



AUSTRALIAN CHICKEN MEAT FEDERATION INC.

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## **Antibiotics Policy of the Australian Chicken Meat Federation**

### **Consumer Summary**

The Australian chicken meat industry's main goal is to produce healthy food.

The industry has management practices in place that aim to minimise the development of antibiotic resistance in flocks and humans, and reduce exposure to antibiotic residues.

The use of antibiotics in meat chickens is limited to two important functions. First, antibiotics are used to treat bacterial infections in unwell birds. Second, they are also used to prevent well birds from becoming infected with bacteria or disease in the first instance.

While in theory, chicken meat consumption can contribute to the development of antibiotic resistance in humans, in common, everyday practice, risks are reduced through industry and consumer actions:

- 1) *In theory, residue of antibiotics given to chicken can remain in chicken meat and be consumed by humans.*  
In practice, industry regulations dictate proper management of antibiotic use to ensure that there are no antibiotics remaining in meat. This is validated in regular testing by the government's National Residue Survey Program. As well, industry avoids using antibiotics in birds that are related to antibiotics used by humans.
- 2) *In theory, antibiotic resistant bacteria may develop in chicken meat and be consumed by humans.*  
In consumer practice, all bacteria, including any that may be resistant to antibiotics, are killed through normal preparation and cooking of chicken meat. As well, industry manages its use of antibiotics to prevent resistant bacteria from developing.

#### **ACMF Industry Code**

- Only antibiotics approved by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority for use in meat chickens are to be used.
- Good veterinary practice, withholding periods, designed to ensure that there is no residue left in the meat at the time of slaughter, and all other conditions stipulated by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority must be observed at all times.
- Antibiotics are not to be used to promote or enhance the birds' growth.
- Where unavoidable, antibiotics used in human medicine may be used, but only for targeted therapeutic treatment.