

## Bracing for Superbugs

Strengthening environmental action  
in the One Health response to  
antimicrobial resistance



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## Strengthening Environmental Action in the One Health Response to Antimicrobial Resistance

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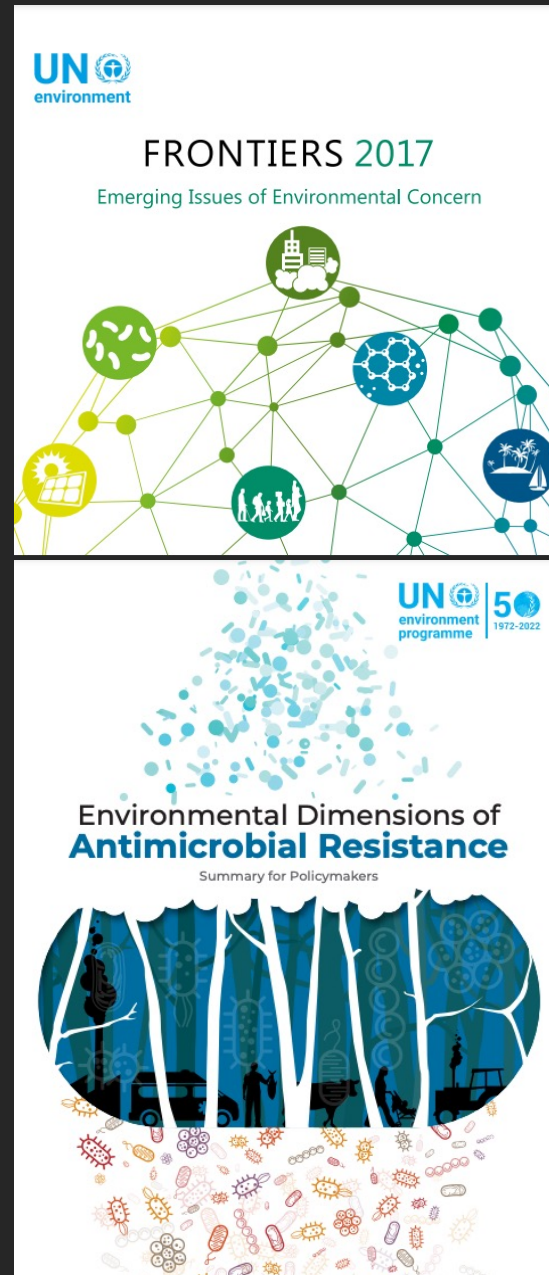
South Centre – Environmental Aspects of Antimicrobial Resistance Virtual Workshop

March 28, 2023

# Significance of UNEP's *Bracing for Superbugs*

Global spotlight report that drew clearer linkage between tackling antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and environment

Environmental dimensions of AMR, while complex, still afford opportunity to take steps actionable on today's evidence



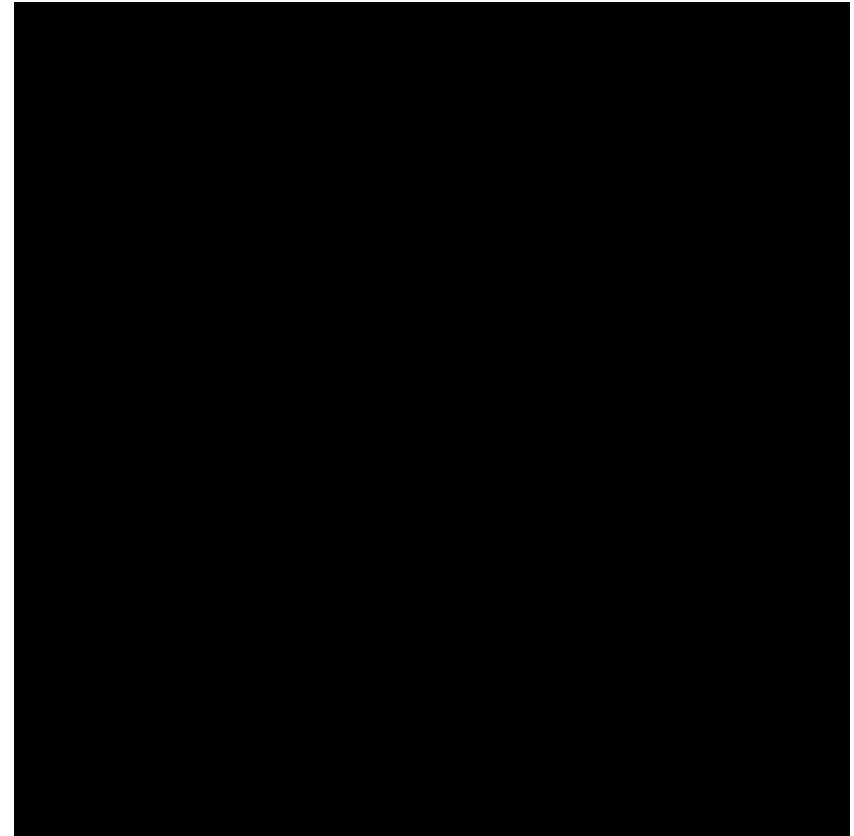
# Why Environment Matters in Tackling AMR

