiotic/antimicrobial on the various websites of the 11 supermarkets included in the assessment. We have included all relevant references found. Some supermarkets included all their antibiotics policies in one up-to-date document. Other supermarkets spread their antibiotics policies over several documents relating to animal welfare, supply chain, and antibiotics.

All antibiotics policies are then assessed by considering whether they meet the standards set out in our assessment questions. The assessment questions have been updated to take into account new veterinary medicines regulations which came into force on 17th May 2024 (see Box 2).

We wrote to the supermarkets in December 2023 and again in May 2024. In the first letter we highlighted that we would be doing desk-based research on the supermarket's published policies for a report and offered our support in developing and improving their antibiotics policies. In the second we shared our revised questions, reiterated our offer of support, shared the links we had found for that supermarket, asked

for the supermarket to alert us to any links that we had missed and, where appropriate, asked for clarification on any questions that we had, based on our initial research. Finally, we wrote to all the supermarkets in July 2024 to inform them of our August 6th deadline to make any changes to their corporate antibiotics policies.

What is represented in this report is correct to the best of our knowledge. In the Evidence for Scoring section p34, we provide the evidence used to make our assessment.

5.

The Supermarkets assessed



- 1. Is the supermarket's publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage? ✔
- 1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients? -
- 1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients? ✘
- 1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients? -
- 1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients? ✘
- 2. Does the policy restrict the use of the "highest-priority critically important antibiotics"? ✔
- 3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin? ✘
- 4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain? ✔
- 5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data at regular intervals? ✔
- 6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system? ✘
- 7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets? ✔
- 8. Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices? -

Overall comment:

Aldi has a clear antibiotic use policy, but the scope of the policy is limited. Aldi's own-brand fresh meat, dairy and eggs are certified by assurance schemes which apply some antibiotic-use restrictions. However, major gaps remain in Aldi's policy, including on minimising the need for antibiotics by improving husbandry and animal health and welfare. Aldi is a member of the FIIA (see Box 1).

Progress since last assessment:

Aldi has published antibiotic-use data for the first time. This is welcome, although the data shows a large increase in use in chickens in 2022 compared with 2021, which highlights the need for health and welfare improvements.

Key Positives:

The policy bans routine use and restricts the use of HPClAs. Aldi collects and publishes antibiotic-use data, and works towards RUMA targets to reduce antibiotic use.

Areas for improvement:

Aldi should ensure all products, including ingredients, branded and imported products are covered by their policy. The policy also needs to reflect legislative changes and ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices. Much better husbandry standards are needed to achieve this. Aldi should ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin.



- 1. Is the supermarket's publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage? ✘
- 1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients? ✘
- 1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients? ✘
- 1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients? ✘
- 1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients? ✘
- 2. Does the policy restrict the use of the "highest-priority critically important antibiotics"? -
- 3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin? -
- 4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain? -
- 5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data at regular intervals? ✘
- 6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system? ✘
- 7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets? ✘
- 8. Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices? -

Overall comment:

ASDA has one of the weakest supermarket antibiotics policies. It has a weaker policy than previously as it no longer publishes up-to-date antibiotic-use data. ASDA was also named as being one of the supermarkets importing Polish chicken which was the cause of a major outbreak of antibiotic-resistant Salmonella in the UK (see Box 3). ASDA is a member of the FIIA (see Box 1).

Progress since last assessment:

There has been no progress since our last assessment.

Key Positives:

All ASDA own-brand meat is assured to a minimum of the Red Tractor standard or an equivalent standard. This can help minimise the use of the highest-priority critically important antibiotics, which

can only be used as a last resort under Red Tractor standards. ASDA says it is "actively working towards reducing antibiotics in our supply chain through our farmer groups, best practice, and supplier partnerships".

Areas for improvement:

ASDA must be clearer about its policy scope and strengthen all its commitments. It should restrict the use of the HPClAs, ban colistin, and collect and publish antibiotic-use data. Animal-husbandry standards need to be significantly improved to ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices.



1. Is the supermarket's publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?	✓
1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?	✓
1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients?	✗
1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients?	–
1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?	–
2. Does the policy restrict the use of the "highest-priority critically important antibiotics"?	✓
3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin?	✗
4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?	✓
5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data at regular intervals?	✗
6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system?	✗
7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets?	✓
8. Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices?	–

Overall comment:

The Co-op has an extensive policy, which details the approach to animal welfare and antibiotic use for each species. The policy states that they have a target to "Lead on the responsible use of antibiotics within our supply chain and help educate our supply chains in best practice". The Co-op is however rated below some other supermarkets as it does not publish antibiotic-use data nor ban the use of colistin. The Co-op is a member of the FIIA (see Box 1).

Progress since last assessment:

The Co-op now has a clearer position on monitoring antibiotic use in the supply chain. It has lowered its stocking density for its fresh chicken production, which should help reduce disease and the need for antibiotics.

Key Positives:

The Co-op is attempting to improve the health, resilience and welfare of its livestock to reduce the need for antibiotics and achieve its reduction targets. However, significantly more can be done in this area.

Areas for improvement:

The scope of the policy should be extended to all products. Antibiotic-use data, including by farming system, should be published. Colistin use should be banned. To ensure that, in line with new legislation, antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices, the Co-op should cease using fast-growing breeds of chickens, move to later weaning of piglets and end all routine tail docking of piglets in its supply chain.

Iceland

1. Is the supermarket's publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?	✓
1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?	✓
1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients?	✓
1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients?	✓
1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?	✓
2. Does the policy restrict the use of the "highest-priority critically important antibiotics"?	✗
3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin?	✗
4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?	✗
5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data at regular intervals?	✗
6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system?	✗
7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets?	✗
8. Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices?	✗

Overall comment:

Iceland has a particularly poor antibiotics policy, which consists of a single four-line paragraph. The policy bans preventative use and says it applies to all animals used in the manufacture of Iceland products. The policy says "This is a contractual obligation for our suppliers overseen by our technical team." However, Iceland was one of the supermarkets importing Polish chicken which caused a major outbreak of antibiotic-resistant Salmonella in the UK (see Box 3), raising concerns that antibiotics are in fact being overused in Iceland's supply chain. Iceland remains the only supermarket that we previously assessed that is not a member of the FIIA (see Box 1).

Progress since last assessment:

There is no evidence of any changes since the last assessment.

Key Positives:

Iceland's very brief statement claims to have banned preventative antibiotic use across the entire product range. However, since Iceland does not monitor antibiotic use in its supply chain, it is unclear whether this is being achieved in practice.

Areas for improvement:

Iceland needs a much more detailed policy that restricts HPCIA's, bans colistin, and collects and publishes antibiotic-use data by animal species and farming system. Animal-husbandry standards need to be significantly improved to ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices.



1. Is the supermarket's publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?	✓
1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?	✓
1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients?	✗
1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients?	–
1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?	–
2. Does the policy restrict the use of the "highest-priority critically important antibiotics"?	✓
3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin?	–
4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?	✓
5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data at regular intervals?	✗
6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system?	✗
7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets?	✓
8. Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices?	–

Overall comment:

Lidl has a clear policy, covering 80% of their animal protein products by volume. The policy, however, has not been updated since 2021 and no new antibiotic-use data has been published. Lidl was named as one of the supermarkets importing Polish chicken (see Box 3). This is significant since Lidl claims that it does not permit its international suppliers to use antibiotics preventatively or irresponsibly. Lidl is a member of the FIIA (see Box 1).

Progress since last assessment:

The policy and products covered by the policy remain unchanged from our previous assessment and no recent antibiotic-use data has been published.

Key Positives:

Lidl is working to RUMA antibiotic-reduction targets. It has partnered with The University of Glasgow School of Veterinary Medicine on a four-year research and innovation project, supporting post-graduate research in antimicrobial resistance (AMR), specific to the dairy sector in Scotland. The project aims to help the industry deliver responsible antibiotic usage.

