



ANTIBIOTIC USE

- Huon has not used antibiotics at sea since 2016 when a single pen was treated. Furthermore, we have not used antibiotics at any of our Huon owned land-based sites (i.e. hatcheries) since January 2019.
- Huon reports antibiotic use for sites that are 100 per cent Huon owned and operated.
- Our use of antibiotics across our freshwater operations (i.e. hatcheries) is restricted to our non-consumptive flow-through hatcheries (which only hold on average around 20 per cent of our total smolt biomass).
- We publicly disclose our [Antibiotic Use](#) and report use to the State Government in real time.
- We believe that disease control in salmon requires a holistic approach. Good site management, fish husbandry and rigorous biosecurity measures are central to reducing the risk of disease outbreaks and controlling the spread of infectious diseases.
- The correct use of antibiotic is critical in reducing antimicrobial resistance which is why our vets/fish health teams follow the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines for the use of antibiotics in livestock industries.
- Our vets only prescribe antibiotics as a last resort and always following a full investigation, confirmation of diagnosis through laboratory testing of fish health samples and after confirming antibiotic sensitivity of causative organisms.
- Antibiotics are prescribed by a qualified veterinarian and there is a strict withholding period which means that any traces are completely passed through the fish long before it is harvested.
- Huon also participates in an annual national residue survey to monitor levels of therapeutants.
- The Australian Government released a report on the total antimicrobial products sold in Australia for Veterinary use from 2005-2010. More than 99% of antimicrobial products used every year in the agriculture/aquaculture sector relate to land-based animals. As an example, in 2009-10, of the total quantity of antimicrobials sold for therapeutic purposes for use in food animals, 55.9% were used in poultry, 13% in cattle and sheep, pigs accounted for 31% and other species (including salmon) accounted for 0.1%! [The report can be viewed here.](#)

A LAST RESORT

We believe that antibiotics should only be used as a last resort which is why we practice a holistic approach to farming. Integral to our approach is good site management, low stocking densities, the development and use of vaccines, feeding a high-quality diet, and keeping our fish as calm and low stress as possible.

It has been five years since we have used antibiotics at sea, which was to treat a single pen of fish.



In January 2019, we needed to use antibiotics to treat some of our small fish grown at one of our flow-through freshwater hatcheries. These fish were prescribed the treatment as they had Yersinia (a coccobacilli bacterium which is naturally present in the river the flows into the hatchery). The treatment was highly successful and effectively resolved the infection. To avoid needing to treat fish in this way in future, we have since changed our stocking practices so that these small salmon are instead grown in our newer, recirculation hatchery systems, where they should not come into contact with the Yersinia bacterium at all.

TYPES USED

Huon does not use any of the antibiotics listed as Critically Important by the WHO – despite WHO guidelines stating that this would be acceptable under certain defined circumstances. This ensures that we preserve those Critically Important antibiotics for human use only. Of the other antibiotics available for use, Huon would only ever use an antibiotic that is confirmed to be effective against the causative disease organism – which is done through testing at our local Fish Health laboratories. This way, we can be sure that we are following best practice in terms of antibiotic stewardship.

(WHO categorises all antimicrobials used in human medicine as either Critically Important, Highly Important or Important in the medically treatment of bacterial infections in humans; in effect placing a value/importance on each antimicrobial in terms of its effectiveness in combating bacterial infections).

The Tasmanian industry as a whole independently made the decision many years ago not to use antibiotics such as Oxolinic Acid (Quinolone) and Amoxycillin (Penicillin) which are compounds listed by the WHO within Critically Important classes of antimicrobials. This decision was made despite these particular antibiotics being used in salmon farming across other countries.

WITHOLDING PERIOD AND RESIDUE TESTING

In the event that antibiotics are used in a population of fish at sea, we adhere to strict withholding periods which allows any therapeutants to pass through the fish long before it is harvested for consumption.

In addition, every year Huon participates in an independent, national residue survey to monitor levels of a wide variety of compounds and therapeutants, ensuring we comply with National standards. These surveys consistently demonstrate that our harvest fish contain no antibiotics, and the results can be found on the National Residues Survey website: <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/food/nrs>.

On occasion we also conduct additional, voluntarily flesh testing which is not required by government regulations. When we do this, we also publish the results on our website.