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UNEP joining the Tripartite agencies (WHO, FAO, WOAHA) in 2022 to form a Quadripartite

## **The lens of environment and AMR:**

- Broadens the range of Ministries and movements to which AMR finds relevance
- Brings a unifying systems frame to addressing the challenge of AMR



# Magnitude of AMR Challenge

## Lancet GRAM study (2022):

- 1.27 M deaths attributable to bacterial AMR in 2019
- Global deaths attributable to AMR greater than HIV/AIDS, breast cancer or malaria
- One in five people who died due to AMR were children
- Highest rate of AMR burden was in sub-Saharan Africa, followed by South Asia

## Regional Analysis

	Attributable to resistance				Rates, per 100,000			
	Deaths	YLLs	DALYs	YLDs				
<b>Counts, thousands</b>								
Global	1270 (911-1710)	47 600 (35 000-63 400)	47 900 (35 300-63 700)	275 (161-439)	16.4 (11.8-22.0)	615.1 (452.4-819.1)	618.7 (455.7-823.2)	3.6 (2.1-5.7)
Central Europe, eastern Europe, and central Asia	73.7 (48.7-105)	1980 (1350-2790)	1990 (1360-2800)	9.95 (4.79-16.8)	17.6 (11.7-25.3)	474.3 (323.0-667.3)	476.7 (325.2-671.0)	2.4 (1.1-4.0)
High income	141 (98.6-197)	2390 (1620-3400)	2410 (1640-3420)	20.2 (12.7-31.2)	13.0 (9.1-18.2)	220.4 (149.9-314.0)	222.3 (151.5-315.9)	1.9 (1.2-2.9)
Latin America and Caribbean	84.3 (60.3-117)	2370 (1660-3310)	2380 (1680-3330)	16 (9.79-24.9)	14.4 (10.3-20.0)	405.3 (284.8-566.6)	408.1 (286.9-570.0)	2.7 (1.7-4.3)
North Africa and Middle East	68.3 (45.6-99)	2590 (1770-3700)	2610 (1790-3720)	20.7 (12-33.5)	11.2 (7.5-16.3)	425.6 (291.2-608.4)	429.0 (293.7-611.5)	3.4 (2.0-5.5)
South Asia	389 (273-538)	16 000 (11 500-21 600)	16 100 (11 600-21 700)	111 (58.5-188)	21.5 (15.1-29.8)	885.8 (636.3-1194.6)	892.0 (643.1-1200.2)	6.2 (3.2-10.4)
Southeast Asia, east Asia, and Oceania	254 (167-369)	6830 (4620-9840)	6870 (4670-9890)	45.6 (25-80.1)	11.7 (7.8-17.1)	316.1 (213.9-455.7)	318.2 (216.1-458.0)	2.1 (1.2-3.7)
Sub-Saharan Africa	255 (196-331)	15 400 (11 700-19 900)	15 500 (11 800-20 000)	51.1 (30.2-81.8)	23.7 (18.2-30.7)	1432.0 (1084.6-1848.1)	1436.7 (1090.0-1853.5)	4.7 (2.8-7.6)

Source: Global burden of antimicrobial resistance in 2019: a systematic analysis. *Lancet*, 2022.

# Transmission of AMR through the Environment

- Natural vs. acquired resistance
- Antimicrobial drugs vs. Antibiotic-resistant genes vs. Drug-resistant pathogens
- AMR hotspots
- Urbanization
- Globalization
- Economic value chains