Areas for improvement:

Lidl's policy needs to be updated and widened in scope. Antibiotic-use data should be published and colistin should be fully banned. To ensure that, in line with new legislation, antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices, Lidl should cease using fast-growing breeds of chickens and require later weaning of piglets in its supply chain.



1. Is the supermarket's publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?	✓
1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?	✓
1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients?	✓
1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients?	✓
1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?	✓
2. Does the policy restrict the use of the "highest-priority critically important antibiotics"?	✓
3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin?	✓
4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?	✓
5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data at regular intervals?	✓
6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system?	–
7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets?	✓
8. Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices?	–

Overall comment:

M&S continues to have the most comprehensive antibiotics policy, with full coverage of its supply chain. It has fully banned colistin, and is the only supermarket that is publishing any data on antibiotic use by farming system. M&S is a member of the FIIA (see Box 1).

Progress since last assessment:

M&S has made its ban on the use of colistin much clearer in its latest policy, published in July 2024.

Key Positives:

M&S has banned colistin, and is the only supermarket publishing any data on antibiotic use by farming system. M&S has some welcome policies on animal husbandry, and will adopt the Better Chicken Commitment in 2026.

These policies should help reduce the

need for antibiotics.

Areas for improvement:

M&S should publish antibiotic-use data for pigs, beef and lamb. There is still room for significant improvements in M&S's minimum husbandry standards. Current standards do not fully ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices, as required by new UK legislation. M&S needs to end routine tail docking of piglets on its supplier farms. Achieving this will reduce the need for antibiotics.



1. Is the supermarket's publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?	✓
1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?	✓
1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients?	✗
1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients?	—
1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?	✗
2. Does the policy restrict the use of the "highest-priority critically important antibiotics"?	✓
3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin?	✓
4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?	✓
5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data at regular intervals?	—
6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system?	✗
7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets?	✓
8. Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices?	—

Overall comment:

The Morrisons antibiotics policy lags behind the best performers because of a lack of published data on antibiotic use and some policies that have limited scope. More action is needed on animal husbandry, although there are some good policies on the HPCIA and colistin. Morrisons is a member of the FIIA (see Box 1).

Progress since last assessment:

No significant progress has been made since our last assessment.

Key Positives:

Morrisons is one of only two supermarkets to have a ban on the use of colistin for its fresh meat and dairy products. The use of HPCIA is also restricted. Morrisons measures antibiotic

use by species and work to RUMA reduction targets.

Areas for improvement:

The scope of the policy should be extended to all products. Up-to-date antibiotic-use data, including by farming system, should be published. To ensure that, in line with new legislation, antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices, Morrisons should cease using fast-growing breeds of chickens, move to later weaning of piglets and end all routine tail docking of piglets in its supply chain.

Sainsbury's

1. Is the supermarket's publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?	✓
1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?	✓
1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients?	✗
1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients?	—
1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?	—
2. Does the policy restrict the use of the "highest-priority critically important antibiotics"?	✓
3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin?	—
4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?	✓
5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data at regular intervals?	✓
6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system?	✗
7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets?	✓
8. Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices?	—

Overall comment:

Sainsbury's has a detailed antibiotics policy. It has good data collection and has made good progress towards meeting RUMA antibiotic-reduction targets. Making further progress will require significant improvements to animal husbandry and animal health and welfare. Sainsbury's is a member of the FIIA (see Box 1).

Progress since last assessment:

Sainsbury's has updated its policy in an attempt to make it consistent with the new UK legislation on veterinary medicines which requires that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices. Greater detail has been added to the data that Sainsbury's publishes on its antibiotic use.

Key Positives:

Sainsbury's has collected antibiotic-use data for many species and provided an indication of the usage levels for all of these species. Sainsbury's has been quick to recognise the importance of their policy being compliant with new legislation.

Areas for improvement:

Sainsbury's needs to extend the scope of its policy to cover all animal products it sells. A full ban on colistin is still needed. Antibiotic-use data by farming system should be published.

Sainsbury's still needs to take significant action on animal husbandry to ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices. It should cease using fast-growing breeds of chickens, move to later weaning of piglets and end all routine tail docking of piglets in its supply chain.



1. Is the supermarket's publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?	✓
1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?	✓
1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients?	–
1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients?	–
1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?	–
2. Does the policy restrict the use of the "highest-priority critically important antibiotics"?	✓
3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin?	–
4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?	✓
5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data at regular intervals?	✓
6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system?	✗
7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets?	✓
8. Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices?	–

Overall comment:

In addition to its antibiotics policy, Tesco publishes a detailed annual Antibiotics Report with good information on its antibiotic use. Tesco's antibiotic use has been reducing in all major species over the past few years. However, it could be significantly lower if improvements were made to minimum husbandry standards. Tesco does not publish any data on antibiotic use by farming system, even though its comprehensive data-collection system probably means it possesses such data for at least some species. Tesco is a member of the FIIA (see Box 1).

Progress since last assessment:

In its latest Antibiotics Report, Tesco has included for the first time a clear statement that antibiotics should not be used at the expense of sound management practice, and that Veterinary Health Plans and medicines records are reviewed to identify poor animal husbandry. Tesco also claims

that antibiotic growth promoters and prophylactic antibiotic use is not permitted in branded products sold by Tesco, but it is unclear how this is implemented in practice.

Key Positives:

Tesco publishes up-to-date data on antibiotic use for all major species. Antibiotic use across most of Tesco's supply chain continues to decrease. It also has restrictions on the use of HPCIA's.

Areas for improvement:

Tesco needs to extend its full antibiotics policy to branded products. Tesco should publish data on antibiotic use by farming system. Tesco still needs to take significant action on animal husbandry to ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices. It should cease using fast-growing breeds of chickens, move to later weaning of piglets and end all routine tail docking of piglets in its supply chain.



1. Is the supermarket's publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?	✓
1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?	✓
1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients?	–
1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients?	–
1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?	–
2. Does the policy restrict the use of the "highest-priority critically important antibiotics"?	✓
3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin?	–
4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?	✓
5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data at regular intervals?	✓
6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system?	✗
7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets?	✓
8. Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices?	–

Overall comment:

Waitrose has a clear policy which applies to 100% of their own-brand supply chains. It publishes the most comprehensive up-to-date antibiotic-use data by species of all the supermarkets, although it does not publish data on use by farming system. Waitrose has higher animal-welfare standards than most supermarkets, and is committed to implement the Better Chicken Commitment in 2026, which should help reduce the need for antibiotics. Waitrose is a member of the FIIA (see Box 1).

Progress since last assessment:

Waitrose continues to publish updated antibiotic-use data for many species.

Key Positives:

Waitrose publishes data on antibiotic use for all major species and several minor species. The policy is clear about restricting the HPCIA's and aims to

reduce use of all antibiotics. Waitrose says it strongly encourages suppliers to avoid metaphylactic antibiotic use (group treatments where some of the animals are diagnosed as sick) where possible.

Areas for improvement:

Waitrose should publish antibiotic-use data by farming system, and introduce a clear ban on colistin across its supply chain. While Waitrose does have some welcome policies on animal husbandry and animal health and welfare, the high level of tail docking of its UK piglets suggests that standards for pigs need to be improved. Improving pig husbandry, and introducing the Better Chicken Commitment should help reduce the need for antibiotics.

Overall comment:

We are assessing Ocado for the first time as, despite not having bricks-and-mortar supermarket stores, Ocado is a fast-growing retailer which now accounts for 1.8% of the groceries market⁵⁴. Ocado was the fastest-growing grocer over the 12 weeks to 12 May 2024, with sales up by 12.4% - well ahead of the total online market, which saw sales increase by 5.4%⁵⁵. It has own-brand ranges of meat, fish, dairy and egg products.

Ocado has no antibiotics policy published online. The supermarket only mentions antibiotics briefly, stating that it applies RUMA antibiotic targets to its suppliers. Ocado has told the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics that it will be publishing an antibiotics policy by the end of 2024, as part of a new animal-welfare policy. Ocado, like Iceland, is not a member of the FIIA (see Box 1).

