# UK Implements New Regulations to Reduce Antibiotic Use in Farming with Concerns over Compliance



New regulations in the UK aimed at curbing antibiotic use in farming take effect today. These rules prohibit the routine use of antibiotics to address poor hygiene, inadequate husbandry, or poor farm management. Despite these bans, experts highlight that loopholes exist, which are closed under the stricter EU legislation enforced since 2022.

Before and after Brexit, UK ministers assured that farming and food standards would not decline. However, critics like Coílín Nunan of the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics argue that the new rules permit the prophylactic administration of antibiotics to large groups of animals under "exceptional circumstances," which risks widespread use. This practice is banned by the EU, which only allows it for individual animals.

Former UK Chief Medical Officer Sally Davies recently emphasized the dangers of antibiotic overuse, which contributes to the rise of antibiotic-resistant superbugs. Approximately two-thirds of global antibiotic use is in farm animals, often to promote growth or prevent infections due to overcrowded and unsanitary conditions.

These new measures have also led to concerns about compliance and enforcement. The Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics is urging the government to ban group prophylaxis, mandate data collection on antibiotic use from farms, and improve animal welfare standards. The Veterinary Medicines Directorate maintains that while routine use is discouraged, an outright ban on prophylaxis could harm animal health and increase disease spread.