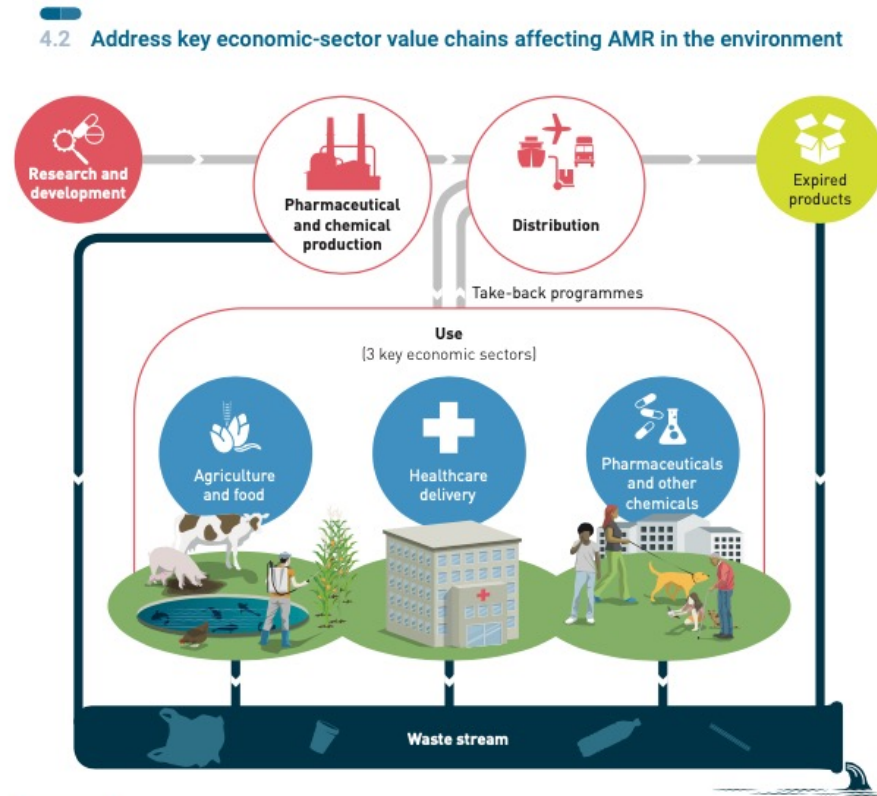


Figure 14

Key economic-sector value chains affecting AMR in the environment

Source: UNEP, *Bracing for Superbugs*, 2023.

# SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production



## Key Economic Sector Value Chains

Pharmaceutical manufacturing  
 Food production systems  
 Healthcare delivery

Waste Stream

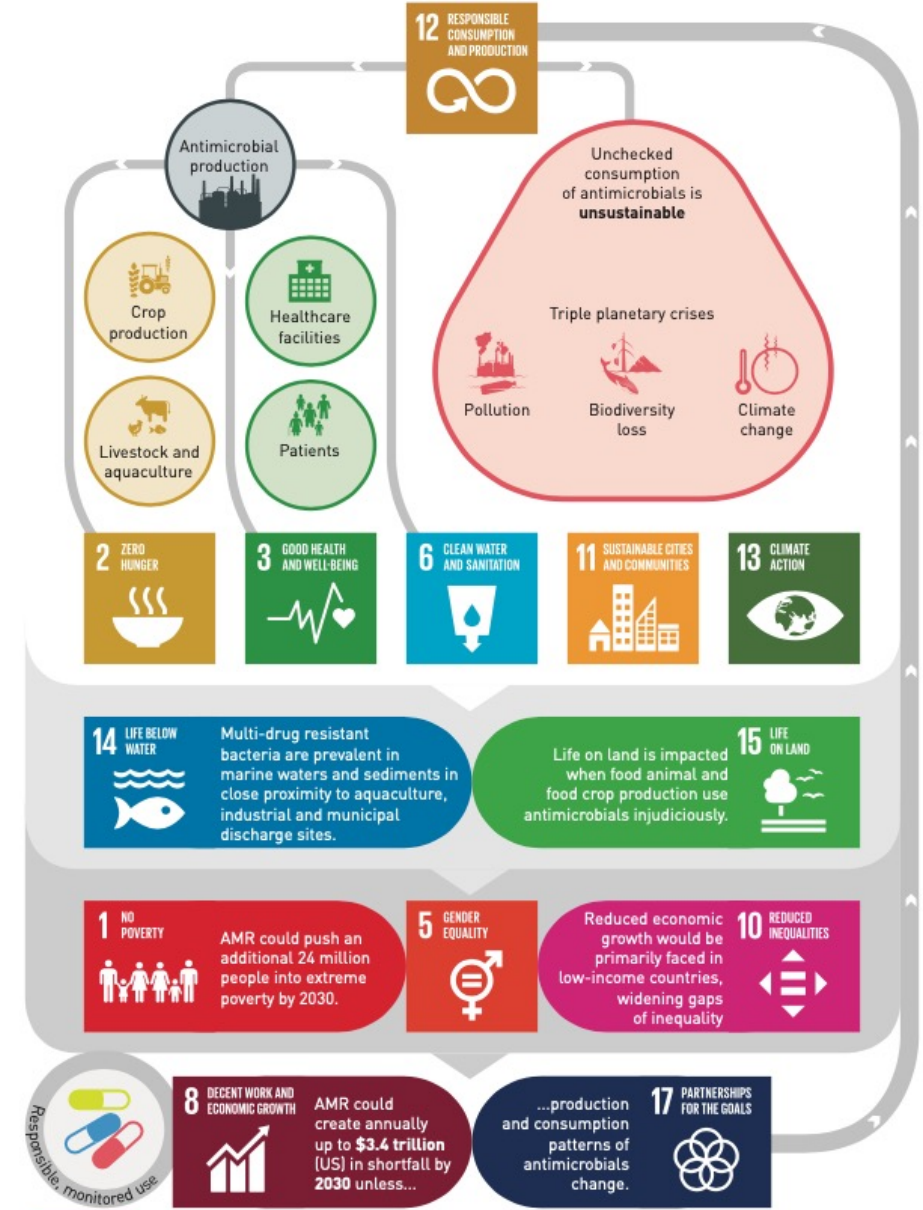


Figure 13

Sustainable production and consumption of antimicrobials can impact many other SDGs