Progress since last assessment:

n/a

Key Positives:

The Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics has met with Ocado to discuss the development of an antibiotics policy. Ocado told the Alliance they will publish a policy by the end of 2024.

Ocado is committed to all own-brand meat, dairy and eggs achieving the “Better” level for the Sourcing Better framework established by Eating Better by 2030. Responsible antibiotic use is a key component of the Sourcing Better framework⁵⁶. The “Better” level of the framework includes a commitment to publishing antibiotic-use data, and to ensuring that most antibiotic use for pigs, cattle and sheep is for individual treatments and not group treatments.

Areas for improvement:

As the only major retailer lacking an antibiotics policy, Ocado is lagging behind its competitors. Ocado must produce and publish an antibiotics policy with a clear scope and with clear commitments aimed at achieving responsible use as soon as possible.

6. Evidence for scoring



Websites examined:

[Aldi UK animal welfare policies and performance](#), updated July 2023, (contains full antibiotics policy)

[Animal welfare policy / responsible use of antimicrobials](#)

[Corporate responsibility](#) and [fairer, geener, healthier](#)

Evidence:

1. Is the supermarket’s publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?

Yes – The scope of the antibiotics policy is “All own-label fresh primary poultry, meat, eggs, dairy”. In addition, the policy states: “We expect all our suppliers and business partners to adhere to these standards, which form part of our contractual relationships. Our suppliers and business partners are expected to apply these standards to all sub-suppliers throughout the production process.”

1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?

Yes/No – The policy covers “All own-label fresh primary poultry, meat, eggs, dairy” but it doesn’t mention fish or ingredients in pre-prepared products.

1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients?

No – No branded products are covered by the policy.

1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients?

Yes/No – The Animal Welfare policy document states: “Country of Origin - All own label fresh primary poultry, beef, pork, shell eggs and milk must be sourced from the UK all year round”. As own-label fresh primary poultry, meat, eggs and dairy are covered in the antibiotics policy, these UK products are covered. However, UK production which goes towards branded products or for ingredients is not covered.

1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?

No – No imported products are covered by the antibiotics policy.

2. Does the policy restrict the use of the “highest-priority critically important antibiotics” (fluoroquinolones and 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins) across the supply chain so that they are never used for prevention or for group treatments?

Yes – The policy says: “Category B Antimicrobials: 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins, colistin and fluoroquinolones must not be used on supplying farms other than in exceptional circumstances where welfare problems would otherwise occur, and where their use is backed up by appropriate bacteriology or other epidemiological evidence. Category C Antimicrobials: Macrolides

and potentiated amoxicillin may only be used where there is a clear and justifiable benefit to animal welfare over other classes of antimicrobial”.

3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?

No – Colistin is not banned.

4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?

Yes – The policy states “We record welfare outcome data and antibiotic usage from our fresh pork, chicken, turkey, eggs, beef and fresh milk suppliers. We require these suppliers to submit data through our welfare reporting platform, managed by Map of Ag. The ALDI UK Sustainability team assess progress regularly with Map of Ag against an industry benchmark and we work collaboratively with our suppliers to take action where any potential issues are identified.”

5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?

Yes – Data is published for chickens, turkeys, dairy cows. Usage is collected for pigs and beef but not published. No data is published for sheep and lamb.

6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system?

No.

7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets?

Yes – Aldi works towards RUMA targets

8. NEW: Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene,

inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices, in line with the latest UK and EU legislation?

Yes/No – In its antibiotics policy, Aldi commits to reduction or eradication of enzootic disease (i.e. recurring disease in animals) “via changes to farm infrastructure and management strategies”. This is a positive statement. Aldi also says it supports the principles of the European Commission’s Guidelines for the prudent use of antimicrobials in veterinary medicine (2015/C 299/04). These EU guidelines talk about the need to alter husbandry to avoid disease. Aldi uses assurance schemes like Red Tractor, and sells a number of higher-welfare products, including free-range, RSPCA or organic. However, while antibiotic use for organic production is much lower than intensive production, antibiotic use for Red Tractor and RSPCA pig farms can be high⁵⁷. Aldi should take far more action on husbandry, by ending the use of fast-growing broilers, early weaning of piglets or tail docking of piglets, and by lowering stocking densities.



Websites examined:

[Antibiotics policy](#)

[Animal welfare \(with further information on antibiotics policy\)](#)

[Reducing antibiotics in food production](#)

[Farming and nature, animal](#)

[welfare](#) (with further information on antibiotics policy)

[Creating change for better documents and downloads](#)

Evidence:

1. Is the supermarket’s publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?

No – There is no clear statement regarding the scope in the antibiotics policy.

1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?

No.

1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients?

No.

1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients

No.

1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?

No.

2. Does the policy restrict the use of the “highest-priority critically important antibiotics” (fluoroquinolones and 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins) across the supply chain so that they are never used for prevention or for group treatments?

Yes/No – The policy says: “We are working with suppliers to ensure the use of 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins and fluoroquinolones is limited to situations where veterinary guidance justifies the use.” This statement suggests that ASDA has not yet managed to fully restrict the use of HPCIs to use justified by veterinary guidance.

3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?

Yes/No – Colistin is not completely banned, except for in their own-brand farmed sea bass and sea bream which, according to the Animal Welfare report, are 100% Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) Certified. ASC rules state that antibiotics designated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as ‘critically important’ can never be used on any ASC certified farm.

4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?

Yes/No – ASDA has collected antibiotic-use data in the past, but it is not entirely clear whether it is still doing so. No data has been published for any year since 2018. On the other hand, ASDA says in its Animal Welfare report, “We are actively working towards reducing antibiotics in our supply chain through our farmer groups, best practice, and supplier partnerships”, which suggests that ASDA is probably collecting data. We wrote to ASDA in May 2024 seeking clarification, but received no response.

5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?

No - ASDA used to publish data for a number of species in its “Reducing Antibiotics in Food Production” document, but ceased doing this after 2018. The only recent data published, on its “Farming and Nature” webpage, is for chickens, and it is not clear that this is ASDA data, nor which year the data is for. ASDA says it used to publish “ASDA specific survey results” but it now publishes “a national survey”, suggesting that this data for

antibiotic use in chickens may not be for ASDA suppliers.

6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system?

No.

7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets?

No. Although ASDA says it is “actively working towards reducing antibiotics in our supply chain through our farmer groups, best practice, and supplier partnerships”, there is no mention of any specific targets.

8. NEW: Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices, in line with the latest UK and EU legislation?

Yes/No – The “Reducing Antibiotics in Food Production” document says “ASDA endorses the statement that ‘antibiotics must not be used to compensate for poor hygiene or inadequate husbandry conditions or where improvements in animal husbandry could reduce the need for antibiotic treatment’. However, this endorsement does not mean it is a supply-chain rule. On its “Farming and Nature, Animal Welfare” webpage, ASDA states that for its Challenger dairy farmers “the aim of this programme is to reduce antibiotic use through improvements in animal husbandry and preventative medicine, rather than by not treating any sick animals.” And for chickens, ASDA says “ASDA does not permit the prophylactic use of antibiotics, focusing on improving the overall health status on supplying farms and

best practice”. However, ASDA should take far more action on husbandry, by ending the use of fast-growing broilers, early weaning of piglets or tail docking of piglets, and by lowering stocking densities.



Websites examined:

[Co-op animal welfare standards & performance & Co-op antibiotics policy](#)

[Co-op animal welfare standards & performance](#)

[Our farmers](#)

[Animal welfare](#)

[Responsible sourcing](#)

[Responsibly sourced fish](#)

Evidence:

1. Is the supermarket’s publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?

Yes – The Antibiotics Policy states: “Our antibiotic usage policy is in place for our full supply chain and applies to all suppliers and farmers producing livestock and aquaculture products for Co-op’s own brand range including ingredients”.

1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?

Yes – As above.

1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients?

No.

