

7<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about antibiotics in farming.

Antibiotic resistance is the biggest threat to modern medicine and we must act now to help keep antibiotics effective for future generations.

The Government has long promoted the responsible use of antibiotics in veterinary medicine, working closely with the farming industry and the veterinary profession, publishing its first five-year strategy to tackle antimicrobial resistance in 2013. In January 2019 the Government launched a further 5-year action plan, as well as a 20-year vision for how the UK will contribute to containing and controlling antimicrobial resistance by 2040.

I am pleased that UK sales in antibiotics for food producing animals was reduced by 53 per cent between 2014 and 2018. This reduction is a testament to the improvements industry and the veterinary profession have made in antibiotic stewardship, training and disease control. This is a great example of how real change can be achieved when Government and industry work together. We should commend our farmers and vets for setting an excellent example for others around the world to follow.

A further target has been set to reduce UK antibiotic use in food-producing animals by 25 per cent between 2016 and 2020 through implementation of agreed industry targets, with new objectives for each animal sector being set by 2021. I believe long term sector-specific reduction targets, focused on the principle that “prevention is better than cure”, are important in helping to bring sustainable change across the agricultural industry.

I have been assured that Ministers will continue to emphasise to the veterinary and farming communities that routine preventative use of antibiotics is not acceptable.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**