

# ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE IN FARMED ANIMALS NEARLY TRIPLED SINCE 2000

Animals exploited for food are becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics, posing a global public health threat, new report finds.

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Antibiotic resistance in animals exploited for food globally has nearly tripled since 2000, according to a recent report published in the *Science* journal. Researchers from ETH Zurich, the Princeton Environmental Institute, and the Free University of Brussels examined nearly 1,000 publications and unpublished veterinary reports to find that from 2000 until 2018, antibiotics used to treat food animals in developing nations for bacterial infections such as

Escherichia coli, Campylobacter, Salmonella, and Staphylococcus aureus are becoming largely ineffective, failing more than half the time in 40 percent of chickens and one-third of the time in pigs. “The portfolio of antimicrobials used to raise animals for food is rapidly getting depleted, with important consequences for animal health, farmers’ livelihoods, and potentially for human health,” the report states. Seventy-three percent of the world’s available antibiotics are used in the meat industry and while meat production has “plateaued in high-income countries” since 2000, regions such as Asia, Africa, and South America now produce 68 percent, 64 percent, and 40 percent more meat, respectively. “This paper is the first to track antibiotic resistance in animals globally and it finds that resistance has gone up dramatically during the past 18 years,” report co-author Ramanan Laxminarayan said. “We certainly do want higher-protein diets for many people, but if this comes at the cost of failing antibiotics, then we need to evaluate our priorities.”