Source: UNEP, *Bracing for Superbugs*, 2023.

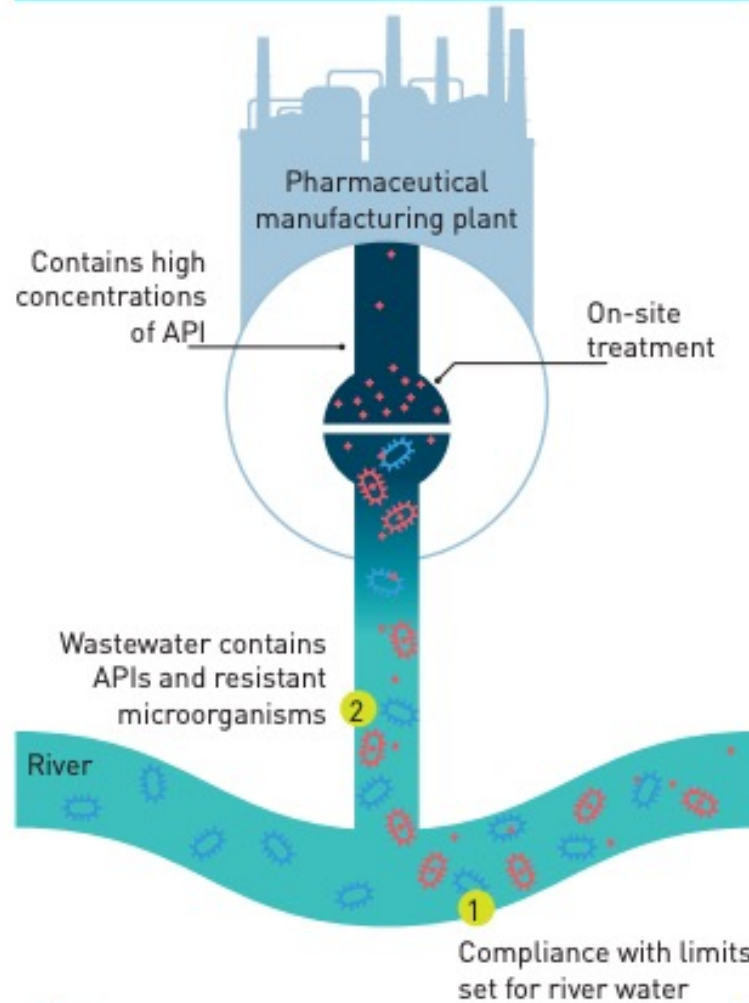
# Pharmaceutical Manufacturing

SETTING DISCHARGE TARGETS – PNECS

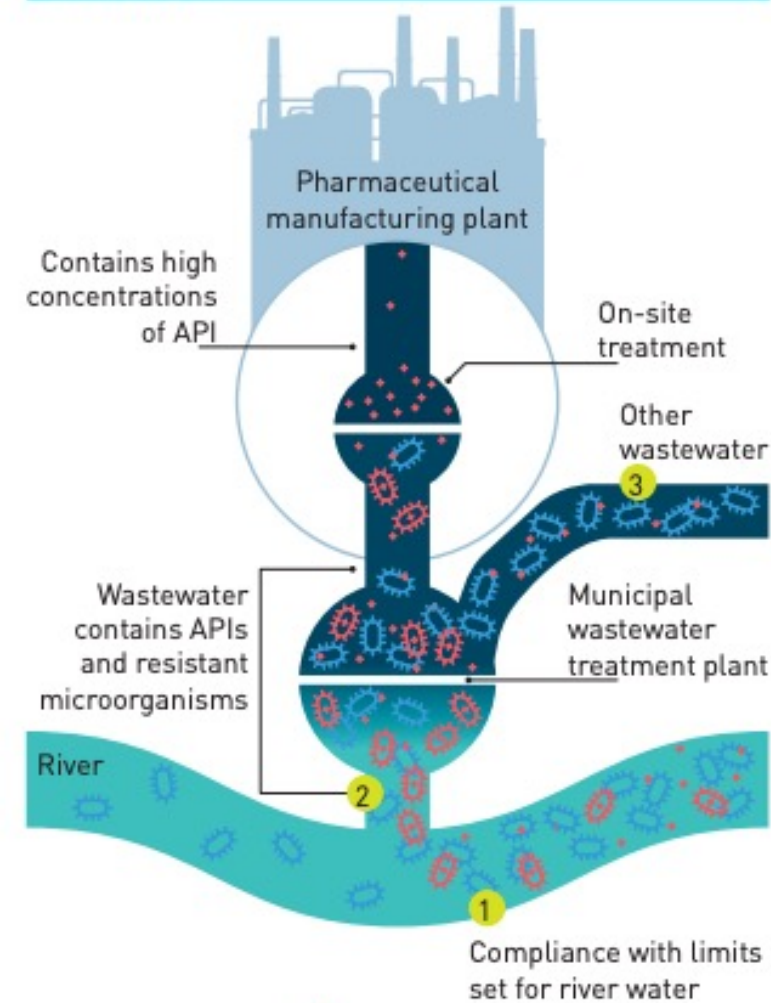
IMPROVING SUPPLY CHAIN TRANSPARENCY

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT AND REIMBURSEMENT SYSTEMS

Option 1: Wastewater is directly discharged into the environment



