



AXFOUNDATION

ANTONIA AX:SON JOHNSON FOUNDATION  
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

## Axfoundation

*Axfoundation is an independent, non-profit organization, based in Stockholm, Sweden, whose objective is to establish venues and conditions for real change towards a sustainable society. The operation is divided into three programs: Environment, Social Sustainability and Children & Youth. We initiate and run many of our own projects, but we also cooperate with other organizations and initiatives in the field of sustainable development. Our proximity to the many companies in the Axel Johnson Group gives us insight into the practical sustainability problems with which the business sector is struggling. It also reinforces our idea of entrepreneurship as a force for change.*

Case study: Since 2014 Axfoundation has been deeply engaged in how to minimize the use of antibiotics to land based food producing animals among the actors in the Swedish food retail and food wholesale/food service sector using their supply chains as tools for change.

## Sustainable use of antibiotics to land based food-producing animals

All players in the food chain are responsible for ensuring that the development and spread of antibiotic resistance in food-producing animals is kept to a minimum. Healthy animals and good hygiene form the basis of a minimal need for antibiotics<sup>1</sup> in animal husbandry. Preventive animal healthcare encompassing good animal environment, good management, suitable breeding stock and adequate feed reduces the risk of disease breaking out. The spread of infectious diseases is minimised through biosafety measures at farm level and restricted and controlled trade in live animals. Healthy animals do not need to be treated with medicine. The risk of antibiotic resistant bacteria developing and spreading is thereby reduced. This benefits both animal health and public health.

There is a clear link between good animal welfare and healthy animals, and this is why the proposed criteria also cover animal welfare. Consumers are also demonstrating a growing

---

<sup>1</sup> In this document, antibiotics are defined as natural and synthetic substances that have an inhibiting or lethal effect on bacteria when used to treat animals. Antiparasitic agents, disinfectants and antiseptics are not included in the definition.

interest in the welfare of animals reared for food production. When they shop consumers expect the food on offer to have been produced according to a minimum standard of animal welfare, just like they expect the level of food safety to be satisfactory.

## The Swedish Livestock-Antimicrobial story

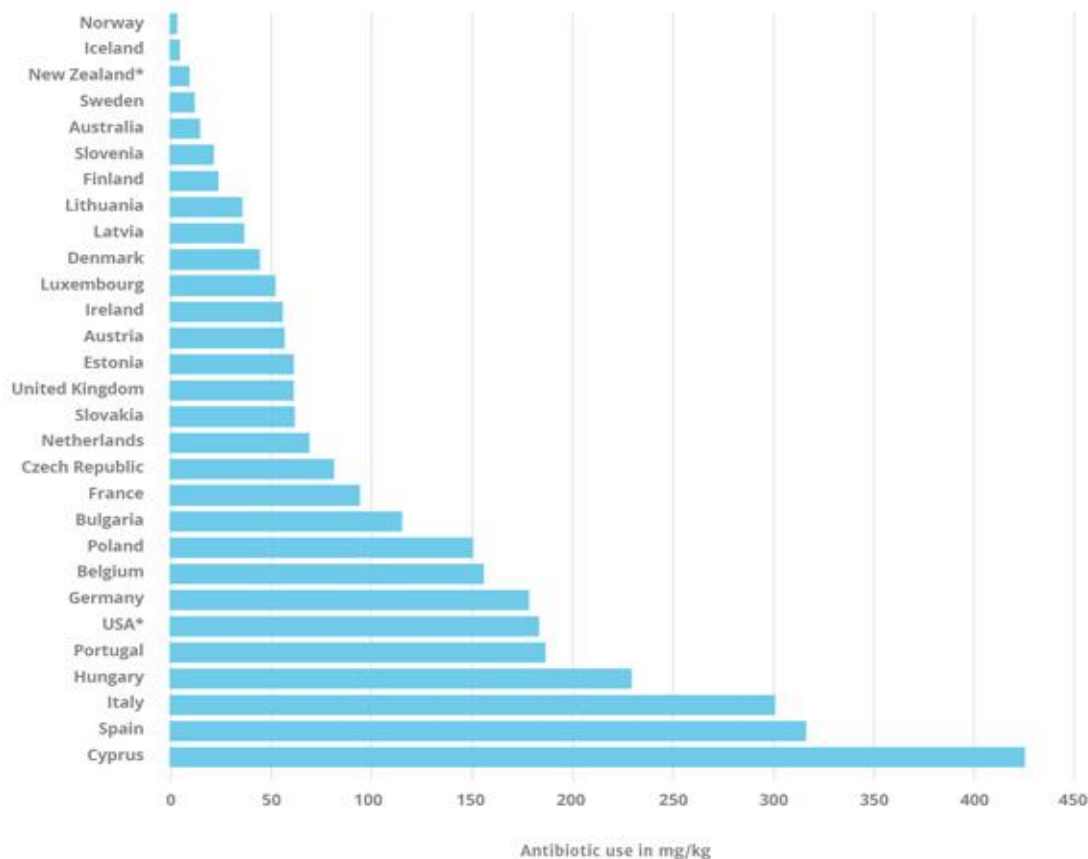
- Sweden was the first country to ban antimicrobials as feed additives in 1986 on farmers's initiative.
- Joined the EU in 1995 and a Governmental
- Report on AMR and feed additives 1997
- EU banned antimicrobials as growth promoters in 2006.

