

**VETERINARY DRUGS DEFINITION ACCORDING  
TO FAO LEGAL PAPER**

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A veterinary revolution is coming in Ukraine. The State Food and Consumer Service together with the EU project “Improving the Food Safety Control System in Ukraine” have unveiled a new draft law “Veterinary Medicine”. This document will introduce a number of significant innovations not only in the field of control over the circulation of veterinary drugs and the safety of animal products, but also makes adjustments to the lives of pet owners.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has developed legal papers “Legislation for veterinary drugs control”. The main aim of the paper is to provide helpful background to governments contemplating a review of their veterinary drugs legislation, on the main issues involved and the options available for dealing with those issues. The broad goals of controlling drugs used on animals are to preserve the health of the animals, improve animal production and protect public health.

According to these papers the broad goals of controlling drugs used on animals are to preserve the health of animals, improve animal production and protect public health. Veterinary drugs control is, however, only one aspect of these broad subjects of public policy and legislation, and the real goals of veterinary drugs control are much narrower. The scope of a veterinary drugs law is determined by its goals, so it is important to distinguish the goals of veterinary drugs control from the broader goals of promoting and protecting animal health, animal production and public health.

*Animal health and veterinary drugs.* Animal health relies heavily on veterinary drugs for controlling pests and diseases, but an animal health law extends much further. Its main concern is the movement of animals and animal products, which can be vectors for transmission of pests and diseases within and between countries. Such laws typically provide the veterinary authorities with strong powers to control animal movements, inspect animals and place them in quarantine, and even to destroy infected animals, animal products and equipment. These measures have obvious advantages for disease control, but also for improving the country’s reputation for disease-free products.

*Animal production and veterinary drugs.* Just as veterinary drugs contribute to animal health they also contribute to increased animal production, but clearly there

are many other contributing factors. Drugs are administered to animals by veterinary surgeons, government officers or private operators with some technical training, and often by owners of animals themselves. Requirements for their safe and effective administration will depend on the particular drug, but the question of who can carry out various veterinary procedures also arises, so the subject of veterinary practice regulation is also involved in animal production – as, indeed, it is in animal health. Another subject which overlaps both animal health and animal production is animal feeds. Laws on this subject regulate the manufacture and supply of animal feeds, and the raw materials used in their production. Certain additives are prohibited, or restricted for use on particular species only. Another overlap is involved here, with the next topic of human or public health.

Public health and veterinary drugs. By eating animals and animal products (meat, milk, eggs, etc.), humans are liable to consume whatever chemicals the animal has consumed or been exposed to – veterinary drugs, but also insecticides used on the animal, herbicides and fertilizers used on pastures and chemical additives used in its feed. Some of these substances are toxic (in particular, pesticides and herbicides), and some are undesirable in other ways for use on animals whose products are consumed by humans. The human health consequences of chemical residues in animals is a subject which is hotly debated, between farmers, chains of food suppliers, pharmaceutical companies, drug regulators, public health administrators and consumer groups. Not only is there disagreement among interest-groups within countries, but between countries the impact of a drug ban on trade in animal products ensures that a country's motives for banning certain drugs will be questioned.

The concern over antibiotics is more serious, and the risk of over-use of antibiotics is not so open to doubt. Use of antibiotics such as penicillin on animals increases the potential for penicillin-resistant bacteria to develop in the animal products, which in turn could make humans consuming those products less responsive to future penicillin treatment. Use of cautious terms like “potential” and “could” shows that there is still disagreement over the health risks, however, and it is argued by some that the risks have been exaggerated.

So the goals of veterinary drugs control are to be met within a wider framework of international obligations, and a national framework of a country's domestic laws on animal health, animal production and human health. With respect to drugs themselves, it is widely recognized that goals of regulating the supply of veterinary drugs are to guarantee their quality, safety and efficacy at the time of their administration to the animal. Taking into account that the veterinary reform is under development, attention should be paid to the existing European documentation and documents that are advisory in nature regarding Veterinary preparations.