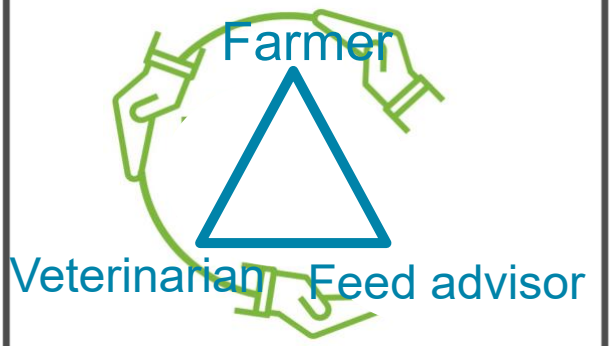
Living lab in the Dutch turkey sector



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Poultry sector

Turkey

The Dutch Turkey Living Lab consisted of representatives of stakeholders of 7 different organizations (turkey farmers, vets and sector organization delegates). The amount of participants of the Living Lab was around 8 and went up and down. An existing working group for antimicrobial reduction in turkeys was used, called the WAAK. Many barriers and possible directions to reduce AMU have been discussed, and the 'action', which involved a number of other stakeholders, was carried out in a so called 'Action Labs'. The Living Lab was initiated in May 2020 and ended in September 2022. 3 Living Lab meetings have taken place.

The strategy tested in the Living Lab

During the LL process, the aim was to come up with solutions to reduce antimicrobial use. Before the ROADMAP project started, interest in the ZLTO coaching trajectory to reduce antibiotic use was shown by the turkey sector. Therefore, this strategy was tested in Action Labs with four turkey farmer teams (farmer, veterinarian, feed advisor). Two farmer teams had 2 coaching sessions, and the other two teams had 3 sessions.

Guided by a coach, these teams worked on farm-specific solutions to reduce antimicrobial use and to improve animal health. Actions were discussed and if possible implemented, such as improving water and feed quality (more fibre) and changing the business model of the farm. However, it was not always possible to find solutions, stressing the complexity of the problem.

The roadmap to implementation

During the first meeting in May 2020 the ROADMAP project, the concept of LL, the tasks and plans for the coaching trajectory were introduced to the group. In September 2020 a second meeting was held to start the conversation on possible directions and ways to implement technical interventions for AMU reduction in turkey farms, in which it was decided not to focus on experimenting with technical interventions in the Action Labs, but to focus on the coaching trajectory only. Due to COVID-19, these first two meetings were held online. The final LL meeting was held live in September 2022. In addition to the WAAK group, turkey farmers that participated in the Action Labs joined this meeting. During this meeting a SWOT analysis of the turkey sector have been made which resulted in new action points, such as finding opportunities to increase animal health within the boundaries of a quality mark. If opportunities will be found, this action will be followed up by the turkey sector in 2023.

The impact created by the Living Lab

- AMU and animal health: the main impact of the LL is that AMU has again become a topic of discussion in times of other pressing issues such as Avian Influenza. By having in-depth discussions about AMU, new perspectives and opportunities emerged. Possibly the LL led to fresh energy to move forward again on this complex topic for the turkey sector. During the coaching trajectory, a dialogue was started on on-farm actions and improvements to reduce AMU and to increase animal health.
- Costs and savings: It has been concluded that to bring down AMU in turkeys significantly it will require systemic changes, which will be costly (e.g. change in genetics, intensive-extensive, nature-inclusive agriculture, new types of housing/management). In addition, Dutch turkey farmers are highly dependent on regulation in Germany, where important parts of the value chain are located, which gives them little room for change.

Challenges

- Setting up a LL with a balanced group of influential stakeholders with all interests represented (also beyond borders)
- Clarity of the goal and conditions of the LL beforehand for all participants
- Establishing a LL in a very small sector
- Awareness of hidden agendas or fears of participants in a LL
- Creating a shared responsibility for the problem of AMR

Successes

The learnings during the process about the importance of:

- Having an independent facilitator to guide the LL meetings
- Open and bottom-up conversations, based on trust and mutual commitment
- Live instead of online LL meetings
- Being flexible in the plan of action during the process
- Identify needs, difficulties and possibilities in the sector

Many different stakeholders are involved on the road to reducing antimicrobial use in the Dutch turkey sector. Multiple possibilities and directions for change seem to exist, but it is of importance to seek for ways to implement these possibilities in practice keeping different interests of stakeholders in mind.

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