Option 2: Wastewater is sent to a municipal wastewater treatment plant, before being discharged into the environment



Active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs)



Microorganisms



Resistant microorganisms

Figure 15

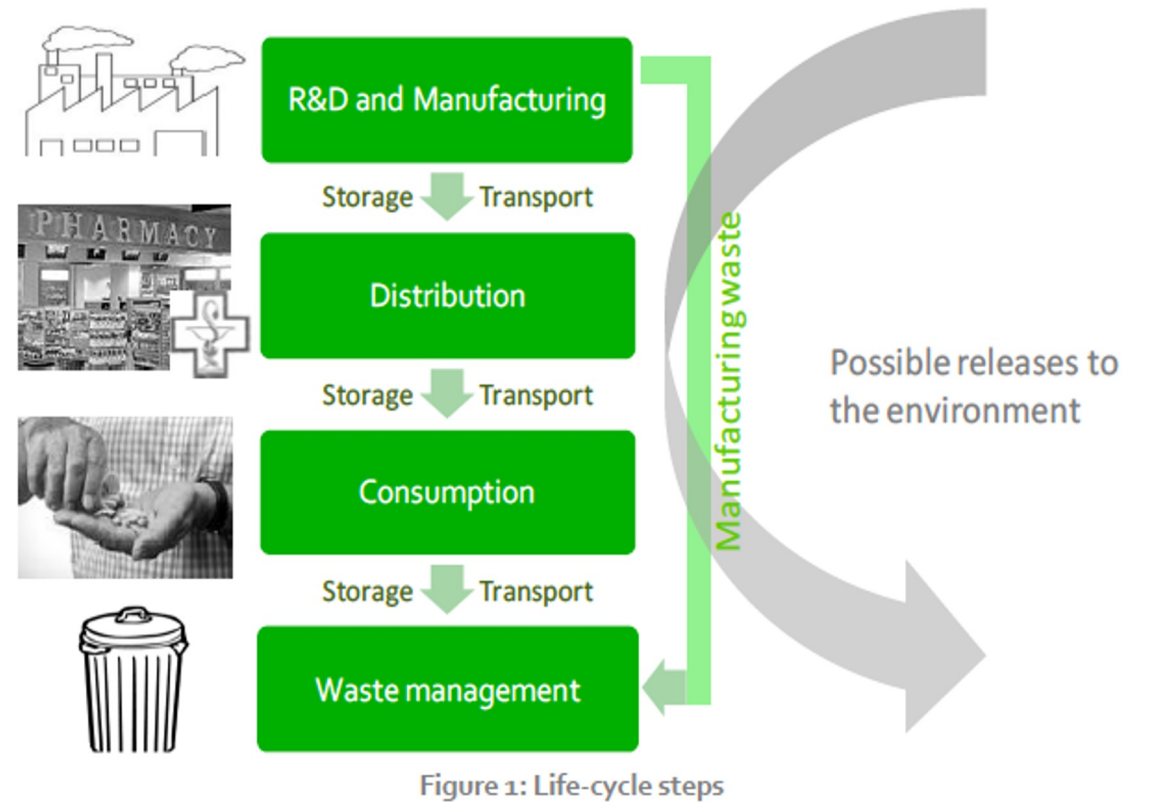
Wastewater discharges from pharmaceutical manufacturing

