Chicken Farmers of Canada supports government announcement on antimicrobial initiative

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 20, 2015 (OTTAWA)—Chicken Farmers of Canada applauds the Government of Canada for the taking a leadership role on the issue of antimicrobial resistance and for announcing plans to strengthen antimicrobial stewardship controls.

The Honourable Rona Ambrose, federal Minister of Health, announced Friday that the Canadian government would be proposing amendments to the Food and Drug regulations to modify the options for own-use importation, to strengthen the regulations for active pharmaceutical ingredients, and to increase veterinary oversight for antimicrobials used in livestock.

“Chicken Farmers of Canada supports the federal government in their objective of amending these regulations to ensure responsible antimicrobial stewardship,” said Chicken Farmers of Canada Chair, Dave Janzen. “The chicken industry is continuing to study all facets of antibiotic use in animal agriculture to ensure that responsible, appropriate, and safe use of antibiotics can continue while reduction methods are explored at all levels of the industry, and with stakeholders and government partners.”

Chicken Farmers of Canada supports the responsible use of antimicrobials to maintain animal health, animal welfare and food safety and is pleased to partner with the federal government on these issues.

As part of our commitment to responsible use, the option to use antimicrobials obtained via “own-use importation” and the use of active pharmaceutical ingredients has not been permitted for Canadian chicken farmers since 2009, and is a requirement of the On-Farm Food Safety Assurance Program, a program which is mandatory for all Canadian chicken farmers.

To further demonstrate this commitment to antimicrobial use and resistance, we developed an antimicrobial use strategy with all members of the stakeholder chain in 2012. This strategy focusses on surveillance, education and reduction alongside research and innovation.

Among other successes, the implementation of the strategy has resulted in:

- A mandatory industry policy to eliminate the preventive use of Category I antibiotics as of May 15, 2014
- Surveillance, in cooperation with the Canadian Integrated Program for Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance of Health Canada, of antimicrobial use and resistance on chicken farms
- The release of Responsible Use Guidelines
- Education and communication seminars/tools for farmers and the supply chain
- Research into innovative products such as vaccines and alternatives to antibiotics
We support only the most responsible use of antibiotics and we are being proactive to manage antibiotic use in order to provide continued confidence to consumers and government. Chicken Farmers of Canada understands that consumers and others have concerns regarding antibiotic use and resistance, and we take our responsibility very seriously.

Chicken Farmers of Canada will continue to work with the Government of Canada as they implement the Federal Action Plan on Antimicrobial Use and Resistance in Canada, including initiatives to remove growth promotion claims from antibiotic labels and increasing the veterinary oversight of feed and water antibiotic use.

For more information on the Chicken Farmers of Canada Antimicrobial Use Strategy, visit www.chickenfarmers.ca.

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