1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients

Yes/No – All UK-sourced own-brand is covered by the antibiotics policy, but UK-origin branded products are not covered.

1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?

Yes/No – The antibiotics policy is part of the animal-welfare policy, which applies to all own-brand products “irrespective of tier, geography or species”.

2. Does the policy restrict the use of the “highest-priority critically important antibiotics” (fluoroquinolones and 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins) across the supply chain so that they are never used for prevention or for group treatments?

Yes – The policy says: “Reductions in antimicrobial use in animals will also be achieved by focusing on the usage of the antibiotics identified as ‘critically important’ to human health. Co-op has adopted the EMA [European Medicine Agency] classification and therefore advises that fluoroquinolones, 3rd and higher generation cephalosporin’s and colistin are ‘critically important antimicrobials’ (CIAs) and will prohibit the use of these within our supply chain, unless used as a treatment of last resort where usage can be supported by relevant diagnostic tests (under veterinary advice), to protect animal welfare.”

3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?

No. – There is no ban on colistin in the policy.

4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?

Yes – There are several statements in the policy indicated that antibiotic-use data is collected for Co-op Farming Groups: “We’re also pioneering a way of capturing accurate data on antimicrobial usage across the Co-op Dairy Group, before sharing our usage data with Kite Consulting, who will evaluate and deliver the data back to [Farming] Group members”, and “The Co-op Pork Farming Group are proactively working with the industry to carefully monitor and record our antibiotic usage using the AHDB EMedicine Book”, and “Key work streams are to... understand levels of antibiotic use across the Co-op supply base.” And “We currently record, measure and benchmark antibiotic usage within our Farming Groups. We aim to widen this data collection to our full supply chain”.

5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?

No – The policy says: “Recording the usage of antibiotics within our supply chain is vital to The Coop to allow us to monitor and report on our progress towards industry goals. Our supply chains are focusing on the collation of antibiotic usage data for all livestock and aquaculture species. We are committed to collecting data on Co-op antibiotic usage performance within our Co-op Farming Groups on a quarterly basis (dairy- biannually) and we are committed to publishing this data biannually. We will also use this data to benchmark the performance within our farming groups and against industry targets.” And “We are committed to publishing Co-op performance in antibiotic usage

within our supply chain biannually”. However, no antibiotic-usage data is available on the Co-op website, and the Co-op has clarified to us that the data will only be published within the supply chain, and not more widely, because they wish to avoid “unfair comparisons”, in line with FIIA policy⁵⁸.

6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system?

No.

7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets?

Yes – The policy states: “We will continue to be members of RUMA and deliver against the RUMA Targets Task Force species targets” and “We are actively working with our Farming Groups and our supply chains to engage and collaborate on ways of working that will allow us to holistically to meet the RUMA Targets”.

8. NEW: Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices, in line with the latest UK and EU legislation?

Yes/No – The policy has a welcome statement that “Driving improvements in the health and resilience of livestock and aquaculture species is vital for preventing disease, and can replace antibiotic use with sustainable alternatives. The Co-op will continue to support our farmer groups to apply best practice in animal husbandry, nutrition, genetic selection, health planning and preventative health care, including use of vaccines in livestock and aquaculture.” The Co-op also has some positive animal-husbandry policies, including the fact that its fresh chickens are now kept at a stocking density which is lower (30 kg/m²) than

the Red Tractor maximum stocking density (38 kg/m²)⁵⁹, which can help reduce disease and antibiotic use. All its pigs are RSPCA assured, although antibiotic use on RSPCA pig farms may only be slightly lower than on Red Tractor farms⁶⁰. The Co-op also requires herd or flock health planning for all species. However, significantly more should be done to improve husbandry. The Co-op’s chickens are mainly from fast-growing breeds, which require much higher antibiotic use. The Co-op says it is working to reduce the incidence of tail docking in piglets, but it is clear that excessive tail docking is still occurring, in spite of routine tail docking being illegal.

Iceland

Websites examined:

[Animal welfare](#) (webpage containing Iceland’s antibiotics policy)

[Doing it right](#)

Evidence:

1. Is the supermarket’s publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?

Yes – The antibiotics policy states “Iceland’s antibiotics policy clearly states that prophylactic use of antimicrobials, where the antibiotics are administered before showing clinical signs of any disease, is not permitted on any animal that is intended to be used for the manufacture of any products supplied to Iceland. This is a contractual obligation for our suppliers overseen by our technical team”

1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?

Yes – As above.

1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients?

Yes – As above.

1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients?

Yes – As above.

1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?

Yes – As above.

2. Does the policy restrict the use of the “highest-priority critically important antibiotics” (fluoroquinolones and 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins) across the supply chain so that they are never used for prevention or for group treatments?

No.

3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?

No.

4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?

No.

5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?

No.

6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system?

No.

7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets?

No.

8. NEW: Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices, in line with the latest UK and EU legislation?

No – Iceland’s antibiotics policy is included as part of its commitments on animal welfare. However, there are few Iceland-specific commitments on good animal welfare, and no commitment to avoiding antibiotic use to compensate for poor animal husbandry or poor hygiene. The use of fast-growing chickens, high stocking densities, tail docking of piglets and early weaning of piglets are all practices all that appear to be permitted by Iceland and are known to greatly increase the need for antibiotics.



Websites examined:

- [Antibiotic stewardship policy](#)
- [Sustainability, animal welfare, antibiotics](#)
- [Sustainability, animal welfare](#)
- [Lidl GB policy farm animal health and welfare](#)
- [Method of production labelling](#)
- [Sustainability](#)
- [Sustainability, supplier relationships, dairy](#)

Evidence:

1. Is the supermarket's publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?

Yes – The Antibiotic Stewardship Policy states “The scope of this policy covers all own-label products sold by Lidl GB. Particular focus is placed upon products purchased directly by our buying teams, based in Great Britain, including chicken, turkey, pork, beef, lamb, eggs, liquid milk, cheese and salmon (primary proteins and ingredients). This represents over 80% of the animal protein sold through our stores by volume per year. Imported products are managed by the respective Lidl country in line with Lidl International’s commitment to responsible antibiotic use.”

1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?

Yes – As above.

1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients?

No – The policy only applies to own-label goods.

1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients?

Yes/no – The policy applies to UK own-label animal products but not to branded UK products.

1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?

Yes/No – The policy applies to any imported own-label goods, but not to branded products. Lidl’s policy states: “For the limited number of products containing animal proteins imported by Lidl GB, suppliers are required to align with the policy of Lidl International with regard to responsible antibiotic use. Policies are implemented at a national level

in line with national targets. For example, Lidl Germany, through its engagement with “Initiative Tierwohl” is committed to ensuring that animal health and antibiotic data is monitored across all farms from 2023. External auditors work within our international supply chains to ensure adherence to our animal welfare policies.” Regarding Lidl international policy, the document states: “Lidl International’s overarching position. Lidl’s suppliers are prohibited from using antibiotics as a preventive measure. Suppliers are obliged to restrict the use of antibiotics whilst ensuring individual sick animals are treated accordingly. Suppliers are required to develop action plans to reduce the use of antibiotics with the aim of reducing multi-resistant germs.” However, Lidl imports poultry from the Polish producer linked with a major outbreak of antibiotic-resistant Salmonella in the UK. This raises concerns about the effectiveness of Lidl international policy.

2. Does the policy restrict the use of the “highest-priority critically important antibiotics” (fluoroquinolones and 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins) across the supply chain so that they are never used for prevention or for group treatments?

Yes – The policy states: “The use of 3rd and 4th generation Cephalosporins and Fluoroquinolones, together with Colistin, should only be used under veterinary permission, as a last resort, demonstrated by culture and sensitivity testing, or in exceptional circumstances when all else has failed. The use of these HP-CIA medicines should be restricted, without compromising animal welfare. In line with the Red Tractor standards, 3rd

and 4th Generation cephalosporins, glycopeptides and colistin are not permitted within our British Poultry supply chain. We are actively working with our supply chain to move away from using these HPCIA’s within other categories where possible.”

