



Report from Focus Group on the reduction of antibiotics in the pig sector

The first meeting of the EIP-AGRI Focus Group on the reduction of antibiotic use in the pig sector took place in the Netherlands, on October 24-25.

Focus groups are intended to map the state of play of research and practice within their field and propose solutions to increase productivity and sustainability in agriculture.

The objective of this focus group was to develop and explore integrated strategies to reduce the use of antibiotics, list good practices, look at alternative treatments (e.g. adapted housing systems, feeding, use of herbs), and analyse economic implications, veterinary aspects and the impact of genetics.

The discussion was framed by the starting paper, which had been circulated to the group's members in advance. The participants were very motivated and had a lively discussion during which it identified three main areas of work:

1. Alternatives to antibiotics including vaccination and breeding: measures to improve immunity and general constitution, feed additives/supplements, immuno modulators, new vaccines and ways of application.
2. Management and husbandry: stables layout, housing, biosecurity, euthanasia, early diagnostic detection and training of personnel, veterinarians and advisors.
3. Behavioral change amongst farmers and veterinarians, economics and cost-benefit at farm level.

Within each of the three areas, the experts discussed and identified needs for further existing dissemination gaps as well as some needs for further research and innovation.

The experts elected Professor Jeroen Dewulf (faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ghent University) as chair of the Focus Group. He, together with the key expert and the Service Point, will draft an initial document which will be the starting point for the next meeting which is scheduled for early 2014.