

# HEALTHY CHICKENS NEED NO ANTIBIOTICS: A CONCERTED EFFORT TO PERSUADE VIETNAMESE VETERINARY PHARMACISTS TO STOP RECOMMENDING ANTIBIOTICS FOR DISEASE PREVENTION IN CHICKENS

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## WHAT

### Healthy Chickens Need No Antibiotics



At the intersection of research, communications and policy, *Healthy Chickens Need No Antibiotics* is an effort in Vietnam to persuade local veterinary pharmacists to stop recommending antibiotics for disease prevention in chickens.

This concerted effort, scheduled to take place from March through May 2019, is part of a wider project called ViParc. ViParc is a randomized controlled before-and-after study of 112 chicken farms in Vietnam's Mekong Delta between 2016 and 2019, which aims to help farmers safely reduce antibiotic usage.

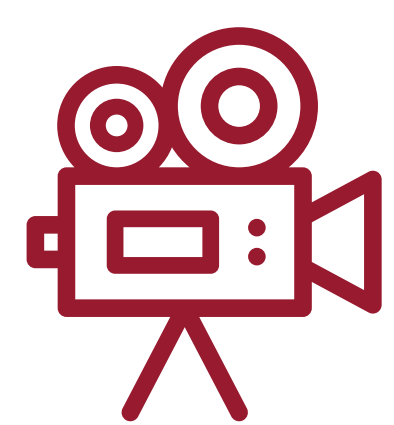
## WHO

### Vietnamese veterinary pharmacists

*Healthy Chickens Need No Antibiotics* will target local veterinary pharmacists in the two districts where ViParc takes place (Cao Lanh and Thap Muoi Districts, Dong Thap Province, Vietnam). They include:

All veterinary pharmacy owners: **150** Influential veterinary pharmacists: **6**

## HOW



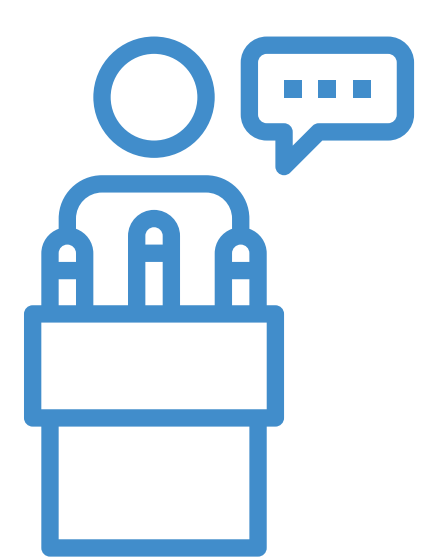
### Media advertising

Targeted communications via YouTube, Television and Simple Message Services (SMS) will be directed towards local veterinary pharmacists, with the main content being the following animated video:

The video starts with three chicks, in front of a veterinary pharmacist, questioning the use of colistin to prevent salmonellosis in chickens. The chicks then cite international and national documents to argue against antibiotic prophylaxis and propose what true disease prevention should mean. The pharmacist finally agrees that *Healthy Chickens Need No Antibiotics*.



[bit.ly/videochickens](http://bit.ly/videochickens)



### Workshops

150 pharmacy owners will be invited to a series of small workshops, where researchers from the ViParc study are to make the economic and scientific case against antibiotic prophylaxis in chickens.



### Letters

The Sub-Department of Livestock Production and Animal Health in Dong Thap Province, Vietnam, will issue a letter to the six most influential veterinary pharmacists, requesting their cooperation in not recommending antibiotics prophylactically to ViParc's study farms. The letters will emphasize removing prophylactic antibiotics as a component of Vietnam's 2017 National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance.

## Acknowledgements

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## WHY

**87%**

chicken flocks (N=203) raised during the baseline phase of ViParc were given colistin.

**100%**

farms the ViParc study (N=112) used antibiotics for disease prevention in healthy chickens, according to data from its baseline phase. This practice contradicts WHO's 2017 recommendations on antibiotic use for food-producing animals.

**75%**

antibiotic usage happened during the brooding period (weeks 1-4 of the chicks' life), according to data from ViParc's baseline phase.

A total of 15 products were found to be marketed to farmers as "thuốc úm" ("brooding medicine"), with active antimicrobial agents:



Veterinary pharmacists are the most important source of advice on antibiotics for farmers, as identified in 26 focus groups and 54 in-depth interviews conducted by ViParc.

There seems to be a supply-induced demand for veterinary antibiotics:

- All farms included in the ViParc study are no more than 5km from their nearest veterinary pharmacy.
- Antibiotic usage was associated with the density of veterinary pharmacies (not density of farms), according to baseline data from the ViParc study.

Veterinary antibiotics in Vietnam are cheap:

- The cost of 1 ADD/kg ranges from 0.07 to 1.39 US cents.
- Antibiotics account, on average, for 1% of the cost of producing a chicken flock, according to baseline data from the ViParc study.

There is a widespread perception among veterinary pharmacists throughout Vietnam that given the country's tropical climate, antibiotics are needed for the prevention of diseases in chickens, and that successes in reducing antibiotic usage in countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands cannot be applied to Vietnam.

A phone survey, with complete data from 95 farmers in the ViParc study, reveals the following:

**24** veterinary pharmacists cater to all of the farmers.

**6** veterinary pharmacists share 79% of the drug market created by the farmers.