

National Beef Antimicrobial Research Strategy developed to drive solutions

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Calgary, AB – As concerns grow about the continued effectiveness of antimicrobials in human health and questions arise about the contribution of modern beef production to antimicrobial resistance in human medicine, the beef industry is increasingly pressured to reconsider its methods of combatting harmful bacteria in cattle. Research will play a critical role in the industry's ability to reduce medically-important antimicrobial use and to develop, identify and implement effective, responsible alternatives to antimicrobials.

"There's no doubt antimicrobial resistance, use and their alternatives are a high priority in terms of policy, research, and regulations," said Tim Oleksyn, a cow-calf producer from Shellbrook, Saskatchewan and Chair of the Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC). "It is important for the industry to have a comprehensive strategy with clearly defined outcomes to ensure every research dollar helps make progress in addressing human health and public confidence concerns, while also ensuring animal welfare and industry sustainability are maintained."

Due to the importance and priority placed on antimicrobial resistance and use, funding of antimicrobial-related livestock research is increasing both federally and provincially. To make the best use of this funding, a National Beef Antimicrobial Research Strategy was developed by the BCRC and the National Beef Value Chain Roundtable (BVCRT).

The Strategy is a result of extensive consultation with all major stakeholder groups, including cattle producers and industry representatives, veterinarians, pharmaceutical experts, scientists, academics, human medical professionals, government regulators, policy makers, and research funders. It identifies priority research outcomes for the Canadian beef industry and has gained commitment from Canada's major beef research funders to focus on achieving these outcomes. Strategy development began with a comprehensive analysis of the antimicrobial research situation relevant to the Canadian beef sector with internationally recognized experts in antimicrobial issues, research and technology.

Research priorities and outcomes defined in the Strategy include:

Antimicrobial Resistance - focused on ensuring evidence-based decision making and communication to the veterinary, producer and medical communities, expanding surveillance within the Canadian Integrated Program for Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance (CIPARS), and pilot projects to monitor antimicrobial resistance in different cattle production systems.

Antimicrobial Use - focused on ensuring that Canada's beef industry continues to have access to antimicrobials to protect animal health and welfare by developing a database to quantify, monitor and defend responsible antimicrobial use practices in cow-calf, feedlot, dairy and veal production.

Antibiotic Alternatives – focused on developing a broader set of tools for disease management including cost-effective alternative production practices, diagnostic tests, nutritional management strategies and vaccines that reduce the need for treating production limiting diseases in beef cattle.

"The beef industry has a responsibility and an opportunity to help guide and direct valuable investments intended to help protect the effectiveness of antimicrobials," added Oleksyn. "By collaborating with research funders and other major stakeholder groups, we can achieve the most meaningful outcomes relevant to both the beef industry and the Canadian public."

The Strategy is intended to evolve based on stakeholder feedback and ongoing review as research outcomes are achieved and new outcomes arise. It can be found on the BCRC website at www.beefresearch.ca/AMR

The [National Beef Antimicrobial Research Strategy](#) was developed as part but ahead of the renewal of the [National Beef Research](#)

[Strategy](#), which is set to begin in mid-2016, because of the large focus on antimicrobial resistance and use.

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