International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)

72th session of the World Health Assembly 20-28 May 2019

Agenda Item 11.8 - Anti-Microbial resistance

IBFAN is pleased that WHO is providing evidence to support the strengthening of Codex trading standards and texts to minimize and contain antimicrobial resistance throughout the animal and food chain, including through processing. We hope that all Member States will recognize that this is a threat to global health security that no country can eliminate on its own and that there are inevitable implications for global trade. Codex is a fora that is dominated by powerful corporations and industrialised countries that protect their interests. WHO needs to be there and strong to protect the global health goal in these complex negotiations.

Among the many factors that increase the risk of AMR are poor animal husbandry and crop management, pharmaceutical promotion and over the counter sales that encourage inappropriate use of antibiotics. We note that only 64 countries have limited the use of critically important antimicrobials (human and animal) for growth promotion in animal food production.

Strong health care systems, cross agency action, surveillance and regulation of all the industries involved is clearly essential. However, care must be taken to ensure that any public private collaborations do not muddy the waters, slow everything down and lead to weaker controls and action. There is evidence that a higher dependence on the private health sector and higher density of private health clinics is associated with increased AMR due to frequent overuse of antibiotics.

Lastly, we support the efforts to promote WASH components within National Action Plans to reduce the incidence of infections. WASH, alongside stricter marketing regulations will protect breastfeeding – a practice that is critically important in reducing the incidence of infections in infants and young children.

Thank you.

For more information contact:

Patti Rundall, prundall@babymilkaction.org +447786523493
Fédora Bernard, fedora.bernard@gifa.org
Katherine Campbell, kcampb33@kent.edu