# Healthcare Delivery System

**Hospitals:** Waste treatment, greening programs, procurement

Community disposal of expired antibiotics

**AMR Surveillance:** Piggybacking on Poliovirus Lab Network and COVID-19 wastewater surveillance



Source: Bio Intelligence Service, 2013



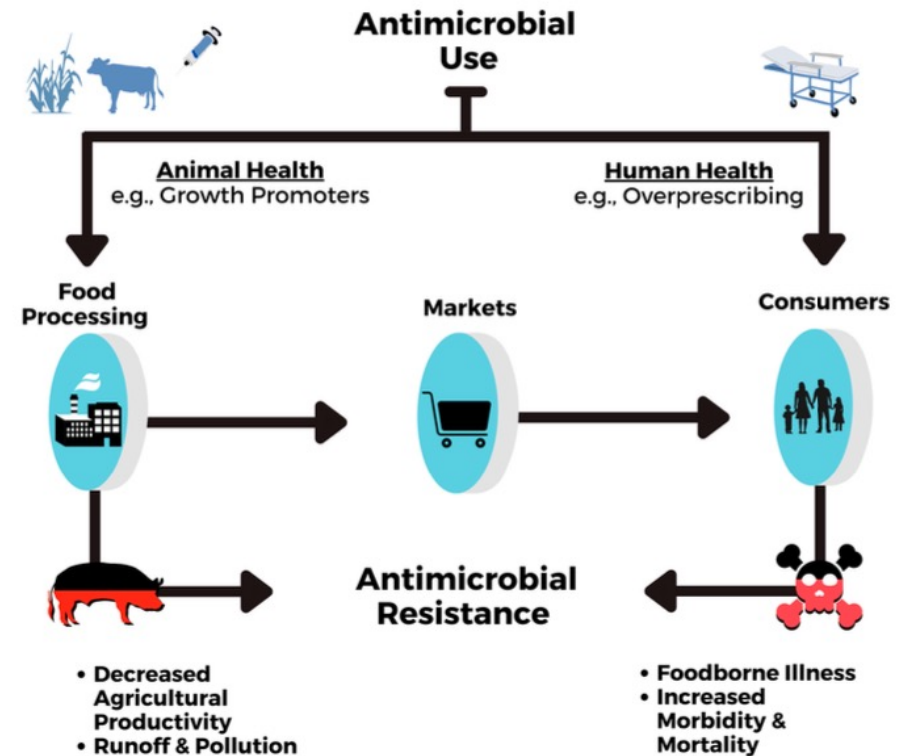
# Food Systems

Antibiotic growth promoters and routine use of antimicrobials in livestock production

- Need for transparency of WOAH country-level data on antimicrobial consumption

Use of antimicrobials in crop production

Trade in food products



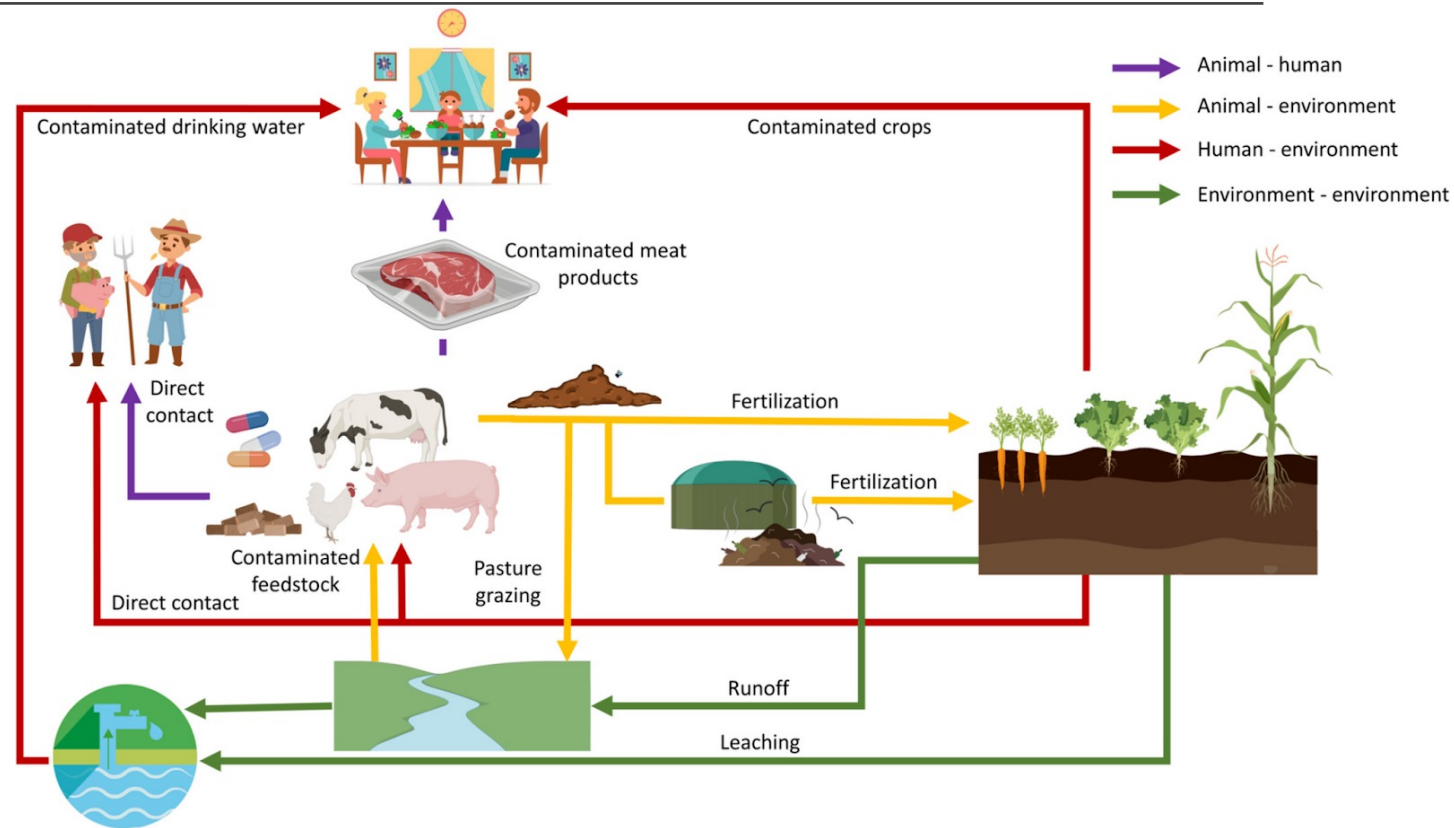
# Pathways from Agri-Food Systems to Human Medicine: From Farm to Fork

