

CONSTITUENT QUESTION

House of Assembly

ASKED BY: Helen Burnet MP

ANSWERED BY: Hon Bridget Archer MP
Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing

QUESTION:

My question is from Claire, a Hobart general practitioner, in regard to antibiotic use to treat salmon, such as florfenicol and oxytetracycline. We know antibiotic resistance can spread to human infections, which is hard or impossible to treat: the silent pandemic of our age already killing thousands of Australians. What steps are being taken to monitor the emergence of antibiotic resistance in Tasmanian waters?

ANSWER:

1. The Environment Protection Authority oversees environmental monitoring to ensure antibiotic use in finfish farming does not cause environmental harm.
2. Data from the Environment Protection Authority monitoring programs to date show no evidence of human health risk from the use of florfenicol or oxytetracycline, and monitoring continues to track environmental residues and potential antimicrobial resistance.
3. I am further advised that these antibiotics are widely used to treat bacterial disease in livestock globally, including Australia. Public Health assesses that the monitoring results for use in aquaculture to date do not pose a risk to human health.

4. Antimicrobial resistance risks are considered by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority when assessing emergency permits.
5. The Tasmanian Government is also working closely with the Australian Government and other jurisdictions to address the issue of antibiotic resistance, as set out in *Australia's National Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy – 2020 and Beyond*.



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