



Cattle in pens, having been auctioned at the Fercogan auction centre, Pampa de la Isla, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, the Plurinational State of Bolivia. The bovine sector in the Plurinational State of Bolivia has expressed interest in fully implementing Codex guidelines on monitoring and surveillance of foodborne antimicrobial resistance.

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ACT IN THE PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA: BUILDING GOVERNANCE TO CONTAIN FOODBORNE ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

Success story

“The Codex Guidelines are fundamental for our country,” says Carolina Tejerina, Food Residues and Contaminants Surveillance and Control Professional in the Plurinational State of Bolivia. She goes on to explain that, for example: **“the bovine sector has expressed interest in fully implementing these Guidelines and in initiating a sampling plan for surveillance and resistance to antimicrobials in live animals.”**

Carolina Tejerina is referring to the *Codex Guidelines on Integrated Monitoring and Surveillance of Foodborne Antimicrobial Resistance*. The successful implementation of these Guidelines is a goal of the FAO-implemented and Republic of Korea-funded

CC-RAM

The Committee for the Containment of Antimicrobial Resistance in Agricultural Health and Food safety (CC-RAM) was established in November 2023 in the Plurinational State of Bolivia. Its role, in collaboration with both public and private sectors, is fundamental for supervising and coordinating activities related to AMR. This ensures a systematic and comprehensive approach, improving the country's management of AMR.

Action to support implementation of Codex AMR Texts (ACT) project. The project sets out a four-pillar pathway to implementation that requires improved governance, surveillance, and awareness of foodborne antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in the country, as well as the application of relevant good practices. That the bovine sector recognizes the threat of foodborne AMR and the benefits of implementing the Codex Guidelines signals the project is succeeding in all of these goals.

In particular, this success is down to the approval and activation of the Committee for the Containment of Antimicrobial Resistance in Agricultural Health and Food Safety (CC-RAM) of the Plurinational State of Bolivia. This is a significant recent milestone regarding ACT implementation. The multisectoral committee met for the first time in April 2024, with full government sanction to discuss and find consensus on the country's work of AMR containment in the food and agriculture sectors, with the participation of public and private sector actors. By the second meeting in June 2024, the bovine sector had already identified the ways in which it can benefit from the Codex texts. **"The sector is very interested from the point of view that they are currently exporting beef to very desirable markets and we want to demonstrate the level of surveillance that exists, including with regard to antimicrobial resistance,"** explains Tejerina.

Ronny Salvatierra, President of CC-RAM, explains why the establishment of the Committee is so significant: **"The establishment of CC-RAM is a great advance in the project's objectives of strengthening the country's governance with respect to AMR in the food and agriculture**



Carolina Tejerina,
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State of Bolivia and
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reports on the bovine
sector's interest in
implementing Codex
AMR guidelines.

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sector," he says, adding that **"the participation of all parties will allow the Committee to delve deeper into specific AMR issues and establish sectoral strategies that address key aspects of AMR containment."**

ACT is being implemented in a total of six countries and each ACT project country needs to strengthen different legislative structures and capacities to successfully implement the project, but success in all four project goals will considerably reinforce countries' capacities to reduce the spread of foodborne AMR. The multisectoral, One Health, approach is essential to success. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the establishment and operationalization of CC-RAM represents key progress on governance and will complement the work on the other three pillars.

In order to arrive at this milestone, the ACT project focused on assessing the situation and the progress of the country in aspects of governance, surveillance, good practices, awareness about AMR and the use of antimicrobials (AMU) in the



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CC-RAM met for the second time in June 2024.

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food and agriculture sectors. The country applied three assessment tools, namely the FAO Progressive Management Pathway for Antimicrobial Resistance (FAO-PMP-AMR) and the FAO Assessment Tool for Laboratories and AMR Surveillance Systems (FAO-ATLASS) in October 2022 and March 2023, respectively and the “ACT Tool” in 2023. These assessments helped inform government entities on priority gaps and to reinforce the development and implementation of the National Action Plan for AMR. In October 2023, during a workshop for the strengthening of governance and the national surveillance system for AMR, SENASAG presented a proposal for the operating regulations of “an agricultural health and food safety committee for the containment of antimicrobial resistance”. On 21 November 2023, the operating regulations of CC-RAM were approved by Administrative Resolution No. 383/2023. The regulations establish the Committee’s objectives “to supervise and coordinate activities related to AMR, in order to ensure a systematic and comprehensive approach”.

