Govt caps antibiotic use in meat

Tribune News Service
Alarmed by growing pathogen resistance to life-saving antibiotics, the government has capped the maximum levels of drugs that can be used for growth promotion in meat and meat products. The Ministry of Health, through Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), notified amendments to the Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulations in order to list maximum permissible limits of various antibiotics in meat and meat products, including chicken. The amendments prescribe maximum permissible limits of 37 antibiotics and 67 other veterinary drugs in chicken.
The amendments are yet to take the shape of law with the government, through a notification, inviting objections and suggestions of stakeholders and people within 30 days. “The notification was issued on November 7. Comments are invited till December 6,” the Health Ministry said.

All suggestions will be placed before the Scientific Panel of FSSAI on Residues of Pesticides and Antibiotics for consideration. The recommendations of the scientific panel will be considered by the scientific committee and then the Food Authority for approval after which it will be notified in the Gazette of India with the approval of Health Minister.

More and more disease-causing bacteria are becoming immune to high-generation antibiotics. The pace of resistance is much higher than the pace of new drug development.

**First major attempt**

- This is the first major attempt by the government to address growing antibiotic use in poultry to promote growth
- The Global Antibiotic Resistance Report has said India has highest burden of anti-microbial resistance
- The WHO has asked governments to act against the growing antibiotic resistant pathogen strains
- Failing this, the world could well return to pre-antibiotic era when medicines could not treat even simple infections