Success factors:

- Well-organized farmers and a well developed and present public sector
- Strong cooperation between farmers, academia and governmental agencies.

Source Ulf Magnusson, SLU

Sweden is in a good position with low AMR-resistance. In most countries approximately 90% of all antibiotics that is used for group treatments are via the feed or in the water, in Sweden the same number is 10%. As the picture below shows the situation within the EU (also including some countries outside the EU) has a wide range when it comes to the amount of antibiotics used per kilogram food producing animal.

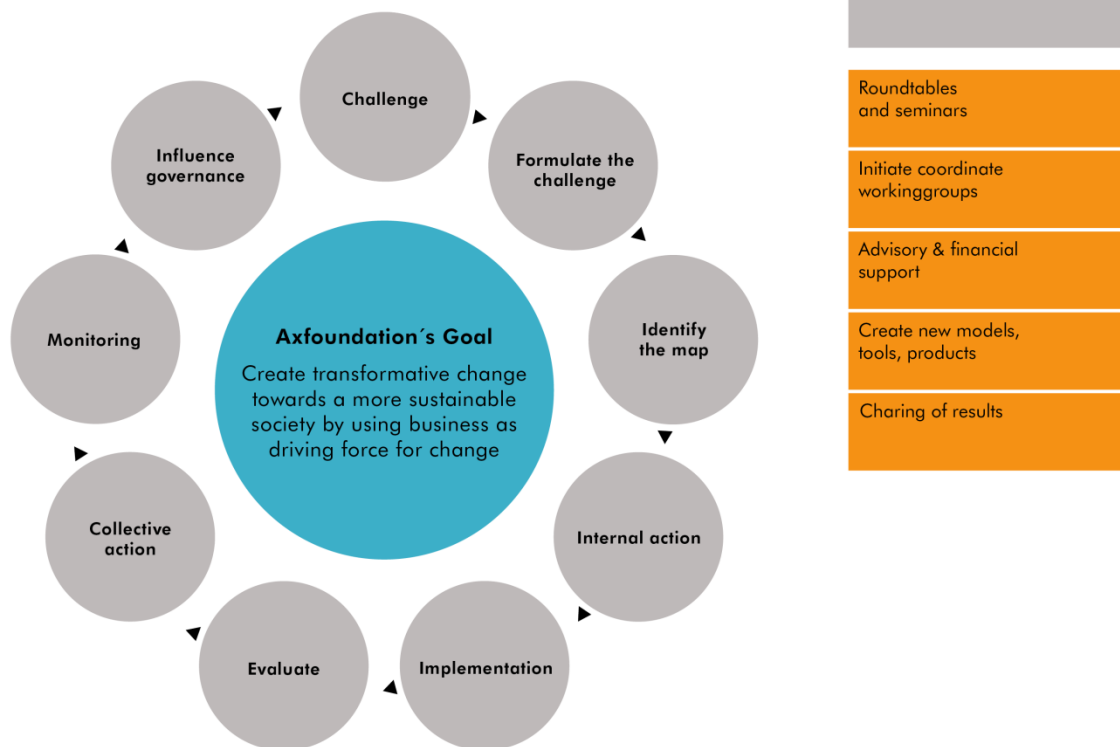


Source: AMR Review 2015 (1)

## The Axfoundation roadmap

The Axfoundation roadmap is a tool that we use in many of our projects. It provides a clear roadmap towards addressing the issue at hand and next steps in order to reach transformative change towards a more sustainable society.

### Axfoundation – roadmap



AXFOUNDATION – Antonia Ax:son Johnson Foundation for Sustainable Development 

The Axfoundation roadmap for transformative change towards a more sustainable use of antibiotics the supplier level, using businesses as a driving force for change

Challenge:

Penicillin was discovered in the 1920s and is considered one of the most important discoveries of the millennium. It is used to kill or inhibit bacteria growth and is vital when used in the right way and the right place.

Overuse of antibiotics, however, can lead to bacteria developing resistance and immunity. The medication simply ceases to have an effect. Overuse of antibiotics is currently a major problem. Both the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) believe that antibiotic resistance is one of the greatest threats to human health.

A recent report from the World Bank shows that research says that a high-case scenario of antimicrobial resistance (AMR)—where antibiotics and other antimicrobial drugs no longer treat infections the way they are supposed to—could cause low-income countries to lose more than 5% of their GDP and push up to 28 million people, mostly in developing countries, into poverty by 2050. And in September 2016 all 193 UN member countries made a landmark declaration agreeing to combat antimicrobial resistance at the United Nations General Assembly.



