

27 March 2020

Supporting food safety, security and animal health and welfare during the Covid-19 pandemic

Animal Medicines Australia and its members, the leaders in Australia's animal health industry, are continuing to work to maintain uninterrupted supply of veterinary medicines and animal health products.

"Our member's products increase livestock productivity by up to 15%. Across all sectors, this amounts to an additional \$2.7 billion dollars in production each year and an additional 10,000 jobs¹," said Animal Medicines Australia's Executive Director, Mr Ben Stapley.

"These products are critical inputs to maintain the safety and integrity of our food production systems. They protect our livestock from a variety of illnesses and diseases that reduce livestock productivity and food safety. Animal diseases are often painful and debilitating. In addition to assuring food safety, treating animals with veterinary medicines when necessary safeguards their health and wellbeing.

"Similarly, our pets rely on us to look after their health. In addition to food, shelter and exercise, they require ongoing access to veterinary medicines and other products to treat animal diseases. While essential for protecting the health of our pets, some diseases and pests can also affect human health, such as leptospirosis and paralysis ticks.

"There are 5.9 million households with a pet, with more than 5.1 million dogs and 3.8 million cats in Australia. They provide us with companionship, help us exercise and make us happier. 88% of pet owners say that pets have a positive or very positive impact on their wellbeing².

"As we manage our collective response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we need to ensure that we protect the systems and supply chains that get these products to veterinarians, farmers and pet owners," said Mr Stapley.

Animal Medicines Australia and its members are working across agricultural, industrial and commercial supply chains to secure supply of animal health products as the government responds to the pandemic.

"All governments have a role in ensuring that we can continue to provide critical veterinary medicines and animal health products. Each component of supply needs to be protected. This includes research facilities; import and manufacture of products; storage, transport and distribution networks; wholesale and retail sales and veterinary services. We are seeking assurances from all governments that all aspects of veterinary medicine supply can continue unimpeded," said Mr Stapley.

"Other leading national associations have also called for agricultural inputs and animal health services to continue, including the Australian Veterinary Association, National Farmers Federation and the RSPCA.

"I acknowledge and welcome Minister Littleproud's statements in support of Australian agriculture and note his commitment to keeping farm inputs and produce moving. We look forward to working with the Minister to keep these essential products and services working for the benefit of all Australians and the animals we care for."

Media contact: Brie Colley 0474 740 808

¹ Acil Allen Consulting (2018), [Economic Contribution of Animal Medicines to Australia's Livestock Industries 2015-16](#), June 2018.

² Animal Medicines Australia (2019), [Pets in Australia: A National Survey of Pets and People](#), October 2019