3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?

Yes/No – Colistin is banned in poultry, but not in other species: “In line with the Red Tractor standards, 3rd and 4th Generation cephalosporins, glycopeptides and colistin are not permitted within our British Poultry supply chain. We are actively working with our supply chain to move away from using these HPCIA’s within other categories where possible.”

4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?

Yes – The policy says: “We monitor antibiotic use in our supply chains through a range of measures, actively working with the following industry bodies to successfully monitor and reduce the overall use of antibiotics: FIIA, RUMA, Red Tractor Assurance, RSPCA Assurance, AHDB e-Med Hub/ EMB-Pigs, BPC, Individual CSR plans with our strategic suppliers” and “Through our ongoing commitment to the Red Tractor Assurance scheme, our suppliers and producers are required to collect and submit their medicine records for third party review. Data is collected from our beef, lamb, and dairy producers through farm-owned medicine records. These are reviewed with their partnered vet and collated on an annual basis. Our pork suppliers upload medicine data onto the pork industry’s eMB (Electronic Medicines book) platform on a quarterly basis and for our poultry producers, The

British Poultry Council (BPC) collect and publish data on an annual basis. Data from industry-level reporting is reviewed and discussed between Lidl and its suppliers.”

5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?

No – Lidl’s antibiotics policy document states “We have committed to publishing this data periodically on our website and are also aligning with the FIIA for a consistent approach to data reporting at a national level.” However, despite this commitment, no new antibiotic-use data has been published by Lidl since our 2021 assessment. We wrote to Lidl asking if they had published any updated data, but received no response.

6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system?

No.

7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets?

Yes – Regarding RUMA antibiotic targets, the policy states “we fully endorse and adopt as part of our policy [the RUMA targets]”.

8. NEW: Does the supermarket ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices, within the supply chain?

Yes/No – The policy states that: “We encourage our producers to optimise the welfare, health, hygiene, husbandry and biosecurity of animals in order to reduce the need for antibiotic treatment. Therefore, antibiotics must not be used as a replacement for good farm management.” “Encourage” is weaker wording than “require”. Lidl

has announced it will be reducing its chicken stocking density to 30 kg/m² for its own-label fresh chicken by early 2025⁶¹. This is welcome, however, Lidl has made no commitment to ending its use of fast-growing chicken breeds which use far higher levels of antibiotic use than slower-growing breeds. Lidl has introduced method-of-production labelling for pigs and poultry and egg production, which adds welcome transparency. However, it is unclear what proportion of Lidl's production adopts higher welfare standards associated with lower antibiotic use.

"This policy covers all M&S' own-brand products and ingredients, M&S do not sell any branded products that contain animal protein. This policy also covers products and ingredients sourced from the UK, as well as those that are imported."

1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?

Yes – As above.

1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients?

Yes – M&S does not sell any branded products containing animal ingredients.

1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients?

Yes – "This policy also covers products and ingredients sourced from the UK, as well as those that are imported."

1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?

Yes – As above.

2. Does the policy restrict the use of the "highest-priority critically important antibiotics" (fluoroquinolones and 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins) across the supply chain so that they are never used for prevention or for group treatments?

Yes – The policy says: "The European Medicines Authority (EMA) has classified antibiotics in terms of their importance to human and animal health. Our definition of 'critical antibiotics' that must be restricted in our livestock and aquaculture supply chains, is an antibiotic that is defined as a 'Category B - Restrict' by the European Medicines Authority (EMA). These categories include the 3rd and higher generation cephalosporins, quinolones and colistin, which are

also listed as 'highest priority critically important antimicrobials' by the World Health Organisation (WHO). In line with the EMA and the WHO, we believe these medicines should be particularly safeguarded for use in people."

3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?

Yes – The 2024 M&S Antibiotic usage policy states: "We also prohibit the use of EMA Category B antibiotic colistin in all our supply chains, and we are working with our suppliers to cease use of all other critical antibiotics."

4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?

Yes – The policy states that all farms in the supply chain must record antibiotic-use data: "Record: the use of antimicrobial agents per unit of livestock at the time of treatment, on all farms in the M&S supply, reliably and robustly". It goes on to say that "we require our farmers to record and report the following comprehensive data on all animals/groups of animals sourced for M&S, reliably and accurately, for each treatment administered:

1. The name of the antibiotic active ingredient used for each treatment;
2. The total quantity of antibiotic used (mg) for each treatment; and
3. The number and life stage category of animals produced"

5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?

Yes – For 2022, antibiotic-use data is published for chicken, dairy cattle, turkey, dairy duck, trout, egg and salmon. There is no published antibiotic-use data for pigs, beef or lamb.

6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system?

Yes/No – The 2022 data published for chicken is broken down by farming system. Data is given for Oakham (a fast-growing breed), Oakham gold (a slower growing bird with 20% more space than the industry norm), ingredient chicken, free range and organic.

7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets?

Yes – The policy states "To align with industry, M&S antibiotic use targets reflect the RUMA Targets Task Force targets, published and refreshed annually."

8. NEW: Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices, in line with the latest UK and EU legislation?

Yes/No – The M&S policy says: "We require all our producers to implement a Herd Health and Welfare Plan that is developed in conjunction with a veterinary surgeon and reviewed and updated on a minimum annual basis. The plan must cover key disease and welfare challenges specific to the farm, a review of existing antimicrobial use and opportunities to replace usage with alternative management, breed and infrastructure solutions. At the supplier level, in each livestock sector we will support leading initiatives to tackle the key disease challenges with practical and evidence-based solutions that can replace the need for medicine use, including vaccinations, improved management strategies, genetics, nutrition, biosecurity and novel technologies." In September 2022, M&S became the first UK



Websites examined:

[Antibiotic usage policy in M&S sourced livestock and aquaculture](#)

[M&S animal welfare performance summary 2023](#)

[M&S farm animal health and welfare Policy](#)

[Our approach to animal welfare](#)

[Aquaculture and fisheries](#)

[Higher welfare fresh chicken](#)

Evidence:

1. Is the supermarket's publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?

Yes – The policy states: "The following policy outlines our approach to responsible antimicrobial use across all livestock and aquaculture species in our supply chain". It also states

retailer to use only slower-growing, higher-welfare breeds, kept at a lower stocking density, for its fresh chickens⁶². Fresh chicken accounts for 30.96% of M&S's total chicken supply. M&S will also be adopting the full Better Chicken Commitment in 2026⁶³. The Better Chicken Commitment requires the use of slower-growing breeds and a lower stocking density. All M&S dairy cows have access to grazing, which is a very positive policy. All M&S fresh, ingredient and frozen pork is already outdoor bred, free range or organic and certified to RSPCA Assured or organic standards. However, M&S welfare-outcome data shows that 72% of M&S UK pigs and 57% of M&S continental pigs have their tails docked, despite routine tail docking being illegal in the UK and the EU. This suggests that significant improvements to pig husbandry are still needed.



Websites examined:

- [Antibiotics](#)
- [Antibiotics policy](#)
- [Antibiotics use](#)
- [Animal welfare](#)
- [Animal welfare policy](#)
- [Key animal welfare policies](#)
- [Species specific welfare policies](#)
- [Morrisons: fresh chicken: health and welfare standards](#)
- [Farm animal welfare progress report](#)

Evidence:

1. Is the supermarket's publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?

Yes – Morrisons main antibiotics policy webpages are not entirely clear about the scope. However, the webpage about Morrisons “Key Animal Welfare Policies”, which includes a summary of the antibiotics policy, states “unless otherwise stated, all the policies listed below are applicable across all products sold in Morrisons. This includes own-brand, fresh, frozen and processed meat products, as well as those where animal proteins or by-products are used as an ingredient.” This means that the scope of the antibiotics policy is all own-brand products.

1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?

Yes – As above.

1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients

No – Policies only apply to own-brand products.

1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients

Yes/No – Policies apply to all UK-sourced own-brand products but not to UK-sourced branded products.

1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?

