Building a European AMR surveillance network in veterinary medicine (EARS-Vet)

The mission of the European Union Joint Action on Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infections (EU-JAMRAI) is to foster synergies among EU Member States by developing and implementing effective One Health policies to fight the rising threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and to reduce healthcare associated infections.

A pillar of all national and international action plans is to develop strong surveillance systems of AMR. Currently, the EU coordinates AMR surveillance in the medical sector through EARS-Net (ECDC), as well as in healthy animals (EFSA), but lacks a coordinated AMR surveillance in bacteria from diseased animals. Although veterinary pharmaceutical industries carry out harmonized monitoring of AMR in bacterial pathogens of food producing animals (VetPath & MycoPath programmes) and companion animals (ComPath) in some European countries, primarily to address their regulatory requirements, this monitoring system remains private and can't replace a public European system producing data addressing such a key health issue as AMR.

Several European countries have already set up national surveillance systems of AMR in diseased animals, but they are highly diverse and fragmented. Some EU countries are also in the process of setting up their surveillance system, in the absence of any European framework, while many others still completely lack a formal surveillance of AMR in clinical animal isolates.

In this context, EU-JAMRAI Task 7.4.2 aims at designing a public European AMR surveillance network in veterinary medicine (EARS-Vet), as well as to produce recommendations to countries wishing to build their national surveillance system.

Our group is composed of 20 professionals from 9 countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Czech Republic, Belgium, Greece, Italy, France and Spain) lead by Anses (France), but we take an even broader approach and seek collaborations with all EU countries.

To build the most pragmatic EARS-Vet and to provide experience-based recommendations to set up national surveillance systems, our strategy is to:

- analyse the strengths & weaknesses of existing national AMR surveillance systems in veterinary medicine in Europe, and
- collect advice, feedbacks and expectations on EARS-Vet from all EU countries and relevant European institutions.

To achieve this, we received budget to do 25 country visits.

Our work will be summarised in an EARS-Vet manual inspired from the CAESAR manual (2015), expected for August 2020.