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RUMA LAUNCHES NEW FARMER POULTRY AND GAME GUIDELINES

The Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA) is delighted to launch its [revised guidelines for farmers on the Responsible Use of Antimicrobials in Poultry and Game Production](#).

RUMA Secretary General, John FitzGerald, said the revised guidelines were prepared as part of RUMA's programme of regularly updating its guidelines. He said that the new revision had been extended to include game production and he was delighted that the Game Farmers' Association had decided to send the revised guideline to all their members as a supplement to their Game Farming Guide.

Mr FitzGerald said that the new version of the Poultry and Game Antimicrobial Guidelines for farmers stressed the need to manage farms to reduce disease challenge and minimise antimicrobial use. They include practical advice for poultry and game farmers and highlight the Four Golden Rules on Disease Control i.e.

- biosecurity to limit disease spread
- avoid stress
- good hygiene
- good nutrition.

RUMA Guidelines were first introduced in 2000 and are intended as working documents. They are updated periodically to continually provide best advice.

Now in their 3rd editions, the [short version](#) provides quick and easy guiding principles that can be used as a working document by farmers, while the longer version is aimed primarily at veterinary surgeons and other advisers, to provide more detail. Work has already begun on updating the longer poultry guideline which will be launched later in 2014.

The holistic approach to minimising disease set out by the Four Golden Rules helps reduce the need to use antimicrobials, including antibiotics, without adversely affecting animal welfare. It is important to reduce the risk of antibiotic resistance without reducing the availability of necessary antibiotics.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. RUMA is an alliance of 23 organisations representing every stage of the "farm to fork" process which aims to promote a co-ordinated and integrated approach to best practice in the use of medicines on farm. For further information contact RUMA Secretary General John

FitzGerald (rumasec@btinternet.com) or see the RUMA website www.ruma.org.uk

2. The Game Farmers' Association (GFA) is a trade organisation dedicated to the production of quality game birds for the UK shooting industry. The Association was founded over 80 years ago and now has in excess of 200 game farming members. Most game farmers in Britain are members of the GFA and the Association represents their interests, as well as encouraging everyone who rears game to follow high standards which include the responsible use of medicines.

3. RUMA Guidelines are regularly reviewed in consultation with RUMA members and specialist groups working in the relevant sector.

4. The Four Golden Rules on Disease Control are explained in the table which is included in the Guidelines Disease Control:

Disease Control: Four Golden rules		
Rule 1	Biosecurity.	Disease spreads onto and around a farm by contamination, usually by faeces or dust. Limit this contamination and you will help to limit the prevalence of disease. REMEMBER this contamination can be INDIRECT by water systems, equipment, vehicles, other animals or people. Don't spread disease by sharing equipment or personnel.
Rule 2	"Stress" is a killer.	Stressed animals are far more likely to become diseased. This includes not only obvious physical stress factors e.g. overcrowding, chilling; but also exposure to micro-organisms which cause major stress to the immune system. THINK - If a procedure causes the birds to become stressed, ask "can this be done in a less stressful manner?"
Rule 3	Good Hygiene	There is no substitute for good hygiene. Cleaning and disinfecting buildings and equipment, including water and feeding systems, coupled with good personal hygiene will all make a difference. Don't be complacent about areas outside of the birds' living area.
Rule 4	Good Nutrition	Balanced diets with adequate levels of trace elements, minerals, vitamins and anti-oxidants are essential if the immune system of birds is to work properly in tackling diseases.