

SUMMARY

Chicken meat tested for resistance to Critically Important Antimicrobials for Human Medicine

Ranking of EU chicken meat companies after contamination with antimicrobial-resistant pathogens

The testing of 165 chicken meat samples from the three largest EU poultry meat companies showed that one in two chicken meat samples is contaminated with antimicrobial-resistant pathogens. The samples were purchased in five EU countries (DE, ES, FR, NL, PL) from the low-cost range of Lidl, Aldi and directly from the companies' factory outlets. Chickens from the German PHW group are the most contaminated, with a total of 59 percent of contaminated samples, followed by the French LDC group with 57 percent of contaminated samples. At the Dutch Plukon Food Group, one in three chickens is contaminated with resistant pathogens.

Antibiotic-resistant pathogens are a growing health threat. If people pick up resistant pathogens during the preparation or consumption of meat, this can lead to serious infections where antibiotics have little or no effect. On average, one third of chicken meat samples contain pathogens that are resistant to quinolones. This groups of **critically important antimicrobials (CIA HP)** is considered by the WHO to be of particular importance with the highest priority for humans. Uniform EU rules against their routine use in industrial animal husbandry are still lacking. In the US, quinolones were already banned for chickens for fattening in 2005 and resistance rates in animals have decreased significantly.

The EU Commission is considering reserving the most important groups of antibiotics for humans until the end of 2020 to combat resistance from animal holdings. The available test results demonstrate the need for an EU-wide ban on CIA HP antibiotics in industrial livestock production. At the same time, a change in the system of breeding and keeping food-producing animals is necessary, as more animal-friendly procedures can avoid the routine use of antibiotics. Germanwatch recommends to consumers to avoid cheap chicken and to switch to organic products from smaller, farm-based livestock farms where - if at all - significantly lower resistance rates are found.

Table 1: Summary of the study results

Name of the company	Quantity Samples	Number of contaminated samples	contaminated samples in %	Resistance to CIA HP antibiotics in %	MRSA contaminated in %
PHW-Group (DE)	54	32	59 %	33 %	24 %
LDC-Group (FR)	56	32	57 %	45 %	0 %
Plukon (NL)	55	20	36 %	25 %	0 %
Total number	165	84	-	57	13
Contaminated samples in %	-	-	51 %	35 %	8 %

German long version of the study:

www.germanwatch.org/de/19459

English long version of the study:

www.germanwatch.org/en/19459

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