

28 August 2020

Reforming the Agvet chemicals regulatory system

The Matthews Review offers a once in a decade opportunity to ensure animal health and welfare outcomes continue to improve in Australia.

Submissions in response to the issues paper on the review of the Agvet chemicals regulatory system closed on Friday, 28 August, marking the end of the first major round of consultation on potential reform opportunities for Australia's Agvet chemical system.

"This review process represents the best opportunity to make meaningful reforms to the National Registration System (NRS) for agvet chemicals," Animal Medicines Australia's Executive Director Ben Stapley said.

"Veterinary medicines and animal health products are essential for productive, ethical and sustainable livestock production, as well as to support the health and welfare of our pets and other animals in our care. Our regulatory systems are designed to minimise risks to users, consumers and the environment."

"We've been pleased to provide extensive input to the review so far and have been encouraged by the thoughtful consideration conducted by the review panel to date."

"Our industry operates within a dynamic operating environment. New technologies, environmental challenges and community expectations will require changes and adaptation in the way that our members conduct their businesses in the future. Our members are continuing to strive to meet the needs of their customers. Similarly, our regulatory system needs to recognise and respond to these challenges by ensuring that its settings remain appropriate to the technologies and products it seeks to regulate," Mr Stapley said.

"Animal Medicines Australia will support recommendations for reform that position Australia at the forefront of innovation in animal health. Already, animal health products are responsible for an average 10.6% increase in production across the major livestock sectors¹. Our industry has several natural advantages that leave it well positioned for coming decades, if our regulatory system can appropriately balance certainty and flexibility.

"Every livestock industry faces particular animal health and business challenges. For example, risks from animal diseases such as African Swine Fever and Avian Influenza have the potential to decimate our pig and poultry industries. Within the business context, drought recovery is having a broader impact on livestock industry businesses. The regulatory system needs to recognise these realities which we have outlined in our submission.

"In our submission, AMA has proposed a strategy to unlock innovation across animal health. Our submission recommends that the review panel consider a platform to support

¹ [Economic Contribution of animal health products to Australia's livestock industries, 2015-16](#)

innovation in animal health linking productivity, regulatory reform and innovation. Such a platform could:

- include measures to incentivise development of new technologies,
- facilitate collaboration between and across industries and government, and
- promote unencumbered trade.

“An innovation platform would recognise that veterinary medicines and animal health products are key inputs to broader industries, and are used to provide health, welfare and productivity benefits. The regulatory system for these products needs to be seen within this broader context.

“As an industry, we are looking forward to continuing to work with the panel to support a suite of recommendations that result in a flexible, responsive and effective regulatory system for veterinary medicines and animal health products,” Mr Stapley said.

The Animal Medicines Australia submission in response to the issues paper can be viewed [here](#).

Background:

The First Principles Review of the agvet chemical regulatory framework (the Matthews Review) was announced on 5 September 2019. The Terms of Reference and further information about the independent review is available [here](#). Submissions on the issues paper closed 28 August 2020 and a final report is expected to be delivered to the Minister for Agriculture by May 2021.

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