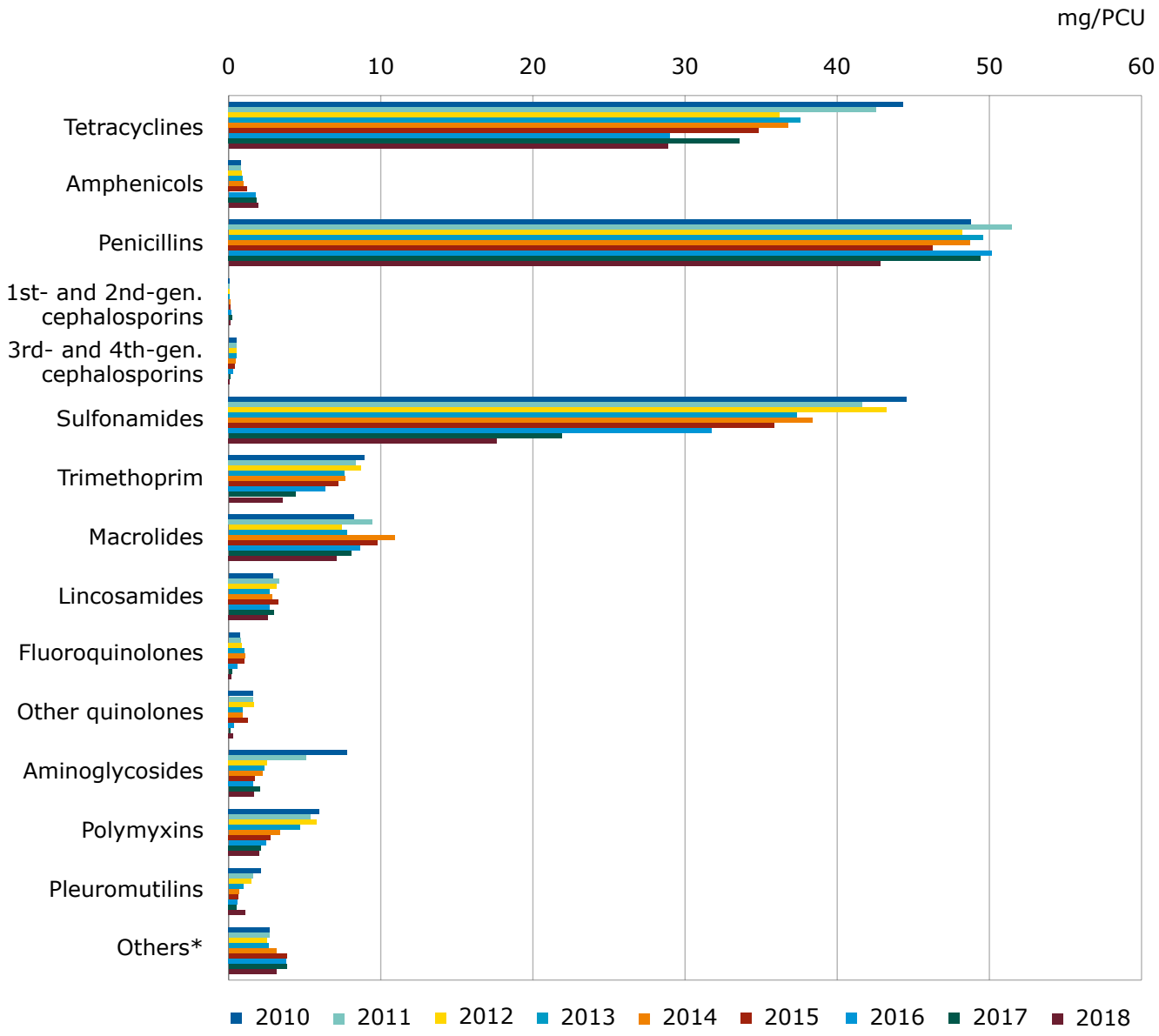
BELGIUM

CHANGES IN SALES (MG/PCU) ACROSS YEARS



* Other antibacterials (classified as such in the ATCvet system).

