

# The "good veterinarian"

## Rethinking the poultry veterinarian

Sebastian Moya<sup>1</sup>, Gareth Enticott<sup>2</sup>, and Mathilde Paul<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>UMR IHAP, ENVT, INRAE, Toulouse, France

<sup>2</sup>CU, Cardiff, United Kingdom

- Poultry farmers, technicians, and veterinarians engage in frequent **communication** and **collaboration** with one another
- The **regulatory** and **institutional framework** establishes the **standards** for *good veterinary practice*
- France implemented the *EcoAntibio* plans (2012-2017 and 2017-2022) to **reduce antimicrobial use** (AMU)

The study:

- Included 16 participants from corporate veterinary groups and independent practices in Brittany, Pays-de-Loire, Nouvelle Aquitaine, and Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes regions, with a range of experience levels from junior to senior
- Conducted interviews using the "**biographical narrative interpretive method**" (BNIM)
- Employed thematic analysis to analyze the interview data

Objectives:

- Examine how veterinarians establish their **criteria** for **appropriate** and **inappropriate AMU**
- Explore the **concept** of the "good veterinarian" as **understood** by veterinary professionals

Evaluation using a step-by-step approach

V4 "We are increasingly starting with phyto or dietary products as a first line of defense before resorting to antibiotics if the mortality rate justifies it (...). Additionally, a bacteriological culture and sensitivity test is almost always performed"

Open-minded preventive positioning

V2 "I have always been quite cautious in my approach, taking necessary precautions and accepting accountability for my actions" / V5 "The goal of veterinarians in animal production, especially in laying hens, is to prevent animals from getting sick. The focus is on disease prevention rather than treatment"

Adopting the perspective of other stakeholders

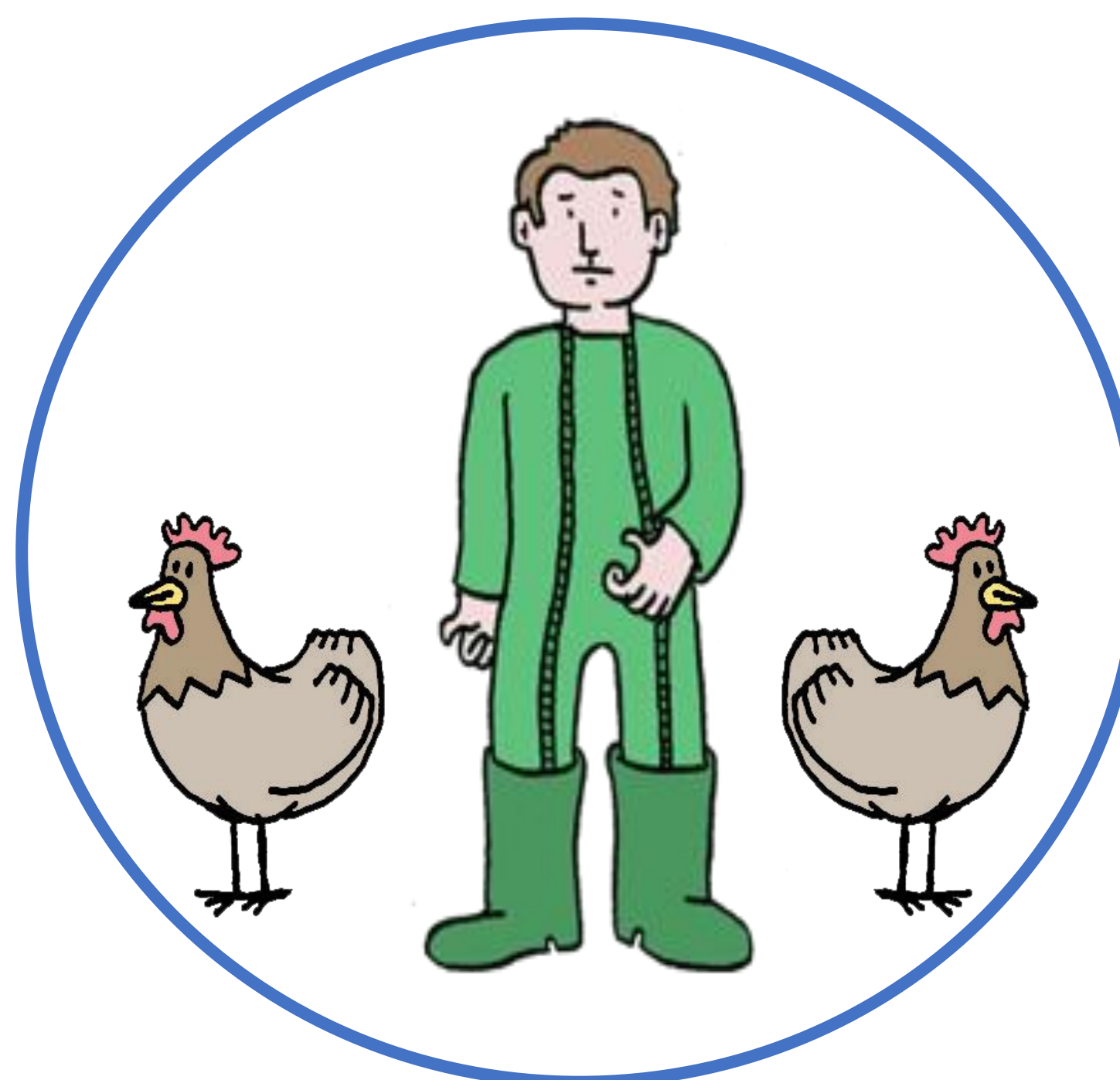
V3 "There are technicians who perform technical work and veterinarians who perform veterinary work (...). It's essential to understand their roles to implement our practices effectively" / V5 "You have to excel in your primary activity, which is disease control and therapeutics, while also being receptive to topics such as animal husbandry and nutrition"

Critiquing regulatory restrictions

V1 "As part of the *EcoAntibio* plans, we were asked to reduce AMU (...). They asked for a finger, but took an arm, and now they want to take our whole body. The specifications for farmers are becoming stricter and stricter (...). We are going too far"

Engagement of other stakeholders in farming

V3 "I had a case that wasn't very clear-cut. I told them 'You see this and that, it's a lesion that's not specific. I can't say what it is, I have no idea' (...). So I needed to consult with other people" / V6 "By contacting the veterinarians involved, I was able to obtain technical or curative solutions for certain problems (...). This also enabled me to exchange ideas (...) with other colleagues"



V1 "Little by little, you expand the field of action a little (...). There are farmers who were very skeptical about alternative treatments to antibiotics, and little by little, you feel that you are succeeding [in convincing farmers to use these alternatives]"

Gradual influence on farmers

- Veterinarians assimilate and incorporate **good veterinary practice** from **academic and organizational sources**
- Veterinarians adopt **stakeholder perspectives** in their reasoning but **not** in their **decision-making**
- Veterinarians conform to **current regulations**, but express concern about the **increasing stringency** for the sector

It is necessary:

- To understand the **criteria** for *good veterinary practice*, as it impacts how **veterinarians perform**
- To comprehend the **notion** of a "good veterinarian" through the lens of **farm stakeholders**
- To examine how well veterinarians can adapt to **restrictions imposed** by regulations on their **decision-making**