

Germany to limit antibiotic use in farming amid food scare

January 10 2012

Germany's agriculture minister Tuesday submitted draft legislation to limit the use of antibiotics in livestock amid a food warning that has made waves in the country's media.

Ilse Aigner said she wanted legislation to reduce "to an absolute minimum" the use of antibiotics in treating animals for slaughter in Germany, Europe's top producer of pork and third biggest producer of poultry.

The draft law also called for more transparency on antibiotics in farming, amid fears that the medicines are getting into the food chain and reducing their effectiveness for humans in fighting disease.

The announcement came amid heavy media coverage of a study by ecologist group BUND that showed large amounts of bacteria resistant to antibiotics in supermarket chicken.

BUND acknowledged that the sample size of 20 for their study was not representative but it has still made front-page news in Germany, which has been in the vanguard of the organic food movement.

The group said the presence of the bacteria was due to the "continuous abuse of [antibiotics](#)" and rejected Aigner's proposals as full of "[loopholes](#)".

"Minister Aigner must decide what is more important to her: the health

of the population or the interests of the pharmaceutical and agricultural lobby," said BUND chairman Hubert Weiger in a statement.

Last year, Germany was wracked by a food scandal over contaminated vegetable sprouts.

Fifty people died in Germany and one in Sweden after the outbreak of the [virulent strain](#) of enterohaemorrhagic E.coli (EHEC) in May and June.

The crisis was initially wrongly blamed on Spanish [cucumbers](#). Germany later said vegetable sprouts caused the deaths.

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Citation: Germany to limit antibiotic use in farming amid food scare (2012, January 10) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-01-germany-limit-antibiotic-farming-food.html>

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