No – It is unclear whether any imported products are covered by the policy.

2. Does the policy restrict the use of the “highest-priority critically important antibiotics” (fluoroquinolones and 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins) across the supply chain so that they are never used for prevention or for

group treatments?

Yes – The policy states: “Farms which supply our other fresh meat, fish, dairy and eggs are required to only use critically important antibiotics (as defined by the European Medicines Alliance) as a last resort, if at all.” and “No pork in our own-brand fresh supply chain is treated with any antibiotics critically important to human health”

3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?

Yes – The antibiotics policy states “Colistin is prohibited in all our fresh meat and dairy products”.

4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?

Yes – The policy says that their work has included: “Having a robust methodology in place to monitor the use of antibiotics in our fresh poultry, dairy and egg supply chain” and “Asking all farms supplying Morrisons with meat, dairy and eggs to report their antibiotic use for anonymous benchmarking” and “Working with our farmers, vets and universities to help develop monitoring tools for the UK pork, beef and sheep sectors, which have a wide variety of farm-based IT systems”.

5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?

Yes/No – Morrisons publish information as to whether they meet the RUMA targets for 2017-2020 on a per species basis in a table. This information is now quite out of date

6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system?

No.

7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets?

Yes – Morrisons has adopted RUMA targets. The policy states: “100% of our fresh supply chain measures its use of antibiotics as part of the Red Tractor Standard. We also monitor antibiotic use in all our fresh protein supply, ensuring that the groups are meeting or improving on targets set for the industry by RUMA.” Furthermore, Morrisons document on “Fresh Chicken: Health and Welfare Standards” states that “as part of an overall health and welfare plan, we expect birds to receive no more than 10mg/PCU (c. 6mg/kg) as an average within our supply chain.” This compares with a RUMA target for chickens of 25 mg/PCU.

8. NEW: Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices, in line with the latest UK and EU legislation?

Yes/No – In its “Antibiotic Use” document, Morrisons acknowledges that “An emphasis on sound animal husbandry and healthy animals kept to high welfare standards will help minimise routine reliance on antimicrobials” and it says it has an “an active programme to address antibiotic use in farming and at all times promote preventative practice to ensure health conditions are treated proactively, thus reducing the need for antibiotics.” In its farmed fish policy it states that: “Antibiotics should never be used as a substitute for good animal husbandry.” The antibiotics policy says: “active herd and flock health plans are being used on farm, developed in association with the farm vet, reducing the need for antibiotics

in the first place.” By the end of 2024, Morrisons will raise all of its own-brand fresh chickens at a maximum stocking density of 30 kg/m² ⁶⁴. This is welcome, however Morrisons is not adopting the Better Chicken Commitment or committing to using only slower-growing chicken breeds. Morrisons does produce a range of chicken that are slower growing, but this is not the case for Morrisons standard chicken. Morrisons says that routine tail docking of its piglets is not permitted, but its “Farm Animal Welfare Progress Report” states that only 1.2% of its piglets have intact tails, suggesting that tail docking is in fact routine.

Sainsbury’s

Websites examined:

[Plan for better, 2024 antibiotic stewardship report](#)

[Sainsbury’s plan for better 2022/2023 sustainability update](#)

[Sainsbury’s animal health and welfare report 2023](#)

[Animal health and welfare](#)

[Animal welfare: setting new standards](#)

Evidence:

1. Is the supermarket’s publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?

Yes – The Animal Health and Welfare Report 2023 says “Our overarching animal health and welfare priorities underpin this strategy and apply to all farmed species and countries in our own brand supply chains.” Antibiotic

use is listed as one of the overarching animal health and welfare priorities.

1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?

Yes – As above.

1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients?

No – The policy only covers own-brand products.

1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients

Yes/No – The policy covers UK sourced products that are sold as own-brand, but not branded products of UK origin.

1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?

Yes/No – The policy covers imported products that are sold as own-brand, but not imported branded products.

2. Does the policy restrict the use of the “highest-priority critically important antibiotics” (fluoroquinolones and 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins) across the supply chain so that they are never used for prevention or for group treatments?

Yes – The policy says: “Sainsbury’s antibiotics policy means: critically important antibiotics can only be used as a last resort, if needed to safeguard animal welfare” and “we’re focusing on reducing the use of antibiotics which are considered critically important to human health (as defined by the European Medicines Agency). We minimise the use of these critically important antibiotics (CIAs) within our supply chains, promoting the responsible use of the most appropriate antibiotics. Since 2017, members of our Dairy Development Group no longer use fluoroquinolones or 3rd and 4th generation

cephalosporins, unless a vet cannot identify a suitable alternative. These classes of antibiotics can also no longer be used as a first-line treatment within our pig and poultry supply chains”.

3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?

Yes/no – The 2024 Antibiotic Stewardship Report states that colistin is banned but then leaves it open for a vet to prescribe colistin in exceptional circumstances: “Colistin = an antibiotic often considered to be the most critically important of all CIAs. As of 2024 we have banned Colistin across all our own brand supply chains. If due to exceptional circumstances a veterinary surgeon prescribes Colistin as an absolute last resort, Sainsbury’s agriculture team must be notified alongside extensive justification of why Colistin is required instead of other available antibiotics.” Also “Suppliers must demonstrate a commitment to not using Colistin under any circumstances, as it is deemed to be the most critically important antibiotic for human health of all antibiotics. If due to exceptional circumstances a veterinary surgeon prescribes Colistin as an absolute last resort, Sainsbury’s agriculture team must be notified alongside extensive justification of why Colistin is required instead of other available antibiotics.”

4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?

Yes – Sainsbury’s collects antibiotic-use data for pigs, chickens, turkeys, ducks, beef, lamb, egg layers, liquid milk, cheese, salmon, trout, sea bream, sea bass, prawns and basa. The policy says: “We have also been working closely with our farmers for a number

of years to share knowledge and best practice through our species-specific development groups, and in recent years this has included collecting data on antibiotic usage. However, there are challenges to collecting robust and representative datasets for all species due to the different structures and challenges faced by each sector. We are continually working with our suppliers to improve the quality and quantity of data available”. And, “Sainsbury’s have been working closely with our farmers since the RUMA targets were set in 2016 to collect and monitor antibiotic use in our supply chains. This has been a completely new and highly complex undertaking but we have invested in the right expertise to ensure our data is accurate and representative of all our supply chains.”

5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?

Yes – Sainsbury’s doesn’t publish the exact overall antibiotic-use data by species, except for sea bream, sea bass, prawns and basa, where usage is zero. For other species, it publishes progress against RUMA targets and the % of the supply chain that the data collection covers. For chicken it gives a bit more information, saying that average use over the past seven years has been over 60% below the RUMA target. Sainsbury’s also publishes exact data on the use of the HPCIA and colistin (no use since 2018) for each species. While publication of exact overall antibiotic-use data is still desirable, the amount of data provided by Sainsbury’s compares well with most supermarkets.

6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system?

No.

7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets?

Yes – The policy says: “Our overarching goal is to ensure antibiotic use within our supply chains is below the RUMA 2024 targets, and to continue to reduce use further where this is possible. It’s important to recognise that there will be fluctuations in antibiotic use over time, and antibiotics will sometimes be needed in higher amounts where antibiotics are the best line of defence to protect animal health and welfare. This means there may be some years when antibiotic use is above the RUMA 2024 target for a good reason, such as a specific disease or industry wide issue, but our long term goal is to keep antibiotic use below these targets most of the time.” In Sainsbury’s Plan for Better 2022/2023 Sustainability Update report, it indicates that in 2021 82% of key animal supply chains achieved responsible antibiotic-use targets.

