Animal health and environmental pollution

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Animal production, like all land-based industries needs to satisfy societal demands for pollution control. We have examined the areas of greatest concern of environmental pollution arising from either lack of animal health or measures to improve animal health in sheep, cattle, pigs and poultry. In particular we have focussed on: veterinary pharmaceutical products such as acaricides; pathogens – (antibiotic resistance, VTEC, Johnes, listeria, toxoplasmosis and Salmonella); eutrophication (especially nitrogen enrichment from slurry); and greenhouse gases. We present an overview of the pollution problems associated with animal production in Scotland, compare animal production as a source of pollution with other sources of pollution in Scotland to provide context, and consider possible mitigation measures. In the process of reviewing this topic we have interviewed practicing vets to establish what they perceive the most important pollution from production animals and we present a summary of their responses.