

POLICY BRIEF

Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance in Nigeria's Animal Health Sector: Policy Actions for a Sustainable Future

Highlights



Nigeria's animal health surveillance systems for AMR are gradually evolving. However, weak data reporting and guideline enforcements are still being addressed.



National guidelines for AMR surveillance in animal health exist but are implementations remain limited.



Animal health laboratories are not optimally funded and understaffed, thereby limiting diagnostic capacity.



We need more private sector engagement owing to its critical role in veterinary and agricultural supply chains.

Addressing AMR surveillance in animal health can no longer wait

The growing threat of AMR in Nigeria's livestock and poultry sectors risks collapsing vital aspects of national food security, economic stability, and human health. Most of the infectious diseases of national interest, and seasonal outbreaks recorded within Nigeria are from zoonotic origin.

Without effective animal health AMR surveillance systems, resistant pathogens silently continue to spread from animals to humans, increasing the risk of untreatable infections and zoonotic outbreaks. In the animal sector, the country could witness an 11% loss in livestock production by 2050.

The movement to contain AMR relies on timely, high-quality data from all sectors, including animal health. Nigeria's current AMR surveillance gaps compromise its ability to manage outbreaks, or contribute meaningfully to One Health goals. Effective surveillance now will enable early detection, reduce misuse of antibiotics, and guide national resource allocation.



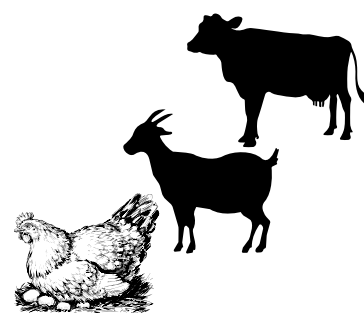
Poor AMR surveillance in the animal health sector could lead to a 11% loss in Nigeria's livestock production by 2050

What limited surveillance and reporting are already telling us and what we risk missing

Surveillance data, where available, show growing resistance among key animal pathogens to commonly used antibiotics, including tetracyclines, sulfonamides and aminoglycosides.

Studies assessing antimicrobial resistance in food and agriculture systems have found resistant genes in our commonly consumed animals and animal products such as goats, pigs, poultry, cattle, sheep, milk, cheese, beef, chicken, yoghurt, etc.

However, incomplete reporting, need for more trained staff, and fragmented data systems obscure the full picture, leaving limited evidence for action.



In Nigeria, antimicrobial resistant genes have been found in our commonly consumed animals and animal products.

Ongoing initiatives and contributions shaping AMR surveillance in animal health

- Nigeria has developed AMR National Action Plans and animal health surveillance frameworks.
- Training and operationalization of INFARM for AMR data reporting by 6 sentinel animal health laboratories
- Isolated initiatives are underway in academic and research institutions to monitor resistance trends.
- Veterinary associations and stakeholders have begun advocating for prudent antimicrobial use.



Photo Speak: Training, Field Hands-on and Laboratory Hands-on Programs for AMR Active Surveillance in Nigeria's animal health sector

Progress and pitfalls

Nigeria through the Fleming Fund Country Grant (FFCG II) implemented by Management Sciences for Health (MSH) has supported the Nigerian government to take commendable steps toward improving AMR surveillance in the animal health sector, particularly through policy development and stakeholder engagement.

To date, 6 animal health sentinel laboratories have now been established and supported through FFCG II to serve the AMR surveillance in the country. However, these sites are not enough to meet the needs of a teeming population (200 million people) at risk.

Other critical gaps in implementation, infrastructure, coordination, and funding continue also to undermine the effectiveness of these efforts. Both the strides made and the structural weaknesses that persist are thus highlighted below to indicate where we stand and where urgent attention is still needed.

Progress Made:

- Availability of policy documents and strategic frameworks for AMR surveillance in the animal health
- Emerging awareness of One Health and AMR within government and academia.

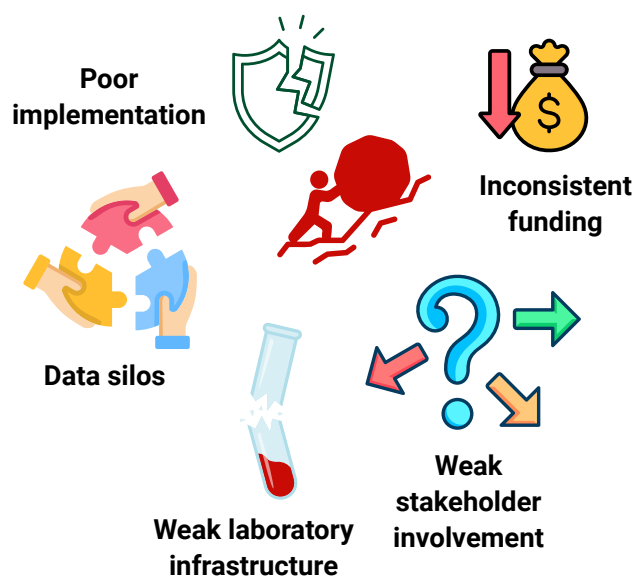
Current Challenges:

- Poor implementation and monitoring of AMR guidelines.
- Weak lab infrastructure with inconsistent funding.
- Data silos and lack of standardized AMR reporting systems.
- Marginal involvement of private sector stakeholders.



Six (6) Animal Health Sentinel Laboratories Established

Current challenges with AMR surveillance in the Animal Health Sector



Lessons that could transform animal health surveillance and health security

- Surveillance works best when data is shared across sectors using harmonized frameworks.
- Sustainable lab funding models, through public-private partnerships, can strengthen diagnostic capacity.
- Incentives for responsible antimicrobial use can bring private sector actors to the table.
- Local ownership of guidelines must be matched with real domestic investments in rollout and accountability.



Strategic Policy Shifts

Below are priority actions we recommend for stronger AMR surveillance in animal health:

- Fund Guideline Implementation: Allocate dedicated resources for implementing and monitoring AMR guidelines.
- Strengthen Laboratories: Invest in infrastructure and skilled personnel for sustainable AMR lab operations. Also create more animal health laboratory networks for AMR surveillance in the animal health sector.
- Engage the Private Sector: Establish public-private partnerships and create incentives for compliance with antimicrobial stewardship.

Call To Action

The following highlights what we need from government, partners and private stakeholders to sustain the progress of AMR surveillance in the animal health sector:

- ☒ Establish new and strengthen existing laboratory AMR surveillance structures for animal health
- ☒ Champion sustainable funding and implementation of animal health AMR surveillance.
- ☒ Lead the establishment of a unified, functional reporting system.
- ☒ Promote private sector engagement through inclusive policies and incentives.
- ☒ Ensure animal health remains a key pillar in One Health action planning.

References

- Nigeria's National Action Plan for Antimicrobial Resistance (2024–2028)
- World Health Organization
- World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) AMR Surveillance Standards
- Fleming Fund Country Grant Reports
- ReAct Africa AMR Policy Brief Resources