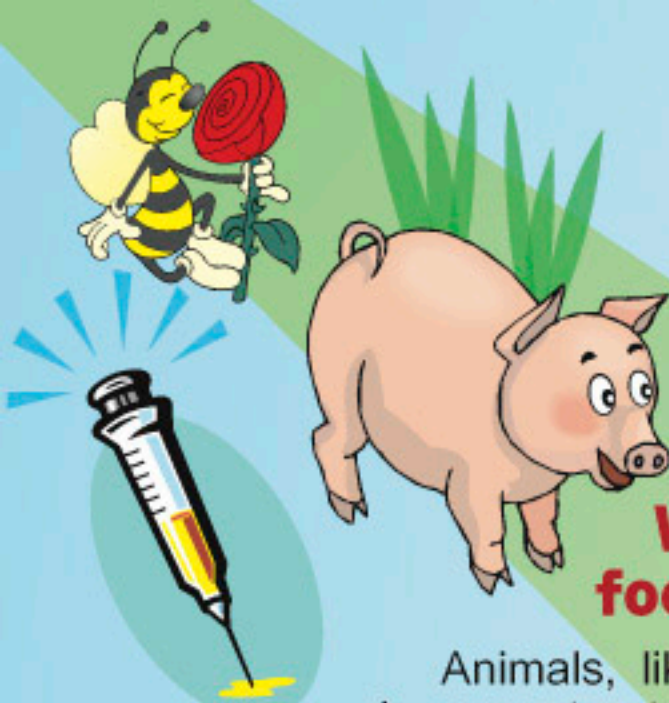


# Veterinary Drug Residues *in Food*







## What are veterinary drugs?

Veterinary drug is any substance applied or administered to food animals, such as meat or milk-producing animals, poultry, fish or bees, for therapeutic/ prophylactic/ diagnostic purposes or modification of physiological functions/ behaviours.

## Why are veterinary drugs used in food animals?

Animals, like human beings, may suffer from diseases and need proper treatment. Veterinary drugs can be used to control diseases so as to allow for efficient food production. Untreated diseases of animals may affect or decrease production and will eventually reduce the quantity and quality of food.

Apart from therapeutic use, veterinary drugs are also used in animal husbandry to increase feed efficiency, improve production and promote growth.



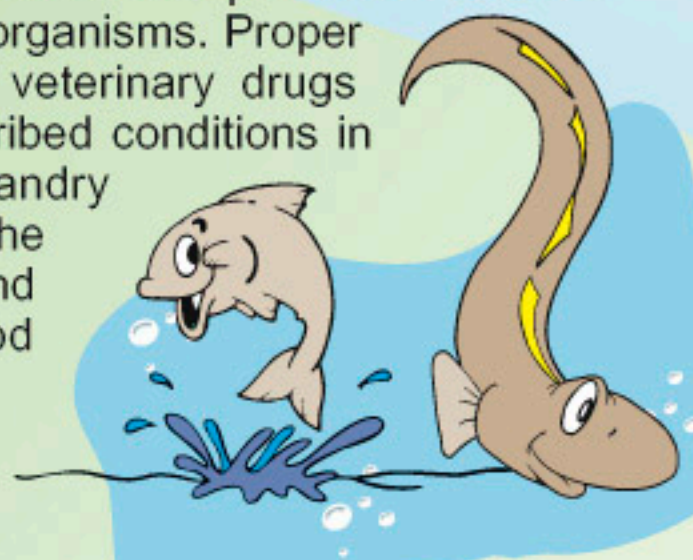
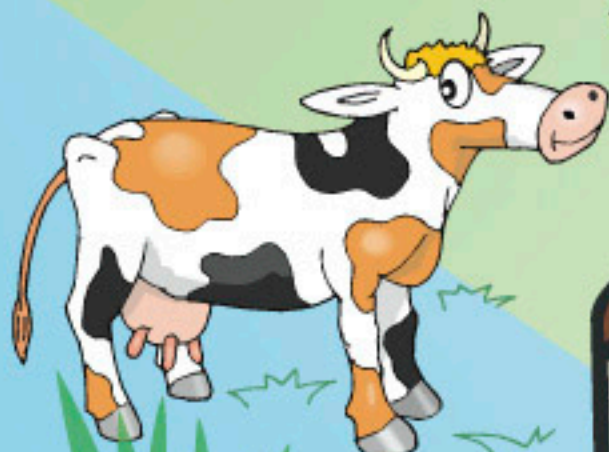
## What are veterinary drug residues in food?

When veterinary drugs are administered to animals, they break down into other products over time and leave residues. Veterinary drug residues are the remains of the veterinary drug in animals at a particular time and can occur as the veterinary drug itself or in the form of breakdown products. The amount and nature of the residues as well as the time required for breakdown vary for different veterinary drugs.

## What are the concerns of veterinary drug residues in food?

The main concern of veterinary drug use in food animals is the presence of residues in food products of animal origins. The health hazards from veterinary drug residues in food depend on many factors, including the nature and level of the veterinary drug residues, and the frequency and degree of human exposure. Improper use of veterinary drugs in food animals and excessive veterinary drug residues in meats and other edible animal tissues may result in different public health hazards, including toxicological effects and the development of antibiotic

resistance in micro-organisms. Proper use of approved veterinary drugs under the prescribed conditions in animal husbandry could assure the food safety and benefit food production.





## How are veterinary drug residues in food regulated in Hong Kong?

Under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Hong Kong Law Cap. 132), food for sale should be fit for human consumption. The veterinary drug residues in food are currently regulated under the Harmful Substances in Food Regulations (Hong Kong Law Cap. 132AF). The Regulations govern the import and sale of food containing harmful substances and most of the regulated harmful substances are veterinary drugs.



The administration of veterinary drugs in food animals is regulated under the Public Health (Animals and Birds) (Chemical Residues) Regulation (Hong Kong Law Cap. 139N).

## Is there any programme to monitor the veterinary drug residues in food in Hong Kong?

Screening and monitoring of veterinary drug residues in food animals in Hong Kong are carried out at the slaughterhouses. All food animals with unsatisfactory testing results of prohibited chemicals are destroyed at the slaughterhouses and not allowed to be released to the retail market.

Veterinary drug residues in food are also monitored by food surveillance programme in which different food commodities are sampled at the import, wholesale and retail levels for testing.



## Enquiries

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