

**EMBARGOED until 12:00 a.m. ET, Tuesday, Dec. 18**

**Groups Issue Framework for Antibiotic Stewardship in Food Animal Production**

*Leading stakeholder organizations define and outline core components of stewardship to protect public health*

WASHINGTON—A group of major food companies, retailers, livestock producers, and trade and professional associations today announced a comprehensive framework to strengthen stewardship of antibiotic use in food animals. The framework is the product of a two-year dialogue among stakeholders, moderated by Farm Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts, to ensure that antibiotics are used judiciously throughout production to protect animal and public health.

The stakeholders agreed that the use of medically important antibiotics in all settings, from human health care to livestock production, must be carefully managed to slow the emergence of resistant bacteria and preserve the effectiveness of these vital drugs. The framework issued today defines effective stewardship, lays out its core components, and describes essential characteristics of effective stewardship programs, including key performance measures.

Organizations agreeing to the framework include: Elanco Animal Health, Hormel Foods, Jennie-O Turkey Store, McDonald's Corporation, National Milk Producers Federation, National Pork Board, National Pork Producers Council, National Turkey Federation, Smithfield Foods, Inc., Tyson Foods, Walmart Inc., and Zoetis.

"Antibiotic stewardship is essential to protecting human and animal health, ensuring food safety and security, and combating antibiotic resistance – issues that consumers increasingly care about when making their purchasing decisions," said Kathy Talkington, who directs Pew's antibiotic resistance project. "The organizations who were part of this dialogue represent the food animal supply chain from farm to table, and they recognize the need for meaningful stewardship programs that everyone can understand and trust."

The 15 core components of the antibiotic stewardship framework are based on the importance of veterinary guidance and partnership, disease prevention strategies, and optimal treatment approaches, as well as effective record keeping and a culture of continuous improvement and commitment to antibiotic stewardship. The components address education, implementation, and evaluation steps for phasing in stewardship programs. The framework's guiding principles are intended to help ensure that stewardship programs have a clear scientific basis, are transparent, minimize the risk of unintended consequences, encourage alternatives to antibiotics, and focus on long-term sustainability.

"There is a broad consensus across the food animal industry that we must continue to drive and demonstrate antibiotic stewardship in animal agriculture," said Joe Swedberg, chairman of the board of Farm Foundation. "This framework is about stakeholders coming together to do the right thing and communicate their commitment to antibiotic stewardship, with a transparent and meaningful approach."

Ultimately, the framework's stakeholders seek to foster and validate the continuous improvement of science-based and validated stewardship practices, and to implement best practices throughout the animal production system. The dialogue's participants also acknowledged that much work still remains to effectively implement the stewardship framework.

“We look forward to continuing to work together to align these stewardship best practices with existing quality and sustainability programs throughout animal production,” said Talkington.

Swedberg added: “The participating organizations are enthusiastic that the framework provides the basis for a robust and science-based system—one that consumers can understand and trust, and that enhances both animal and public health.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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