



# Living Lab about the check-up of the regional guidelines for the prudent use of antibiotics in pig farms in Emilia-Romagna

Regione Emilia Romagna

## LINEE GUIDA

Uso prudente degli antibiotici nell'allevamento suino



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Pig sector

Pigs

Based on a previous working group, the Italian Living Lab (LL) on pig production included fifteen organizations representing all the main stakeholders in Emilia-Romagna (ER): i.e. the Regional Health Authority (HA) and Agricultural Services, Local HAs (ASL Modena), the National Veterinary Labs (IZS), pharmaceutical groups (MSD and Elanco), pig industry integrators (Amadori Group and Veronesi Group), producer organizations (Gran Suino Italiano and Consorzio Prosciutto di Parma), farmer unions (Coldiretti and Confagricoltura), big retailers (CooptItalia), expert consultancies (CRPA), and the University of Bologna. Thirty experts and professionals were involved. The LL checked the Regional Guidelines on prudent AMU in pig farming within the framework of the new European legislation on veterinary medicines and the 2023-2027 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) cycle. The LL organized one main event and several restricted meetings to prepare discussions and finalize the results.



## The strategy tested in the Living Lab

Main points of the strategy discussed in the LL: 1) Support a Ministry of Health (MH) action for a complete harmonization of the risk categorization from veterinary AMU in the EU (Resp. ER Region); 2) Support small farms to create AMR archives for to improve early diagnosis and first therapies' effectiveness (Resp. IZS); 3) Reduce time for diagnoses from AMR lab tests (Resp. IZS); 4) Support training for all supply chain operators dealing with AMR issues (Resp. ER Region and agricultural training institutions); 5) Clarify the criteria for the application of metaphylaxis (Resp. ER Region and MH); 6) Promote the evaluation of pigs' anatomopathological lesions at slaughtering to support therapeutic choices in farms (Resp. IZS and MH); 7) Foster transparency and data sharing (Resp. IZS and MH).



## The roadmap to implementation

In 2018, Regional administrations adopted the ER Guidelines on AMU in pig farming as Guidelines for this sector. In 2021, within the LL, the ER Regional HA started to adapt the Guidelines to the evolution of the EU Regulations on AMU in animal farming (Reg. 2019/4 and 2019/6). National experts examined the new Guidelines draft. The revised document was publicly presented in November 2022, starting the discussion to adopt the new ER Guidelines at the national level within the Italian strategy against AMR in the pig sector. The Ministry of Health (MH) is now reviewing the document with this purpose. The MH and professional counterparts are evaluating the possibility of farm access to AMU data in the national vet database. In the Italian Strategic Plan for the 2023-2027 CAP, the ER Region has proposed and obtained the conditionality of Eco-Scheme 1 for direct payments to farms' compliance with animal welfare improvements and AMU reduction.



## The impact created by the Living Lab

- AMU: the LL led all major swine players to discuss with public health professionals the reduction of AMU in herds as a common goal, despite their divergent business and professional interests. The agreed actions aim to reduce AMU in ER pig farms within the new European sectoral legislation and extend the good practices envisaged at the national level;
- Animal Health: the envisaged measures also imply significant improvements in farm structures, health management, biosecurity and animal welfare, with positive impacts for the containment of infections from both types of pathogens: resistant and susceptible to drugs;
- Costs and savings: the positive impacts on animal health imply savings on disease-related costs, such as production losses, management of health emergencies in livestock and direct health care costs. The new dedicated Eco-scheme in the Italian CAP 2023-2027 will provide an economic advantage to farmers willing to adapt to this trend, in addition to the finance available for farm investments in the CAP 2nd Pillar.



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## Challenges



- The considerable fragmentation of pig production in Italy, i.e. many small individual farms (non-operating with big integrators);
- The presence of many obsolete farm structures, difficult to adapt for significant biosecurity and animal welfare improvements;
- Because of the above, bottom-up initiatives have little chance of having a significant impacts;
- And ultimate responsibility for high-impact actions is dispersed among several highly centralized decision-making bodies.

## Successes

- Succeed in bringing together all the most relevant stakeholders of the pig industry, despite their divergent business and professional interests;
- Bring all stakeholders to share the common goal of reducing AMU and combating AMR, and jointly identify actions capable of having a significant impacts, contributing the Guidelines revision;
- Identify the entities responsible for the desired actions;
- Having contributed to addressing the application of the CAP in Italy to these objectives, in line with the farm2fork strategy.

Animal health management in farms cannot rely on routine preventive AMU. Significantly reducing AMU in farms is possible, and the pig industry operators are willing to cooperate toward this achievement.

[www.roadmap-h2020.eu](http://www.roadmap-h2020.eu)



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