The nations committed to:

- develop surveillance and regulatory systems on the use and sales of antimicrobial medicines for humans and animals
- encourage innovative ways to develop new antibiotics, and improve rapid diagnostics
- raise awareness among health professionals and the public on how to prevent drug resistant infections

All this is fantastic developments but we still face the challenge that approximately two thirds globally of all antibiotics are given to animals in pursuit of cheaper meat. Once the bacteria have become resistant they can be transferred from humans to humans, from humans to animals, from animals to humans and from animals to animals.

Since animal husbandry accounts for the largest use of antibiotics, all actors along the food chain are responsible for minimizing the spread of antibiotic resistance in food-producing animals. Healthy animals and good hygiene form the foundation for minimizing the need for antibiotics in animal husbandry. Through preventive animal health care, comprehensive satisfactory animal environments, good management, appropriate animal material and feed, the risk of disease outbreak is reduced, which benefits both animal and public health.

### Formulate the Challenge:

It all started with a phone call two years ago from Åsa Domeij, Sustainability Manager at Axfood, the third largest food retailer in Sweden and also one of the many companies within the Axel Johnson Group that we work in close relation with. She said: - the retail sector really need to step in regarding the use of antibiotics to food producing animals –we are going towards a disaster. Could you help us?

### Identify the Map:

Who should we involve: Since one of our pillars is to work via the companies within the Axel Johnson group in order to create sustainable change and be a force for positive change in society we decided to gather a roundtable with scientist and experts from the Natural Veterinary Institute, The Swedish Poultry Meat Association, Swedish University for Agriculture, Farm and Animal Health, Axfood among others. We also included Martin & Servera that is also part of the Axel Johnson Group and Sweden's leading wholesaler and supplier to restaurants – both in the private and in the public sector.

