Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) would be leading a Stakeholder Consultation in the 2023 edition of Food Systems Dialogue, a pan-India brainstorming meet organised jointly by the Bharat Krishak Samaj (BKS) and the Food and Land Use Coalition India Country platform to discuss and debate on food system transformation. The focus of the session would be on antibiotic misuse and the resultant antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Overuse and misuse of antibiotics has meant that these life-savers are now becoming ineffective in treating bacterial infections, as bacteria are becoming immune and resistant to them. In 2019, about 1.3 million deaths globally were attributed to antibiotic-resistant bacteria. If no action is taken, AMR is expected to cause about 50 million deaths per year by 2050 – about two million of those could be in India.

While Indian food production is more about small farms, but with rising economic, livelihood and food needs, it is expected that more animal food will be reared in big farms that are fuelled by excessive use of chemicals and antibiotics and carry a high risk of AMR from the food and waste routes. To address this, it is critical to shift towards sustainable approaches of food production requiring less antibiotics, which will also have co-benefits of less greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, greater resilience, livelihoods for more, and food and nutrition security. It is time to start discussing how we can transform our food systems before it gets too late.

The objective of this Stakeholder Consultation is to kick-start this discussion, share knowledge and understanding on the challenges and solutions, and draw up a roadmap for coordinated multi-sectoral action.