

# VET09

## Understanding Susceptibility Test Data as a Component of Antimicrobial Stewardship in Veterinary Settings

This report provides veterinarians with the information needed to successfully acquire and interpret antimicrobial susceptibility test results. It promotes common understanding between the veterinarian and the veterinary microbiology laboratory by providing example culture and susceptibility reports and animal species-specific guidance on applying breakpoints to interpret susceptibility test results.

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# Understanding Susceptibility Test Data as a Component of Antimicrobial Stewardship in Veterinary Settings

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## Abstract

Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute report VET09—*Understanding Susceptibility Test Data as a Component of Antimicrobial Stewardship in Veterinary Settings* discusses antimicrobial susceptibility testing (AST) that provides important, clinically relevant information to the submitting veterinarian if the veterinarian understands how the testing is performed and how the results can be interpreted. This report provides veterinarians background information about laboratory processes, including how AST is performed, reasons for AST not being performed, and how AST results are assessed by the laboratory. It also describes the reasons for varying degrees of confidence in applying breakpoints for interpreting AST results, which will empower veterinarians as they make decisions about the use of antimicrobial agents to treat bacterial disease in animals.

This report gives an overview of some of the factors that affect antimicrobial drug selection in animals, including principles of antimicrobial pharmacology, how bacterial species identification affects AST results interpretation, and the veterinarian's role in ensuring AST results are accurate and useful. By providing example susceptibility test reports with callout boxes, important facets of laboratory reports with AST results are highlighted to aid the veterinarian in maximizing the data.

This report has separate chapters for animal species—specific guidance on how to interpret AST data for dogs, cats, horses, cattle, pigs, and fish, and uniquely, it provides evidence-based appraisals of confidence in the AST data reported by laboratories. This guidance can be also used by laboratories to select appropriate breakpoints for assigning interpretive categories and to aid client veterinarians in interpreting their data.

Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI). *Understanding Susceptibility Test Data as a Component of Antimicrobial Stewardship in Veterinary Settings*. 1st ed. CLSI report VET09 (ISBN 978-1-68440-050-8 [Print]; ISBN 978-1-68440-051-5 [Electronic]). Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute, 950 West Valley Road, Suite 2500, Wayne, Pennsylvania 19087 USA, 2019.

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## Suggested Citation

CLSI. *Understanding Susceptibility Test Data as a Component of Antimicrobial Stewardship in Veterinary Settings*. 1st ed. CLSI report VET09. Wayne, PA: Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute; 2019.

ISBN 978-1-68440-050-8 (Print)

ISBN 978-1-68440-051-5 (Electronic)

ISSN 1558-6502 (Print)

ISSN 2162-2914 (Electronic)

Volume 39, Number 8

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CLSI, the Subcommittee on Veterinary Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing, and the Document Development Committee on Understanding AST Data in Veterinary Settings gratefully acknowledge the following volunteers for their important contributions to the development of this report:

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## Foreword

This report is designed to provide veterinarians and other stakeholders in veterinary diagnostics with key information needed to appropriately interpret antimicrobial susceptibility testing (AST) data for application to clinical decision-making. This report can therefore be read from beginning to end for a comprehensive overview by animal species, bacterial type, and antimicrobial agents in the context of AST. However, each chapter is also designed to provide stand-alone information, so the report can be sampled as needed.

This report includes general guidance on how to apply pharmacological principles to selection and use of antimicrobial agents and how to get the best information from the laboratory, starting with submitting an animal specimen for culture through receiving the laboratory report with AST results. Basic components of a laboratory report and specific examples with AST results are included with commentary on the information reported, as well as different presentations that clinicians may receive from different laboratories. There is also an overview of regulatory and legal considerations for antimicrobial agents. Finally, separate chapters are included that focus on AST results interpretations applied to different animal species: dogs, cats, horses, cattle, pigs, and fish.

Some unique information included in this report is not available anywhere else, including recommendations on extrapolating from:

- One infection site to another
  - For example, whether a breakpoint established for *Escherichia coli* from skin and soft-tissue infections in dogs can be applied to *E. coli* isolated from the lungs
- One bacterial species to another
  - For example, whether a breakpoint established for *E. coli* can be applied to *Klebsiella pneumoniae*
- One animal species to another
  - For example, whether it is reasonable to apply canine breakpoints to bacterial isolates from cats

**NOTE:** The content of this report is supported by the CLSI consensus process and does not necessarily reflect the views of any single individual or organization.



### NOTE:

Each chapter in this report is designed to provide stand-alone information.

### KEY WORDS

**Antimicrobial stewardship**

**Antimicrobial susceptibility testing**

**Breakpoints**

**Interpretive categories**

**Laboratory**

**Reporting**

**Species-specific breakpoints**

**Veterinary**

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### This chapter includes:

- Report's scope and applicable exclusions
- Background information pertinent to the report's content
- Standard precautions information
- "Note on Terminology" that highlights particular use and/or variation in use of terms and/or definitions
- Terms and definitions used in the report
- Abbreviations and acronyms used in the report



# Understanding Susceptibility Test Data as a Component of Antimicrobial Stewardship in Veterinary Settings

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Scope

This report is designed to facilitate common understanding among veterinarians, microbiologists, and laboratorians about how antimicrobial susceptibility testing (AST) is performed, and how the results can be interpreted and applied to clinical decision-making. The intended audience includes veterinarians, microbiologists, laboratorians conducting *in vitro* testing, veterinary educators, pharmacists, and students.

**This report provides information that may be used in concert with other efforts and activities to support antimicrobial stewardship, such as those advocated by professional associations<sup>1</sup> or regulatory agencies.<sup>2</sup>**

To provide this information, the report includes an overview of pharmacological principles relevant to antimicrobial agent selection, some general principles about differences among animal species that may affect antimicrobial agent use and efficacy, and how bacterial species affects AST results and interpretations. This information also helps to explain how microbiological and pharmacological data are used to develop breakpoints. Example AST reports are included, in which common questions are answered and misconceptions are clarified. A large portion of this report provides animal species–specific guidance on applying AST results; reasonable extrapolations that can be made across bacterial species, infection sites, or antimicrobial agents; and the expected degree of confidence in these extrapolations. Also included are excerpts from other CLSI documents relevant to interpreting AST reports.

Based on available expertise and perceived need, this report covers the following animal species: dogs, cats, horses, cattle, pigs, and fish. These animal species represent all the veterinary breakpoints that have been approved to date by the CLSI Subcommittee on Veterinary Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing (VAST), with the exception of poultry breakpoints for one antimicrobial agent. Interpreting AST results for chicken and turkey pathogens is not discussed in this report, although these animal species are a significant focus for antimicrobial stewardship efforts worldwide. Poultry veterinarians and laboratories handling poultry diagnostics are encouraged to consult CLSI documents VET01<sup>3</sup> and VET08<sup>4</sup> for AST guidance.

### NOTE:

Interpreting AST results for chicken and turkey pathogens is not discussed in this report, although these animal species are a significant focus for antimicrobial stewardship efforts worldwide.