The core group consisted of:

External experts: Christina Greko, National Veterinary Institute Sweden (SVA), veterinarian and expert in Antibiotic strategies, Jenny Lundström, expert at Farm and Animal Health organization (Gård och Djurhälsan), Bo Algers, professor at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) specialized in animal health issues.

Retail experts from Axfood: Åsa Domeij, Sustainability manager, Kristina Areskog Bjurling, Axfood, Head of Product Sustainability, Henrik Eriksson, Team Coordinator, Quality Assurance

Wholesale/food service experts from Martin & Servera: Anna-Lena Norrman, Head of Sustainability, Britta Ekman, Head of Sustainability and Quality Assurance, Åke Johansson Business Area Manager Assortment and Purchasing

The external experts have been working with the AMR- issue for over 20 years and this was the first time they worked together with the retail and wholesale sector. Together we formulated the challenge for the retail and wholesale/food service sector:

*How to impact and reach a sustainable use of antibiotics to land based food producing animals in the supply chain.*

Our primary goal was to put as much pressure along the supply chain as we could. The method we identified as most effective was to formulate purchasing criteria and questions for the buyers to use in their procurement processes. We knew that the challenge was big and we did not know how the suppliers would respond to our criteria and questions.

Our secondary goal was to spread the criteria and questions together with our learnings to relevant players within the food retail and food wholesale sector in order to get a bigger impact.

Our long term goal was of course to achieve good animal husbandry – healthy animals, minimizing the need for antibiotics and decreasing the spread of resistant bacteria.

The core group decided quickly to develop criteria and questions based on the Codex Alimentaris (2005). The Criteria for Sustainable Use of Antibiotics to food producing animals and for good animal husbandry was to be used by the purchasers and byers in their procurement processes and supply-chain work. See enclosed document.

#### Implementation:

We tested the criteria in our own supply chains in Axfood and Martin & Servera during a six month period using email for the criteria and questionnaire, follow up with telephone interviewing and final visits and audits to some main suppliers.

#### Evaluation:

As we started to receive the answers we sharpened our questions to the supplier in order to really understand their sometimes clueless answers. But from their answers we started to understand and get a first picture who understood the AMR-resistance issue and who did not... and who understood our questions but did not want to address the problem.

#### Collective Action:

Six months later we presented the criteria, questions and the pilot case to the rest of the retail and wholesale/food service actors in Sweden followed by a roundtrip to inform other relevant players active within the food sector of our work and of course most importantly share the criteria and questions to companies like Coop, ICA, Lidl, Menigo, Svensk Cater, Fazer, Hk Scan, Dafgårds, Ikea and so on.

A year later the Swedish Food Retailers Association decided to take a common statement based on our criteria starting with their private labels including a long term goal to put pressure on all brands in their assortment. See enclosed document.

---

## Common statement from the member companies within the Swedish Food Retailer's Federation

1. Antibiotics should not be used as a growth promotor.
2. Antibiotics is only allowed after prescription from a veterinary.
3. Ample documentation of all use of antibiotics, including via feed and water should be performed. Responsible veterinary should frequently review and sign this documentation.
4. If antibiotics to all animals, of a certain age, are used regularly, the motives for this should be documented, an investigation should be performed by a veterinary and a program for measure that deal with the health problems should be developed and implemented.



---

The wholesale/food service sector is much more diversified and does not have a strong common industry association so our approach has been somewhat different here. Our goal is to get a common statement from this sector also together with Martin & Servera.

We are also in close dialogue with other industry associations like the Swedish Meat Industry Association and agencies like The National Agency for Public Procurement, Visita (represents approximately 7,000 hotels, restaurants and other enterprises in the Swedish hospitality sector) regarding our criteria and their work in this field.

Another important actor within this segment was the Swedish WWF and their newly launched consumer guide for meat (Köttguiden.se). In 2016 they relaunched the guide now encompassing our criteria on antibiotics

### Monitoring:

Since our criteria are used on a voluntary basis except from the common statement from the member companies within the Swedish Food retailers Federation monitoring has not been our focus.