Annually, 600 million cases of foodborne diseases, with 420,000 deaths (WHO, 2015)

- Extensively-drug resistant (XDR) typhoid in Pakistan
- Pork from UK supermarkets

Urinary tract infections from retail poultry meat (Liu CM, et al., 2018)

Plasmid-mediated resistance to colistin, a last-line antibiotic in China (Liu YY, et al., 2016)



Source: Jadeja NB, Worrlich A. From gut to mud: dissemination of antimicrobial resistance between animal and agricultural niches. *Environ Microbiol.* 2022 Feb 16. (CC license)

# Climate Change and AMR

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## *Climate Change → Antimicrobial Use*

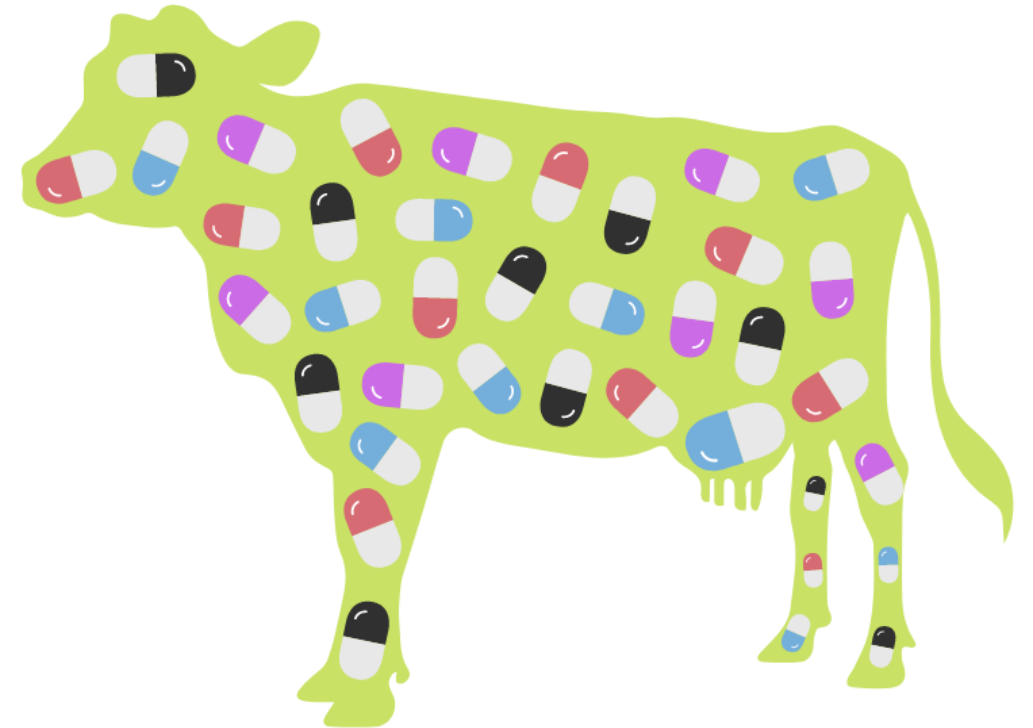
Higher temperature associated with greater antibiotic resistance