8. NEW: Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices, in line with the latest UK and EU legislation?

Yes/No – The Latest Sainsbury’s antibiotics policy clearly states that “in line with UK legislation under no circumstances must antibiotics in our supply chains be used to compensate for poor hygiene, farming practises or inadequate animal husbandry. At Sainsbury’s we understand that improving animal welfare leads to lower antibiotic use, we recognise

our farmers are facing the growing challenge of antibiotic resistance and we have an important role to play in promoting responsible use. To help reduce reliance on antibiotics, we’re working closely with our farmers to minimise their use in three key ways.” Sainsbury’s says “we invested substantially in research to support reducing the confinement of sows in indoor pig production and we sell a higher volume of RSPCA Assured products than any other retailer. We also know that high standards of animal health and welfare are essential for enabling farmers to reduce their use of antibiotics. However, although this is an important step, Sainsbury’s must do more to improve animal husbandry to make sure they can guarantee antibiotics are not being used to prop up poor farm management.” However, antibiotic use on RSPCA pig farms may only be slightly lower than on Red Tractor farms⁶⁵. Sainsbury’s is partnering with academics to attempt to identify early indicators of tail biting in pigs. However, Sainsbury’s does not seem to have eliminated routine tail docking, because the conditions in which the pigs are kept remain too stressful and unhealthy. Eliminating the causes of tail biting and the need for tail docking will reduce the need for antibiotics. Sainsbury’s has reduced its chicken stocking density to 30 kg/m², compared with the Red Tractor maximum density of 38 kg/m²⁶⁶. However, most of Sainsbury’s chickens are still fast-growing breeds, which require far more antibiotics than slower-growing breeds.



Websites examined:

[Antibiotics](#) (the antibiotics policy)

[Tesco antibiotics report 2024](#)

[Maintaining and improving animal welfare](#)

[Animal health and welfare report 2022/2023](#)

Evidence:

1. Is the supermarket’s publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?

Yes – The antibiotics policy states that “This policy applies to all own-label products in all geographies supplying Tesco UK and One Stop.” Furthermore, in the Maintaining and Improving Animal Welfare document it states that some restrictions apply to all products sold by Tesco, as it says “Antibiotics are not used prophylactically or as growth promoters in any of our products (own-label or branded) across any of our businesses or geographies.” However, it is unclear how Tesco is ensuring that this restriction is being applied in practice in branded products. Furthermore, Tesco does allow selective dry-cow therapy in dairy cows, which is an acceptable form of prophylactic antibiotic use, so the statement as presented does not seem entirely accurate.

1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?

Yes – As above.

1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients?

Yes/No – Tesco claims to not permit antibiotic growth promoters or prophylactic antibiotic use for branded products. However, it is unclear how Tesco is ensuring these practices do not occur in branded products. Furthermore, the full antibiotics policy is not applied to branded products.

1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients

Yes/No – The full antibiotics policy only applies to UK own-brand products.

1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?

Yes/No – The full antibiotics policy only applies to imported own-brand products.

2. Does the policy restrict the use of the “highest-priority critically important antibiotics” (fluoroquinolones and 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins) across the supply chain so that they are never used for prevention or for group treatments?

Yes – The policy says: “We restrict the use of the highest priority “critically important” antibiotics for human health (fluoroquinolones, 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporin’s and colistin) as defined by the European Medicine Agency in our supply chain and make sure these antibiotics are used only as a treatment of last resort, where no other viable treatment is available to prevent animal welfare issues. We are working with our suppliers to reduce the use of other critically important antibiotics, including macrolides.”

3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic

colistin in the supply chain?

Yes/No – Colistin is not banned in most species, although no use has occurred in recent years. For the shell-egg supply chain, “colistin and HPCIA use is prohibited”, according to the Tesco Antibiotics Report 2024.

4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?

Yes – The policy states: “We measure antibiotic use in our supply chain. We have made antibiotic usage and records a key feature of our farm audit programme. Visibility of records of any antibiotic usage at Tesco supplying farms is required to enable us to monitor levels of use and to help target reduction strategies.”

5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?

Yes – Tesco provides good data on its antibiotic use. It has published data for all major species for years up to 2022. Antibiotic-use data for poultry covers 100% of farms supplying Tesco with broiler chickens, turkey and duck. Tesco also publishes data covering all its shell-egg production and all of Tesco fresh-pork production. For continental pork, antibiotic-use data is also published. Data is also available from the Tesco Sustainable Dairy Group (TSDG) and Sustainable Cheese Group (TCG), although it isn’t clear how much of the supply chain these groups make up. The Tesco Sustainable Lamb Group has published antibiotic usage data, although it is also unclear how much of the supply chain this covers. The Tesco Sustainable Beef Group has reported data for 2020 and 2021. Data is published each year and shows a decreasing trend in antibiotic use for

all major species.

6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system?

No – Tesco’s pork data is broken down by conventional supply (from UK, Netherlands and Denmark) and continental meats (Spain and Italy). However, this is distinguishing between origin, not farming system.

7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets?

Yes – The antibiotics policy states “We will implement the UK species specific targets for antibiotic reduction (as defined by RUMA and the Veterinary Medicines Directorate) in our supply chain. From 2018, once we have sufficient data to establish a baseline, we will make sure that each of our animal sector supply chains have targeted reduction strategies in place to make sure they meet the specific national target for that species.” The Tesco Antibiotics Report states that “Tesco supply base either meets or exceeds UK sector equivalents, as reported by the latest Veterinary Antimicrobial Resistance and Sales Surveillance (VARSS), which was published in November 2023”. Tesco says “In line with RUMA targets, the industry emphasis is now on identifying persistent high usage (PHU) within supply chains, working with individual outliers to carry out reductions, and demonstrating where supported engagement has led to reductions at individual supplier level. The ruminant sector has been presumed to have comparatively low usage but presents limited data to support this. Therefore, in line with RUMA objectives, we are focussing on the continued development of reporting metrics across our

sustainable beef and lamb groups – now in their second and third year respectively”. The same report also states that “Tesco’s target is for farms to increase the proportion of cows receiving selective dry cow therapy by at least 10% of the herd per year until all eligible animals are only receiving teat sealant and no antibiotic treatment. Reducing routine antibiotic dry cow therapy is a key area to reducing total antibiotic use in our dairy supply chain and we have seen significant progress in this area in recent years”.

8. NEW: Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices, in line with the latest UK and EU legislation?

Yes/No – The Tesco Antibiotics Report 2024 says “In all instances it should be noted that Tesco places overarching importance on the need for suppliers to demonstrate that antibiotic therapy is not to be used at the expense of sound management practice. This is evidenced through a range of approaches including review of company Veterinary Health Plans, company policy documents, medicines records (to identify patterns that could be considered consistent with poor husbandry) and Food Chain Information (FCI) disclosures. Tesco works with producers through a programme of supplier reviews to support intervention strategies aimed at delivering reductions in antimicrobial use, where this can be effected in a responsible manner and without compromising animal health and welfare.” Tesco has committed to reducing the stocking density at which it keeps its chickens to 30 kg/m² by the first half of 2025⁶⁷, which is a positive

measure. However, it has not signed up to the Better Chicken Commitment and continues to use fast-growing broiler chicken breeds for 96% of its chicken production, according to its Animal Health and Welfare Report 2022/2023, despite the strong evidence that these birds are unhealthier and consume far more antibiotics. The same health and welfare report shows that most Tesco pigs (77%) still have their tails docked, suggesting widespread inadequate husbandry standards linked with higher levels of antibiotic use.

WAITROSE
& PARTNERS

Websites examined:

[Animal welfare policy](#) (contains antibiotics policy)

[Our animal welfare policy and livestock & farmed fish KPIs](#) (contains further information on antibiotics policies and antibiotic use)

[Animal welfare, first for animal welfare](#)

[Animal welfare](#)

Evidence:

1. Is the supermarket’s publicly available antibiotics policy clear about its coverage?

Yes – The Animal Welfare Policy document states: “All our policy commitments, and all of our reporting, unless explicitly stated otherwise, apply to 100% of our own-brand supply chains (fresh, frozen, ingredient) irrespective of geographic location. These include all UK supply, New Zealand (NZ) lamb and venison

and our authentic continental pig meat sourced from Europe via our partner Winterbotham Darby.”

1a. Does the policy cover all own-brand products, including ingredients?

Yes – As above.

