



### **European Antibiotic Awareness Day: AIFA-OPERA expert group to promote optimal uses and curb resistance onset**

The “European Antibiotic Awareness Day” (EAAD) promoted by the World Health Organization (WHO) is celebrated on 18 November; this year its theme is represented by the slogan “*Spread awareness, stop resistance*”. The initiative aims at raising awareness of antibiotic resistance and at fostering best medical practices at all levels (civil society, health professionals and policy makers) to avoid further emergencies and the spread of drug-resistant infections.

In Italy, the situation is critical both for the high rate of antibiotic use, as also highlighted by the OsMed Report data, and for the high prevalence of antibiotic-resistant germs, which makes it urgent to prevent and control antibiotic resistance. Despite the downward trend, consumption continues to be above the European average, both in the human and veterinary sector, with great variability between the Italian regions. In fact, Italy holds, together with Greece, the European record for the spread of resistant germs. Therefore, inappropriate use of antibiotics is increasing bacterial resistance in Italy and worldwide.

In this context, which could be defined as an emergency, AIFA has set up a working group (called AIFA-OPERA, Ottimizzazione della Prescrizione Antibiotica- Optimization of Antibiotic Prescription) composed of some of the leading national experts\* of antibiotics and resistance (coordinated by Prof. Evelina Tacconelli - University of Verona), supporting the Agency in optimizing antibiotic use to preserve their effectiveness and reduce the onset of resistance. Such optimization is all the more urgent during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic.

The working group's program of activities will be divided into different initiatives with short-term (6-12 months) and long-term (next 3-5 years) goals:

- Short-term: development of recommendations based on the best scientific evidence of antibiotic therapy of infections for both hospitals and general practitioners, and strengthening antibiotic monitoring systems;
- Long-term: development of coherent actions, including awareness campaigns, creation of a network of centers of excellence to support AIFA-OPERA's training and research activities.

AIFA is fully aware of the challenge and willing to provide maximum scientific support to prescribers, health professionals, citizens and policy makers to promote optimal and responsible use of antibiotics.

According to Director General Nicola Magrini, “*the problem of antibiotic resistance is one of the main global challenges both for human and veterinary health and for the ecosystem in general. In order to combat this, we need a shared strategy at all levels, promoting optimal and limited use of antibiotics, in a One Health approach. AIFA is ready to make its contribution and has set up a specific working group aimed at enhancing both immediate and long-term actions.*”

*In this context, the “European Antibiotic Awareness Day” and its slogan “Spread awareness, stop resistance” has the task of raising awareness of the threat posed by antibiotic resistance, as well as their proper and prudent use. We must respond globally to the global challenge of antibiotic resistance: using antibiotics carefully must be a commitment and a duty for everyone, from healthcare professionals to the general population.”*

*\* Experts of the AIFA-OPERA working group: Evelina Tacconelli (coordinator), Massimo Antonelli, Andrea Gori, Paolo Antonio Grossi, Raffaele Iandolo, Carlo Manfredi, Stefania Stefani, Mario Tumbarello, Pierluigi Viale.*