

May 2019

## How can an incoming government support animal health?

Whoever has the opportunity to form government after the election on 18 May, there are some key initiatives that can be adopted to better support the health of our livestock, our pets, and provide support to Australia's animal health industries. Animal Medicines Australia, as the industry association representing innovators, registrants, manufacturers and importers of animal health products looks forward to working with the next government to implement these measures.

Animal health products are essential tools that support our \$30 billion livestock and \$12.4 billion pet industries. These products promote responsible companionship between people and their pets, and are also key to supporting safe and sustainable animal products for domestic and export markets.

Australia is fortunate to have a rigorous, well-regulated and effective system for controlling veterinary medicines. This system includes pre-market assessment by the APVMA, manufacturing that is assured by audited good manufacturing practices, and sound pharmacovigilance. However, there are opportunities for targeted reforms that will deliver better animal health outcomes.

### ***Implementing an animal sector antimicrobial resistance surveillance system***

The World Health Organisation has described antimicrobial resistance as one of the key global health issues facing our generation. It threatens human health and the health of animals within our care. *Australia's First National Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy 2015-19* identified the need for a nationally coordinated One Health system for surveillance of organisms resistant to antibiotics. A One Health approach considers both human and animal health, and environmental impact.

Considerable resources have been allocated by the Government to establish a human health antimicrobial surveillance system, but this has not been matched by investment in an animal health equivalent. This gap needs to be addressed to ensure we continue to have access to these critical medicines. AMA promotes the judicious and responsible use of antibiotics in line with the adage "as little as possible, as much as necessary." The available evidence<sup>1</sup> indicates that Australian use of antibiotics in animal health care is conservative, and that antimicrobial resistance rates in animals are low, a comprehensive surveillance system will provide an independent and clear evidence base.

Such a system would support our livestock exporters and provide industries with essential information to assess the effectiveness of their AMR stewardship approaches.

---

<sup>1</sup> O'Neill, J, [Antimicrobials in agriculture and the environment: reducing use and waste](#), 2015.

### ***Improving APVMA efficiency***

AMA has worked closely with the policy makers and the APVMA to develop reforms that can enhance APVMA's decision making efficiency. This resulted in legislation<sup>2</sup>, introduced but not passed by the 45<sup>th</sup> Parliament, designed to streamline APVMA assessment processes and improve efficiency. An incoming government should seek to reintroduce key reforms contained within these bills to implement these common sense reforms.

An APVMA that is efficient as possible will maintain the incentive for leading, global companies to continue to innovate and invest in Australia. This will ensure that Australia's livestock industries and pet owners continue to have access to new innovations and technologies that protect and enhance the health and wellbeing of animals within their care.

Such reforms include:

- Streamlining arrangements for reporting annual returns of veterinary medicines and animal health products;
- Increasing flexibility when managing application errors; and
- providing additional flexibility for the APVMA to consider new information when assessing an application.

Australia is fortunate to have a rigorous and comprehensive regulation system controlling veterinary medicines and animal health products. Supporting these reforms through the new Parliament will continue to protect access to innovative new products while maintaining the rigour applied by the APVMA in its assessment.

AMA and its members have a long-standing commitment to an animal health industry that is responsible and sustainable. Our members' products are essential tools that can help meet economic, environmental and social challenges. We look forward to continuing to work with government to improve animal health outcomes across the livestock, equine and companion animal sector.

---

<sup>2</sup> The [Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Amendment \(Operational Efficiency\) Bill 2017](#) and the [Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Amendment \(Streamlining Regulation\) Bill 2018](#).