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RE: Defining the Pork Industry Vision of Antibiotic Stewardship

As society seeks to address the growing challenge of antibiotic resistance, the subject of antibiotic use in animal and human health has captured the attention of governments, consumers and the media. Maintaining the health of pigs is a top priority of the U.S. pork industry and effective antibiotics are a critical tool in raising pigs. We want to share with you our past efforts and the leadership role our organizations have taken in the responsible use of antibiotics.

In June, the National Pork Board, in collaboration with the American Association of Swine Veterinarians and the National Pork Producers Council, announced the creation of the pork industry Antibiotic Stewardship Plan. This endeavor builds upon years of previous work by our combined organizations:

- We will continue to create educational opportunities and support stewardship outreach to our pork producers, veterinarians and consumers. These efforts will augment our Pork Quality Assurance® Plus (PQA Plus) program, which has provided on-farm producer education and training resources for nearly a decade. We will revise current, and develop new, educational materials and programs to help our farmers and veterinarians to embrace FDA Guidance 209 and 213.
- As has been our industry's tradition, we will continue to define additional methods to maintain the highest swine herd health status possible to minimize the need for antibiotic use.
- We will measure success through identifying challenges, conducting new research and collecting data to improve our understanding of the optimum role of antibiotics in raising a safe and healthy pork supply.

Our organizations are responsible for farmer-funded research, promotion and consumer information projects and we communicate directly to pork producers, veterinarians and the public. Since 2000, the swine industry has invested more than **\$5.3 million in research** on the epidemiology of antimicrobial resistance, as well as efforts to define alternatives to antimicrobial use. These past investments provide a solid foundation upon which to build. In addition, the National Pork Board's directors approved up to \$1.4 million in 2015 and 2016 funds earmarked for better understanding the role antibiotics play in pork production.

Swine health and production research has always been a major effort of each of our organizations. **Research, pork producer education and veterinarian education** are top priorities for the swine industry. As pork industry organizations, we are focused on continuous improvement, understanding that reducing antibiotic resistance is a process where everyone has a role to play to ensure antibiotics remain effective and safe for both humans and animals. Our industry supports the use of antibiotics to treat sick pigs and prevent illness. It is simply unethical to withhold treatment. Through research and farmer and veterinarian education, we will be innovative in finding ways to improve pig health with and without antibiotics.

Through PQA Plus, our industry has certified more than 60,000 pig farmers and their employees in good production practices. More than 90 percent of pigs entering the U.S. pork market have been raised under the professional standards of PQA Plus. In the year ahead, this program's curriculum will be revised to include an added emphasis on antibiotic stewardship. PQA Plus is a valuable resource to deliver training, best practices and new information to pig farmers.



Additionally, we work closely with the United States Department of Agriculture and our colleagues in the poultry, dairy and beef industries to define models and metrics for success. We highlight this as a special area of concern, as there are some who may seek to employ a model or metric that unreasonably restricts the availability of antibiotics necessary to keep pigs healthy. We are engaging with experts to develop workable models and metrics that the swine industry can embrace. This long-term project will take many months to complete and we pledge to keep you informed of our progress.

Our Commitment to You

America's pork industry is a leader in the effort to address antibiotic resistance related to pork production and to ensure the availability of effective antibiotics for future generations. We stand ready to engage our partners and colleagues in defining and funding new research and education priorities. We will share updates with you on our progress. In summary:

- The National Pork Board will make antimicrobial use and resistance a **top research priority** in the 2016 budget.
- The U.S. pork industry will fund additional research to demonstrate the value of therapeutic prevention, assess mass treatment versus individual treatment methods, evaluate and improve antibiotic record keeping, and assess the fate and transport of antibiotics in the environment. We will also explore strategies to better maintain herd health so as to reduce the need for antibiotics. We will **share research findings and develop educational materials** for our more than 60,000 farmers and the academic and swine veterinarian community. We will specifically address this issue through our existing print and electronic communications tools.
- By mid-2016, the National Pork Board will revise and add focus to antibiotic stewardship in the industry's **PQA Plus program**. This action will ensure America's pork producers understand the importance of the veterinarian-client-patient relationship in deciding when to use antibiotics.
- Supporting our existing committee of experts, we will convene a **blue-ribbon task force** of national experts focused on antibiotic-use research and data collection. This panel will help us to define models and metrics that provide value to the pork industry for continual improvement of antibiotic use practices.

Our industry operates on shared values.

Keeping pigs healthy and ensuring their well-being are important facets of our work and areas where consumers, farmers and veterinarians agree. We need to preserve existing effective tools as well as develop new approaches for this challenge. We look forward to working with you to achieve this goal.

Sincerely,



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