

## RESPONSIBLE USE OF MEDICINES IN AGRICULTURE ALLIANCE

# RUMA

### **Completion of antibiotic treatment courses**

RUMA's independent Scientific Group has urged caution over an article published in the [British Medical Journal \(BMJ\)](#) (26 July 2017), which concludes there is little evidence that failing to complete a prescribed antibiotic course in human medicine contributes to antibiotic resistance.

The Scientific Group has advised farming and veterinary communities to continue following current prescription guidelines and completing courses of animal treatments until more research is carried out.

Mark Fielder, Professor of Medical Microbiology with Kingston University London and member of the RUMA Scientific Group, says:

“While it is right to debate and question current practice in science in medicine, it is also important to ensure the continuation of best practice unless new evidence suggests otherwise.

“In line with the comments made by Public Health England, it is imperative for patients to follow the instructions given by their prescribing physician or pharmacist in relation to antibiotics. The same applies to farmers and their prescribing vets.

“It is imperative that the full course of antibiotics are used following culture and sensitivity testing to ensure that the drug has had the opportunity to act against the invading organism and achieve the best outcome.

“This will also help in the prevention of resistance development as if the correct antibiotic is prescribed and administered in the most appropriate way, then it follows that there is the best opportunity for the organism to be killed, dead organisms do not mutate and so develop resistance.”

This mirrors the advice from the chief medical officer Dame Sally Davies, who has said the message to the public on medical use of antibiotics should remain unchanged until there is further research.