According to Oscar Vargas, former National Head of Legal Affairs, **“the Resolution provides clarity on the responsibilities and functioning mechanism each of the members must comply with. After obtaining the legal support, an important step was taken on the formation of the CC-RAM Board of Directors. This allows the implementation of the commitments established in the Administrative Resolution itself.”**

The first meeting saw the appointment of the

President, Vice-President and Secretary of the Committee and in addition to the broad workplan, three sectoral working groups were formed, related to swine, poultry and bovine issues. All related AMR activities in the country now require intersectoral coordination among the stakeholders involved in AMR containment. The bovine working group has got off to a running start. Salvatierra explains some of the other committee commitments: **“the next steps are to start defining the Committee’s work schedule, which includes the preparation of an action plan on AMR for the agricultural sector, with specific activities for the coming years,”** he says.

“CC-RAM works with stakeholders in the agricultural sector from primary production and food safety, thereby taking responsibility for the protection of public health,” Salvatierra continues. **“It is very important for Bolivia to continue working to strengthen the promotion of good agricultural practices and the proper use of antimicrobials, reducing the impact of AMR from the first stage of food production.”**

In an indication that the poultry working group is also keen to move forward, José Miguel Peducassé, Head of the Technical Department of the Poultry Farmers Association of Santa Cruz de la Sierra commented that: **“It is important to understand that AMR affects us all and this is work that each of the sectors involved must seek to address. We are already beginning to define the first activities for the containment of AMR from the food production sector.”**

“The formation of CC-RAM is an important step for the agrifood sector in the country. The public and private sector collaboration will improve the country’s management of antimicrobial resistance,” says Jorge Berrios, ACT project coordinator for the Plurinational State of Bolivia. He continues: “I am optimistic about the work being done by the working groups of the committee; aspects such as the implementation of the electronic veterinary prescription and issues related to growth promoters, have been addressed in the first extraordinary meeting of the committee and show the commitment of the members to face antimicrobial resistance head on.”

The start of CC-RAM’S work will also allow the Plurinational State of Bolivia to follow up on AMR commitments, such as the review of the commitments acquired from the application of the FAO-PMP-AMR tool and the implementation of the monitoring plan that is currently being prepared. The country has made headway in improving surveillance of AMU and AMR. Data driven assessments from the work on surveillance will help to inform CC-RAM on how to shape regulations and legislation that will address priority areas of concern, including the implementation of good practices.

Jorge Pinto Ferreira, Lead Technical Officer for the ACT project, explains the role of the FAO assessment tools: “FAO has developed various tools to assist countries in assessing their status regarding antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and in finding tailored solutions based on their specific needs and circumstances. These tools are not only assessment instruments, but their deployment also provides training opportunities that can guide countries in the right direction. The recommendation to establish CC-RAM originates from the implementation of these FAO tools, serving as an excellent example of how FAO supports countries in paving the way to contain foodborne AMR.”



The Plurinational State of Bolivia and AMR

In 2019, there were 10 100 AMR-associated deaths in the Plurinational State of Bolivia.¹

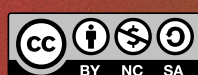
The bovine sector in the country is experiencing healthy growth with Bolivian livestock reaching **over 11 million heads in 2022**. The value of exports has also seen significant growth in recent years, with hopes that will continue to grow.²

The bovine sector is second in size to the poultry sector, which produces over **262 million** broilers per year.³

¹ Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation, University of Washington. n.d. The burden of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in Bolivia (Plurinational State of) [cited 25 July 2024]. <https://www.healthdata.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/Bolivia.pdf>

² La Federación de Ganaderos de Santa Cruz (FEGASACRUZ). [2024]. *Statistical Portfolio of the Bolivian Bovine Livestock Sector 2022*.

³ Instituto Nacional de Estadística Boliviano. *Bolivia – Existencia de Aves Parrilleras por Departamento, según Años, 1984 – 2023*.



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