

New EU rules mean tighter controls on antibiotic use required on dairy farms



From September 2026, new European Union (EU) rules will affect how Australian dairy farms need to use and record antimicrobials, including antibiotics, in order for Australia to maintain trade access.

While antibiotics and other antimicrobials used to prevent or treat disease will still be allowed under the [new EU rules](#), antimicrobials can no longer be used to promote growth or increase production in animals. This includes some products that may be described as feed additives or nutritional supplements, such as:

- Lasalocid
- Monensin.

These changes mean that the Australian dairy industry will need to carefully manage and record the usage of antimicrobials on farm.

"Australia exported \$29 million of dairy products to Europe in 2025, primarily high protein whey concentrate," explained Karl Ellis, Dairy Australia's Economic Sustainability & Competitiveness



For Australia to keep selling dairy products into the EU market, the whole dairy industry is going to need to comply with these new rules.

Manager. "For Australia to keep selling dairy products into the EU market, the whole dairy industry is going to need to comply with these new rules."

For dairy farmers, that means keeping careful records of any veterinary product or feed additive usage as the EU may review them during audits of Australia's export systems. Farmers will therefore need to be careful and deliberate about how antimicrobials are used on-farm and make sure every use is recorded clearly and accurately.

The formal advice from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is:

- Review all antimicrobial veterinary products used on your property or included in feeds and supplements to ensure they are only used for disease control or prevention.

- If necessary, consult your veterinarian or nutrition advisor for guidance on complying with EU rules.
- Record the therapeutic reason for using any veterinary products or feed additives on your property, including for antimicrobials the disease or condition being treated or prevented by recording that you have used the product 'to prevent or control disease' or include the disease treatment or prevention use listed on the label (e.g. to prevent bloat, treat coccidiosis).

Dairy Australia is currently developing Australian guidelines for the integrated management of ruminal acidosis, which includes guidance for veterinarians and nutritional professionals on the use of ionophores and other in-feed antimicrobials, and these are expected to be available in late 2026. ■ ■