But in 2017 we will gather the entire food sector again for a discussion on their progress in putting pressure on their supply chains and what kind of development they have seen with their suppliers.

### Influence governance:

- We have been very active influencing the Swedish Governments New strategy for Food arranging meetings with the Minister for Rural Affairs Sven-Erik Bucht and his secretary of

state Elisabeth Backteman secretary of state at the Ministry of Rural Affairs together with Axfood and the Swedish Food Retailers Association.

- Axfoundation introduced the AMR-issue and our criteria at the EAT-conference in 2015, 2016 both conferences attended by relevant policymakers and the business sector . We have also met with and shared our criteria with the Nordic Council for Ministers.

- Leading up to the UN general assembly meeting in September we arranged a seminar early September in the European parliament together with Alde (Liberals Democrats Group) and Swedish member of the EU-Parliament, Fredrik Federlay. The main focus was to highlight that we need to address all actors as the Commission, the veterinarian, retail, consumer and farmer sector in order to create sustainable change along the food chain. For agenda see enclosed document.

- ReAct, is a Swedish based global network of antibiotic resistance experts. They have developed a Toolbox where the aim is to provide inspiration and guidance to take action on antibiotic resistance, based on scientific evidence and experiences gathered from those working in the field across the globe. They work in close relation with WHO. WHO asked ReAct if they could develop the Toolbox on the animal side also. Based on our work and criteria Axfoundation funded one of the experts from our team to developed the Toolbox on the animal side. That is now being spread throughout WHO's network to be implemented in country level strategies.

Axfoundation's AMR News Letter, (Antibiotikaspaning), was launched in 2015 covers AMR-related issues, animal welfare and trade related to land based food producing animals.

## Results:

- The actual development of purchasing criteria and questions for the food supply chain for landbased animals is of course our core.

Results within the companies in the Axel Johnson group:

- Martin & Servera's biggest German supplier of beef and pork came to Sweden especially to meet with M&S because of their AMR-work. The supplier immediately took action and stated that they would decrease their use of antibiotics with 50%. Martin & Servera has exchanged several suppliers of beef (especially veal) and pork because of their high usage of antibiotics in their production and their lack of incentive to change. Since then they have seen that these actors are starting to understand the urgency in this matter and has started acting in a completely different manner.



M & S has also been extremely transparent with their work in an, unusual open manner. Being a big actor in a highly competitive business segment they have shown that this is an area where we need to put competition aside and work together.

M & S has also changed their internal routines when they are considering a new supplier and work much closer with the sustainability department at M&S in their purchasing processes.

- Axfood has been focusing their internal efforts on their private label which make out 27% of their assortment. They have changed all their private label suppliers to suppliers that work with farms that has certifications for animal protection. Axfood has made an extensive analysis to identify good animal protection standards in the respective country they source from that also included third party certification.

Axfoods experience is that if the animal protection program is working at the farm level then they usually use much less antibiotics. Their experience is that in many EU countries like Spain and Italy where the use of antibiotics is still high, the usage is very much a part of culture. Even though we have legislation within the EU like criteria 1, that antibiotics should not be used as a growth promotor, it is not being followed. So when it comes to other labels and brands that are not their own, their approach has been to put pressure on Swedish politicians and policy makers in order to push that at least the EU-legislation should be followed. Accordingly the first question they pose to other other brands than their own is really if they follow legislation, which might seem like a silly question but is highly relevant in many cases. Therefore Axfood has been very active as a member within the Swedish Retail Association and also in putting pressure on the Swedish Governments New Strategy for Food (Livsmedelsstrategin) during meetings with the Minister for Rural Affairs Sven-Erik Bucht and his secretary of state Elisabeth Backteman secretary of state at the Ministry of Rural Affairs together and also in Brussels together with Axfoundation.

Results from other actors in the food chain:

- Results from other relevant actors within the food chain in Sweden has proven a bit difficult to measure but we will have a meeting during 2017 to take the next step and also discuss their success rate in pushing the use of antibiotics in their supply chains.