Infectious diseases increase → Antimicrobial use increases

Pressure on food production systems → Increased use of antimicrobials

## *Antimicrobial Use → Climate Change?*

Cattle treated with antibiotics produced 1.8 times more methane, a potent greenhouse gas (Hammer TJ, et al., 2016)



Source: Hammer TJ, Fierer N, Hardwick B, et al. Treating cattle with antibiotics affects greenhouse gas emissions, and microbiota in dung and dung beetles. *Proc R. Soc. B* 2016; 283: 20160150

# Other Environmental Exposures and AMR

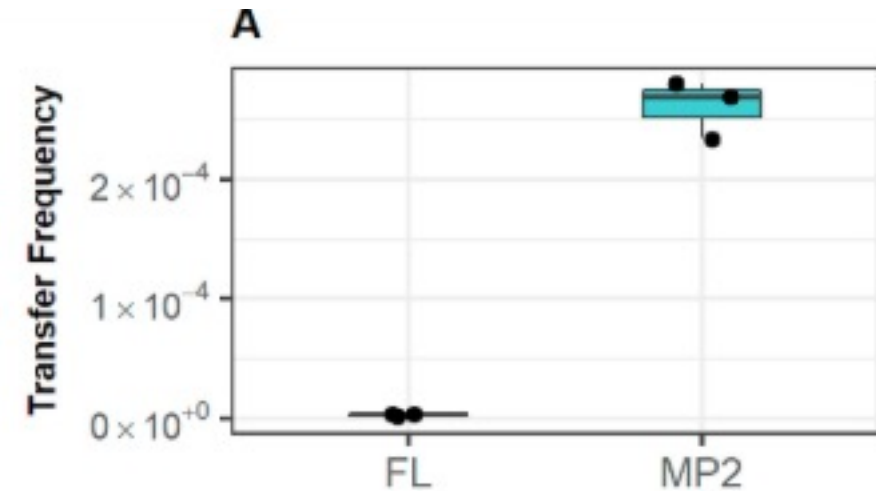
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## Herbicides and AMR

Herbicides (glyphosate, 2,4-D and dicamba) can induce greater tolerance to antibiotics (Kurenbach, et al., 2015).

Glyphosate, glufosinate and dicamba increase the prevalence of antibiotic resistance genes in agricultural soils (Liao, et al., 2021)

## Microplastics and AMR (Arias-Andres, et al. 2018)



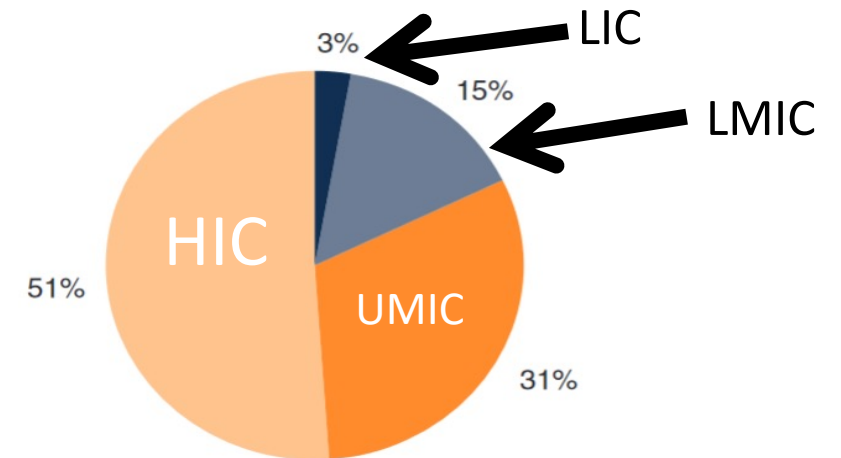
→ Plasmid uptake frequency by bacteria on microplastic biofilms is two orders of magnitude higher than by free-living bacteria (Arias-Andres, et al., 2018)

# AMR Containment: “one of the highest-yield investments countries can make”

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- Up to **24 million** more people would be forced into extreme poverty by 2030 (World Bank, 2017)
- In high AMR-impact scenario, **3.8% loss of annual GDP** by 2050, with annual shortfall of \$3.4 trillion by 2030
- “putting resources into AMR containment now is one of the highest-yield investments countries can make.”

Figure: Where global AMR containment benefits accrue



Source: World Bank, *Drug-Resistant Infections: A Threat to Our Economic Future*, March 2017.

# Making the case for investing to address AMR

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Averting the human and  
economic toll

Synergy with COVID-19

Co-Benefits, from Health  
Care to Sustainable Food  
Systems

Connection with other  
movements

## **A MULTI-BILLION-DOLLAR OPPORTUNITY**

Repurposing agricultural support to transform food systems