After a decrease in antibiotic sales in Belgium in the previous years, overall sales dropped again in 2018 (113.1 mg/PCU), by 14% from 2017 (131.3 mg/PCU). The reduction in 2018 from the previous year is observed for the classes of the most used substances, such as penicillins, tetracyclines and sulfonamides.

Cumulatively, sales of veterinary antimicrobial agents in Belgium decreased by 36% from 2011 (175.3 mg/PCU) to 2018 (113.1 mg/PCU).

Sales of 3rd- and 4th-generation cephalosporins were relatively stable from 2010 to 2015, having dropped significantly after 2016. In 2018 (0.08 mg/PCU), sales decreased by 20% from 2017 (0.10 mg/PCU) and by 83% from 2011 (0.50 mg/PCU). The aggregated sales for 25 countries were 0.18 mg/PCU.

From 2011 (0.79 mg/PCU) to 2018 (0.20 mg/PCU), sales of fluoroquinolones decreased by 75 %, after a sharp increase in 2013 and a reversal of this trend in 2016. It has to be highlighted that the increase in sales of fluoroquinolones since 2010 was reversed for the first time in 2015 and dropped substantially in 2016 (43 %). In comparison with 2017 (0.22 mg/PCU), sales of fluoroquinolones decreased by 10 %, while the aggregated sales for the 25 countries were 2.42 mg/PCU.

The sales of other quinolones decreased by 81 % in 2018 (0.30 mg/PCU) from 2011 (1.58 mg/PCU) but increased by 188 % in comparison with 2017 (0.10 mg/PCU). The aggregated sales for 25 countries were 0.27 mg/PCU.

The sales of polymyxins dropped by 62 % from 2011 (5.37 mg/PCU) to 2018 (2.03 mg/PCU) and slightly decreased by 5 % in comparison with 2017 (2.14 mg/PCU), while the aggregated sales for 25 countries were 3.31 mg/PCU. Of note is that since 2012, the year before ZnO premixes, authorised to be applied in therapeutic doses in weaned piglets and primarily replacing colistin, became available, sales of polymyxins decreased substantially by 65 %. Notably, on 26 June 2017, the EC adopted a decision to withdraw all marketing authorisations for veterinary medicinal products containing ZnO administered orally to food-producing species[1].

The sales of macrolides in 2018 (7.12 mg/PCU) have also dropped by 25 % from 2010 (8.26 mg/PCU) and by 12 % from 2017 (8.05 mg/PCU).

In Belgium, awareness campaigns on antibiotic use and the emergence of resistance are primarily based on the national monitoring programme 'BelVet-Sac'. For this, the Federal Agency for Medicines and Health Products (FAMHP)[2] collaborates with the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Ghent to collect and analyse data.

Because of a rather slow decreasing trend in overall antimicrobial use since 2011 (reference year) and the disappointing figures of 2014, the competent authority decided in 2015 to prepare co-regulation measures to complement the awareness-raising activities of the Centre of Expertise on Antimicrobial Consumption and Resistance in Animals (AMCRA), and its partners. Additional legal measures were implemented, and a centralised data collection system was installed, with restrictions on the use of critically important antibiotics for human medicine, requiring obligatory sampling and sensitivity testing before use. The Royal Decree came into force in mid-2016 and had an almost immediate effect.

Since 2016, the main activities include further awareness-raising initiatives (AMCRA), enforcement activities by the competent authority regarding the new legislation, and the preparation of individual analysis reports (benchmarking).

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, upon invitation by the Belgian authorities, jointly carried out a country visit between 16 and 24 November 2017 in order to discuss policies relating to antimicrobial resistance[3].

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/health/documents/community-register/2017/20170626136754/dec_136754_en.pdf
[2] https://www.fagg-afmps.be/nl/DIERGENEESKUNDIG_gebruik/geneesmiddelen/geneesmiddelen/goed_gebruik/Antibiotica_0
[3] https://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/audit_reports/details.cfm?rep_id=3995