Policy results:

- Sweden: In the Swedish Governments New Strategy for Food (not yet completely ready) we know that the AMR-resistance issue for food producing animals has gotten substantial attention.

- Sweden: Axfoundation is now part of a roundtable that Gabriel Wikström, Minister of Health, gathers.
- Sweden: Axfoundations AMR newsletter reach a large group of decision makers and politicians in Sweden.
- EU: hopefully we could achieve some influence on policymakers in the EU with showing the Swedish business case last September.
- Globally: Together with ReAct and the development of the Toolbox on the animal side we have reached all member countries within the UN that work with WHO.

### Looking forward:

- Reach a common statement from the wholesale/food service sector.
- Create a MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) course on antibiotics resistance with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU).
- Create practical examples of how to work with animals in rural areas in developing countries together with ReAct.
- Reach out to Swedish Food Retailers Associations sister organizations in Europe in order to spread our work and criteria and encourage other business initiatives.
- Continue to put pressure on politicians and policymakers in Sweden and within the EU on better data collection, better surveillance mechanism on EU policy and trade agreements like TTIP, G7, G20 and so on.

#### Relevant links:

<http://axfoundation.se/en/>

<http://www.axfood.se/en/>

<http://www.martinservera.se/in-english/>

*Axel Johnson builds and develops profitable trade and service businesses in the European market, with a focus on the Nordic countries. All told, our operations employ more than 22,000 people, and we are trading partners with thousands of companies worldwide, which makes Axel Johnson one of the largest trade and service companies in the Nordic region.*

<http://www.axeljohnson.se/en/about-axel-johnson/>

[SVDH.se/en](http://SVDH.se/en)

[Wwf.se/kottquiden](http://Wwf.se/kottquiden)

<http://www.reactgroup.org/toolbox/>

<http://www.eatforum.org/eat-initiative/>

#### Relevant reports:

- O'Neill report on the agricultural side <http://amr-review.org/sites/default/files/Antimicrobials%20in%20agriculture%20and%20the%20environment%20-%20Reducing%20unnecessary%20use%20and%20waste.pdf>
- An overview of current rules and legislations within the EU
  - o <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20160303IPR16930/superbugs-meps-want-to-curb-use-of-antibiotics-in-farming>
  - o <https://epthinktank.eu/2016/06/22/review-of-medicated-feed-legislation-eu-legislation-in-progress/>
- The conclusion of the council of ministers:
- [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/131126.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/131126.pdf)
- <http://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/about.html>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/pdf/2-2013-508.pdf>

# Welcome Setting the agenda: AMR Seminar

DATE: SEPTEMBER 8, 2016  
TIME: 12:00 – 14:00. PLACE: MEP SALON

In late September, the UN General Assembly will host a high level meeting among global leaders on the antimicrobial resistance (AMR) issue. The awareness of the threat to both future human and animal health is spreading, and action is needed in order for us to safeguard our possibility to treat a number of medical conditions that require effective antibiotics. Not acting to halt the spread of AMR will not only pose a threat to human and animal health, it will also cause increasing cost for both public authorities and private companies. Several processes are ongoing both in Europe and globally to address the issue, and this seminar will focus on solutions and ways forward from the perspective of the Commission, but also from a veterinarian, farmer, consumer, and retail perspective.

You will listen to the following speakers:

Koen Van Dyck, European Commission – Directorate General for Health and Food Safety, Head of Unit for Food, Alert System and Training, SANTE G4,  
Christina Greko, National Veterinary Institute Sweden, expert in Antibiotic Strategies, Örjan Brinkman, president of BEUC, Åsa Domeij, head of Sustainability at Axfood, Mattias Espert Pig Farmer, Trelleborg, Sweden. The session will be moderated by Dave Keating.

This session is hosted by Axfoundation  
and Alde, Centerpartiet.

RSVP: asap to [isak.engqvist@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:isak.engqvist@europarl.europa.eu)

