



Questions & Answers about Antibiotics Use



Why does Seaboard Foods use antibiotics?

[Watch video for more information.](#)

We are committed to raising healthy pigs to produce safe, delicious pork. Our veterinary teams develop and oversee a comprehensive total care plan, which includes proper housing, keeping our barns clean, feeding our pigs a balanced, nutritious diet and administering vaccinations – all designed to keep our pigs as healthy as possible. Our goal is to keep our pigs healthy and minimize the use of antibiotics, but there are occasions when we need to use antibiotics to control the spread of disease in our herds or to treat a disease when it is diagnosed. Without this treatment program, the pigs may suffer and the pork products from those animals may not meet quality expectations.

When does Seaboard Foods use antibiotics?

Raising healthy pigs so we can deliver safe pork to our customers is the foundation of all that we do. We use antibiotics when it is the right decision to protect the health of our pigs. We use antibiotics to treat an individual sick pig, to control the spread of disease among pigs in a barn together if one or more has shown signs of illness, or to prevent the spread of sickness in our herds where there is a known infection and sickness is likely to occur.

Does Seaboard Foods treat pigs with antibiotics pre-emptively, even when they are not sick? If so, why?

Treating animals is different from treating humans. In humans, doctors treat the individual. In farm animals, veterinarians tend to treat the herd. On our farms, it is important that we prevent and control the spread of disease to keep our pigs safe and healthy and prevent animal suffering. We have found that it is often more humane and safer to prevent illness than to treat a sick animal that may later infect other animals. Plus, preventative doses generally are less potent and used for a shorter period of time than antibiotics for treatment purposes, which is another reason why farmers and veterinarians prefer to prevent than treat a disease.

How can you tell a pig needs antibiotic treatment?

[Watch video for more information.](#)

Our team responsible for animal care walks through our barns each day and is trained to spot early signs that a pig is sick. Droopy ears, irregular breathing or even something as subtle as not being as curious as usual or lying in a spot where they don't typically rest, tell us a pig might be ill. When we spot symptoms, our animal care team immediately begins treatment, which can include the use of antibiotics, with that particular pig using supplies they carry with them in special backpacks. Our teams conduct onsite evaluations and look at specific symptoms to select the right treatment plan to target the specific illness. The quicker we can identify and bring a pig back to health, the better for that pig, the entire herd and the pork we raise.

How are antibiotics administered to animals?

[Watch video for more information.](#)

Antibiotics can be administered via feed, water or injection. We rely on all of these methods, depending on the number of pigs being treated, their age, the type of antibiotic and other factors. When treating pigs via feed, we make the feed a different color than the non-medicated feed, so it is easy to tell when a group of pigs is being treated and when the treatment has stopped. We also employ a needle-free injection system to administer antibiotics to individual pigs. While more expensive than a typical needle injection system, this method is better for the pig, our people and for our customers, as the technology eliminates the risk that a needle could break off, cause food

Is pork from pigs raised using antibiotics safe?

[Watch video for more information.](#)

Yes. The Food and Drug Administration oversees a stringent approval process for all veterinary medicines and antibiotics. In fact, the testing for antibiotics used in animals is the same as that for antibiotics used in humans, with the added requirement that they

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must be tested to ensure meat and milk from the treated animal is safe for human consumption. Furthermore, antibiotics approved for use in animals must be continuously re-evaluated and shown to be safe in order to remain on the market.

What safeguards are in place to ensure antibiotic residues do not end up in pork products?

[*Watch video for more information.*](#)

Our people are connected across every step of the way as we raise pigs to feed families. We own and oversee the sows, the pigs, the facilities that make our feed, the barns where we raise the pigs and the processing plants where our pork is made.

Whenever any medication is used on our farms, including antibiotics, it is immediately recorded. Knowing what antibiotic was used, when and for how long lets us know exactly how long we need to wait before the treated pig can go to market. This is called a withdrawal period and the FDA mandates the wait time. At Seaboard Foods, we always adhere to – and often exceed – the mandated wait time.

Not only do we have tight controls on antibiotic use on our farms, we have the ability to test for antibiotic residues at our processing facility very quickly. This allows us to have the test results prior to releasing any pork to our customers.

Are antibiotics used on the farm the same as those used in human health?

There are many different types of antibiotics. Some are used in both people and animals. Some are used primarily in animals and are not considered medically important to people – meaning they are not the antibiotics needed to treat the most challenging illnesses in people. In fact, of the antibiotics used in farm animals today, about one-third are called ionophores. Ionophores are not medically important; nor are they used in humans.

At Seaboard Foods, we strive to minimize our use of all antibiotics, particularly medically important antibiotics, and are supportive of FDA's policy to phase out the use of medically important antibiotics to promote growth and phase in more veterinary oversight.

Does Seaboard Foods use antibiotics for growth promotion?

No. We are committed to the responsible, judicious use of antibiotics, and are always looking for ways to preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics. We were supportive of FDA's policy (Guidance 209) to phase out the use of medically important antibiotics in human medicine to promote growth and improve feed efficiency.

Does Seaboard Foods produce any "no antibiotics added" pork products?

Seaboard Foods does not produce pork products labeled "raised without antibiotics." We are committed to caring for our pigs in a responsible, safe manner, and sometimes the use of antibiotics is the right choice for the health of the pig or herd. Even niche pig farmers who raise pigs for the "raised without antibiotics" label treat sick pigs with antibiotics when necessary because it is the humane thing to do; they simply separate those pigs out and do not market them for the "raised without antibiotics" label.

Does the use of antibiotics in pigs raised for pork contribute to antibiotic resistance?

Pig farmers and their veterinary teams recognize the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria is a public health concern. We take seriously our responsibility to work together with our counterparts in human medicine to preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics, particularly those that are medically important in humans. At Seaboard Foods, this includes using antibiotics responsibly with the oversight of our veterinary team. While there has been no proven link that use of antibiotics in animal production has resulted in a failure of antibiotic treatment in humans, we, as pig farmers, are committed to reducing future risk through responsible antibiotic use.