



UK FARMING RECEIVES ACCOLADES AT ANTIBIOTIC GUARDIAN AWARDS

The UK farming industry took the Antibiotic Guardian Awards by storm last night (27 June), in the third annual event which saw entries from as far afield as Malaysia and New Zealand competing for recognition of efforts to slow the onset of drug-resistant infections.

The evening started with Chief Medical Officer Dame Sally Davies acknowledging the antibiotic stewardship achievements of the poultry meat and pig sectors within her opening speech; it ended with a tally of three wins and three 'highly commended' awards for farming.

The awards, run by mission-driven event organisers 4 All of Us on behalf of Public Health England (PHE), included an Agriculture and Food category for the first time this year. This was the focus for most farming entries, attracting 16 including retailers, universities, independent businesses and farmers, with nine scoring highly enough to be shortlisted by the judges.

In the end, top honours in this category went to University of Bristol Veterinary School's 'AMR Force' programme which researches key topics around veterinary antimicrobial resistance. Alongside it, both the British Poultry Council and Wayland Farms were highly commended.

The wins continued in other categories which had, to date, been more healthcare-focused.

One such category, the Prescribing & Stewardship award, was hotly contested with 10 shortlisted entries including various NHS Trusts and a leading Malaysian hospital. While ABP/Blade Farming was highly commended, it was the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture (RUMA) Alliance who secured top spot with its 'Target Task Force' initiative, a cross-sector collaboration between vets and farmers to identify baseline antibiotic usage then set and agree specific targets for species as diverse as pigs, sheep, gamebirds and fish.

Dr Diane Ashiru-Oredope from Antibiotic Guardian, who is also Lead Pharmacist of the Antimicrobial Resistance programme for PHE, singled out the Targets Task Force entry for particular comment. With the concept focusing on 'bottom-up ownership' of antibiotic stewardship rather than 'top-down regulation', Dr Ashiru-Oredope remarked that it had been a "clear unanimous winner, scoring very highly among the judges".

RUMA bagged its second win of the evening in the Community Communications award for the #ColostrumIsGold campaign. Running throughout February, the campaign aimed to cut the need for antibiotics in neonatal and older animals through improved colostrum management at birth.

Amy Jackson, who collected the awards on behalf of RUMA, said it was a very proud moment to see the farming industry holding its own at such a prestigious 'One Health' event.

She said: "The last two years have been incredibly hard work for all involved in engaging the farming industry with the issue of antibiotic resistance. But tonight's event, including the number of entries from farming and the quality of the shortlists, shows the progress we've made. The discussion really has moved on from 'who is to blame', to 'what can we do?', and the best practice on show will help us all take a truly One Health approach in the future."

Other shortlisted entries in the Agriculture & Food category were Pyon Products, The Co-op, Tesco, MSD Animal Health, Waitrose Farming Partnership and University of Nottingham. Semex and ABP were also shortlisted in the Innovation category.