1b. Does the policy cover all branded products, including ingredients?

Yes/No – The Animal Welfare document says Waitrose is actively working to extend their policy to branded goods: “Branded goods represent approximately 45% of Waitrose sales by volume. Our influence over the policies and performance of branded goods is more limited. We are however, actively exploring how best to work with branded suppliers to influence positive change for animal welfare in the wider industry. Where we can drive improvements in animal welfare for branded products, we do”. Similarly, the Livestock and Farmed Fish KPIs document says: “We are committed to working with our branded suppliers to move towards a position where the branded goods supplied to Waitrose have clear policies for the avoidance of long-distance live transport, ensuring pre-slaughter stunning, and the avoidance of prophylactic and (where appropriate for the species, e.g. not including farmed fish) metaphylactic use of antibiotics is in place.”

1c. NEW: Does the policy cover all UK sourced products and ingredients

Yes/No – At present, only own-brand UK products are covered by the policy.

1d. Does the policy cover all imported products and ingredients?

Yes/No – The policy states that “New Zealand (NZ) lamb and venison and our authentic continental pig

meat sourced from Europe via our partner Winterbotham Darby” are included. However, branded imports are not yet covered.

2. Does the policy restrict the use of the “highest-priority critically important antibiotics” (fluoroquinolones and 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins) across the supply chain so that they are never used for prevention or for group treatments?

Yes – The policy states: “One area of concern is the use of critically important antibiotics (CIAs). Our definition of CIAs is in line with the World Health Organisation (WHO) / European Medicines Agency (EMA) recommendations, with the addition of Colistin. CIAs are rarely prescribed and none of our supply chains use Colistin to treat livestock. All our own label supply chains are working towards significant year-on-year reductions in antibiotic use and have pledged to end using all CIAs as soon as possible. Our aquaculture supply chain achieved this pledge in 2020.”

3. Does the policy completely ban the use of the last-resort antibiotic colistin in the supply chain?

Yes/No – The policy says: “none of our supply chains use Colistin to treat livestock.” The Livestock and Farmed Fish KPIs document says pig and poultry suppliers are both mentioned as having a “voluntary ban on colistin”. However it is unclear whether Waitrose fully bans colistin and we received no answer when we wrote to them seeking clarification.

4. Does the supermarket collect data on/ monitor antibiotic use in the supply chain?

Yes – The policy states: “Our supply chains are focused on collating antibiotic usage data for all livestock and aquaculture”.

5. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data in the supply chain at regular intervals e.g. annually?

Yes – In its Livestock and Farmed Fish KPIs document, Waitrose publishes the most comprehensive up-to-date antibiotic-use data by species of all the supermarkets. It covers all major species and many minor species: pigs, chickens, turkeys, eggs, dairy, beef, veal, lamb, venison, salmon, trout, sea bream, sea bass and halibut. The data shows low levels of antibiotic use for all species except for pigs, salmon and trout.

6. Does the supermarket publish antibiotic-usage data by farm system

No.

7. Does the supermarket have antibiotic-use reduction targets

Yes – Waitrose has signed up to RUMA targets and says: “All supply chains have committed to minimise the use of antibiotics, including CIA’s, where appropriate.”

8. NEW: Does the policy ensure that antibiotics are not used to compensate for poor hygiene, inadequate animal husbandry, or poor farm management practices, in line with the latest UK and EU legislation?

Yes/No – The antibiotics policy says: “A proactive approach to responsible animal health has been developed for all livestock supply chains in conjunction with veterinary advisors.” Also “Livestock Steering Group established to drive improvements in health, welfare and antibiotic use across the Waitrose supply chain.” All Waitrose chickens are raised with a lower stocking density (30kg/m² is their highest stocking density for chickens). Waitrose will be adopting

the Better Chicken Commitment from 2026, which means that it will then move to using slower-growing breeds associated with much lower use of antibiotics⁶⁸. All their UK dairy cows have to be outside for at least 180 days a year⁶⁹. This is a welcome as raising dairy cows entirely indoors is associated with higher levels of mastitis, lameness, reproductive disorders, and mortality. All their UK sows are free range and give birth outside. When piglets are weaned, they are brought inside and raised on straw bedding⁷⁰. However, according to the Livestock and Farmed Fish KPIs document, with the exception of Waitrose’s organic pigs, Waitrose UK pigs have their tails docked. This means that husbandry standards of these pigs still need to be increased to avoid the need for tail docking, and to reduce antibiotic use.



Websites examined:

[Animal welfare](#)

[Sourcing with integrity](#)

Evidence:

Ocado was not included in our previous three supermarket assessments, and so has not had the same access to advice and support from the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics as the other supermarkets have had. Ocado has therefore had less time than their competitors to prepare an antibiotics policy and it is for this reason that we have not included them in the overall

assessment table.

Ocado currently has no published antibiotics policy. We have met with Ocado, and we were assured that they are currently drawing up a policy and intend to publish it in 2024.

Ocado only mentions antibiotics once on its website, stating that it applies RUMA antibiotic targets to its suppliers. However, since Ocado does not collect antibiotic-use data, the commitment to the RUMA targets appears to be more of an aspiration than a policy that is applied in practice.

Ocado's website says that it intends "To source 100% of Ocado's Own Range meat, dairy and eggs, including as ingredients, to 'Better' standard by 2030 (based on the 'Sourcing Better' Framework)." The Sourcing Better Framework, a scheme run by Eating Better, includes antibiotic use as one of eight key impact areas. The Sourcing Better Framework takes into account the benchmarking of the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotic Supermarket Assessment. The "Better" level means:

- **Target:** Transparency and targets: publish technical targets and performance against them. Indicators: publishes volume of antibiotics in supply chain.
- **Target:** For pigs, cattle and sheep, a majority of antibiotic use is used for individual treatments and not group treatments. Indicators: Reports on target. Organic.
- **Target:** No antibiotics for growth or routine disease prevention or any form of routine treatment. Indicators: Reports on target. Organic.

The commitment to reach the Better standard is welcome. However, this is only a commitment for 2030. Furthermore, none of the specific

commitments on antibiotic use are made clear on the Ocado website.

Ocado has a partnership with the Soil Association where they work together to showcase agroecological approaches to farming, such as organic farming. Organic farming can have significantly lower antibiotic use than non-organic farming.

7. Glossary

ANTIBIOTIC

Any substance with a direct action on bacteria that is used for treatment or prevention of infections or infectious diseases.

ANTIMICROBIAL

Any substance with a direct action on micro-organisms used for treatment or prevention of infections or infectious diseases, including antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals and antiprotozoals.

ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

The acquired ability of bacteria to survive or to grow in the presence of a concentration of an antibiotic agent that was previously sufficient to inhibit or kill bacteria of the same species. This makes treating previously simple infections increasingly difficult.

GROUP TREATMENTS

Antibiotic treatments given to groups of animals, most often in their feed or drinking water.

HIGHEST-PRIORITY CRITICALLY IMPORTANT ANTIBIOTICS

These antibiotics are considered the most important for human medicine of all the antibiotics that are used in farming. Includes the fluoroquinolones, 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins (modern cephalosporins) and colistin.

LAST-RESORT ANTIBIOTIC

In human medicine, these antibiotics are reserved for serious and often life-threatening infections that are resistant to many other types of antibiotics. Colistin is a last-resort antibiotic that is licensed to be used in farm animals in the UK. The Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics believes that the use of colistin in farming should be banned.

METAPHYLACTIC ANTIBIOTIC TREATMENT

Metaphylaxis is a group treatment, when antibiotics are added to the animals' feed or drinking water, after clinical disease has been diagnosed in some of the animals in the group. All animals get treated, including those not yet showing signs of infection, as the aim is to control the spread of the disease.

PREVENTATIVE/PROPHYLACTIC ANTIBIOTIC TREATMENT

Antibiotic treatment given to an animal or group of animals before clinical disease has been diagnosed, to prevent the occurrence of disease.

STOCKING DENSITY

Number of animals per unit of area in a pen, shed or field.

8.

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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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