

Increasing use of antibiotics threatens the public health in Denmark

Danish media have recently increased their focus on the growing use of antibiotics. The reason is that agricultural use of antibiotics has grown rapidly and has never been greater than now.

Overuse of antibiotics makes the animals bacteria resistant and these bacteria could infect us with diseases when we eat meat - mainly pork but also poultry - and also by contact between people. The danger is that bacteria can make us seriously ill, and these illnesses are difficult to treat.

It has become a nationwide health problem affecting the whole community. Hans Jorgen Kolmos, leading expert in clinical microbiology, predicts that we are heading toward a disaster if no radical actions are taken right now. He is not alone in his concerns. Staff doctor from the Serum Institute Robert Skov, recommends avoiding all unnecessary use of antibiotics, especially because of the fact that the infection does not only happen when people eat animal products, but also transfer from human to human.

This has led the Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries to take initiative to introduce a so-called yellow card solution in which farmers and veterinarians are ordered to make a plan of action if the antibiotic use is remarkably high. This means that the problem is on the government's agenda. The opposition additionally demand that there will be developed a joint plan to prevent the pig bacteria becoming a public health problem.

References:

- "Resistente bakterier fra landbruget truer folkesundheden" ("Resistant bacteria from agriculture threatens the public health") in Børsen Fødevarer Sundhed, 22. april 2010
- "Resistente bakterier fra svin breder sig" ("Resistant bacteria from pigs spreads") by Michael Rothenborg in Politiken, 25. april 2010

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