

## «Antibiotics in the meat is against the Animal Protection Law»



[1]

57 tonnes of antibiotics were administered to animals in Switzerland in 2012 - even to healthy ones. Even though the delivery of antibiotics to healthy animals is actually prohibited under the Swiss Animal Protection Law.

Already young calves are given a standard antibiotic treatment at the age of a few weeks. Particularly in large calf mast farms, according to Beat Mühlethaler, managing director of the calf mast organization Univo, it is not possible differently. Because the keeping of over a hundred animals in a small space, the risk of infection with a variety of germs is particularly high. Individual sick animals can no longer be identified and therefore the entire herd is treated prophylactically. This is done by adding antibiotics for ten days to the milk powder used as a daily food for the calves. This treatment is then carried out at intervals of 14 days, two to three times.

### Farmers hoarding on stock

Even on ordinary farms dealing with antibiotics is part of everyday life. In dairy cows, diseases such as uterine infections or mild injuries occur so frequently that the veterinarian is not called every time, instead the farmers keep the appropriate antibiotic already stored in the closet and administer it independently.

### Antibiotics prohibited

But strictly speaking, this practice violates the Animal Welfare Act. This opinion is expressed by the Zurich cantonal veterinarian Regula Vogel:

"If a posture only works if you routinely have to administer antibiotics in advance, then this is contrary to the Animal Welfare Law."

However, tackling the release of antibiotics in agriculture is difficult, if not impossible. Both veterinarians and farmers profit economically from the treatment with antibiotics. In the course of the revision of the cure law, the Federal Office of Public Health proposed to limit the dose of antibiotics for veterinary use. The consultation showed, however, that this proposal met with very strong opposition. Especially the farmers' representatives in parliament resisted this proposal, as Urs Schneeberger of the BAG told the Swiss television.

### Everyone benefits from it

The reason why antibiotics are treated so generously is clear: Meat must be cheap. Organic meat was bought in 2010 by just 3.7% of all fish and meat consumers [Source], that is why the customers looking at the wallet are the main selling point. Therefore it is not worthwhile for the meat producers to invest too much space, too much time and too much work in the animals. The price for this is paid primarily by the animals, who must live their lives under these conditions. But it is already foreseeable that this approach will take revenge on humans. Because of the diet

with animal products and the contained antibiotic-resistant bacteria, these pathogens spread more and more in humans. Thousand of patients can therefore no longer be treated against infections every year in Switzerland because of resistant germs.

Bernadette Raschle

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Weitere Infos:

- [Antibiotika bei Nutztieren - Mit Risiken und Nebenwirkungen](#) [2], SRF Sendung PULS vom 14. Okt. 2013
- [Experten fordern Antibiotika-Verbot in Tierhaltung](#) [3], SRF Sendung Espresso vom 03.12.2014
- [Antibiotika-Verbot bei der Produktion von Nahrungsmitteln](#) [4], Tages-Anzeiger vom 23.11.2014

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#### Links

[1] <https://www.swissveg.ch/Antibiotics?language=en>

[2] <http://www.srf.ch/gesundheit/lifestyle/antibiotika-bei-nutztieren-mit-risiken-und-nebenwirkungen>

[3] <http://www.srf.ch/konsum/themen/gesundheit/experten-fordern-antibiotika-verbot-in-tierhaltung>

[4] <http://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/wissen/natur/AntibiotikaVerbot-bei-der-Produktion-von-Nahrungsmitteln/story/29999006>