## Summary Report on the NFAHWC Governance Forum
## Ottawa, December 5, 2012

### *Context and Facilitation Process*

The purpose of the facilitation was twofold: 1) to enable stakeholders to consider the issues set out in the *Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Governance in Canada* concept paper prepared by the Institute on Governance (IOG); and 2) to canvass participants' goals and expectations with regard to farmed animal health and welfare governance, including the scope of interest in pursuing new governance models.

A full-day session was held during the NFAHW Governance Forum on Wednesday, December 5, 2012 in Ottawa, Ontario.

IOG staff opened the session with an overview of the concept paper, focusing on the following areas: existing governance structures, challenges under the status quo, case studies and evaluation of alternative models, assessment of the broader environment, and suggested options for consideration.

The remainder of the day was given to three themed breakout sessions, with different breakout groups considering different aspects of the theme. The first session focused on clarifying expectations; the second session on the pros and cons of the three model options (Australian-style partnership, US-style "unilateral" capacity building and a Pan-Canadian Farmed Animal Health Network). In the final session, participants were asked to join a discussion on implementation planning for their preferred model, or an open session to consider alternative models.

### *Emergent Themes from Breakout Sessions*

The first two sessions signaled broad support for moving to a new governance model to foster more coordinated and collaborative policy and operational decisions by external stakeholders and governments.

Participants identified a range of benefits from a more coordinated system, including more transparent and informed decision making, increased public confidence in the food supply (and related credibility as an exporter), improved emergency responsiveness and conflict resolution, greater knowledge sharing across sectors, and greater efficiency in the use of resources with

corresponding savings. In general, there was not much rejection of the principle of moving to a new system; instead concerns tended to be pragmatic in nature. Participants recognized that any alternative to the status quo would, to varying degrees, require resource commitments at a time when both government and industry are financially constrained and that equitable funding mechanisms could be hard to hammer out. Divergent perspectives and, to an even greater extent, divergent capacity among different industry sectors were also recognized as problems. Further, given the level of political will that would be needed, leadership (with better continuity) would be important. Some participants noted that the shift from lobbying to a policy development role would be challenging, and others noted that animal welfare issues might require a different vision than animal health.

In terms of prioritizing initiatives, participants generally agreed that early steps should include marshalling the industry for action through buy-in, and that this would require clarity of vision and agreed goals (including clarification of animal health versus animal welfare issues). A champion would be needed, possibly multiple champions (e.g., for different jurisdictions). Engaging government more effectively at a more senior level was also widely seen as a priority.

There was a high level of realism about the pros and cons of each of the models and the challenges in pursuing any of them.

Broadly speaking, the **Australian "full partnership" model** was seen as very attractive but one for which a lot of groundwork would be needed if it could be achieved at all. It was seen as equitable, highly collaborative, effective in assigning roles, establishing processes and resolving conflict. It was also seen as being proactive and strategically oriented, coordinating actions from planning through implementation. At the same time, some participants noted that it was not entirely comprehensive – e.g., welfare, intelligence and surveillance are not covered, others that equitable funding arrangements and willingness to pool effective decision-making would be challenging in a Canadian context. It was also suggested that Canada's geographical situation is more challenging to manage than Australia's isolated one.

With respect to the **US-style "unilateral capacity building" model**, there was widespread regard for what the Americans had achieved as a credible, well-managed "clearing house" for developing stakeholder positions. However, many participants noted that it is still fundamentally a lobbying body rather than a policy partner, and overall the lack of a committed government buy-in seemed to weigh against it. Even those who viewed it in the most positive light observed that it was a century in the making.

The **Pan-Canadian Network** model was recognized as closest to the status quo, which was viewed as both a pro and a con. Participants liked the goal of more senior level engagement by a more inclusive, higher capacity body with more systematic stakeholder input. They also liked the fact that existing structures and templates (e.g., for funding) could be leveraged. On the

other hand, there were concerns that the inclusiveness could make the organization unwieldy, and particular that it might give CVOs too predominant a role.  Some did not appear to find the option very ambitious.

## *Summary Observations and Next Steps*

It was clear from the third session that the large majority favored either the Australian-style partnership model or the Pan-Canadian model over the US-style model or another alternative. The main divergence – in roughly equal numbers – was as to whether the best strategy would be to "go big or go home" or to pursue more incremental change, mainly on the basis that it would be more feasible.  On one level, this outcome appears to impose a rather binary choice on the Council leadership.   In fact, however, the choice need not be so stark.

Given the high level of direct support for the more ambitious partnership model, together with the wider recognition of its implicit desirability, the Council can be seen to have a mandate to set the partnership model as an aspirational goal provided this does not eliminate the possibility of taking an "off ramp" and accepting more incremental outcomes at some point along the way.  Experience with planning processes has shown that setting a more ambitious target tends to produce better outcomes than pure incrementalism, even on an interim basis. An incremental planning process typically leads to circumstance-driven actions, whereas having a clear target supports a dynamic strategic planning process and strategy-driven outcomes that tend to be further advanced at any given point.  This principle is illustrated in Figure 1, below.

Figure 1
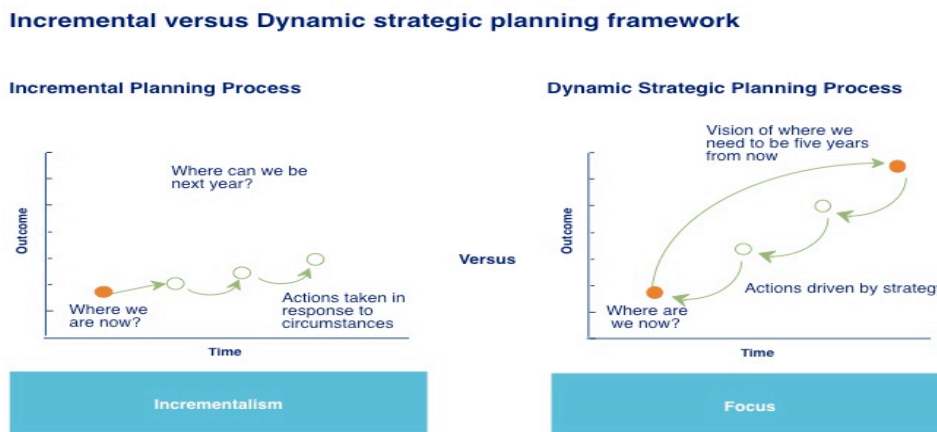


The Council has an opportunity to adopt a dynamic strategic approach because, especially over the near term, both options involve similar steps.  In particular, each involves **generating**

**stakeholder buy-in by developing a business case for change** (using "before and after org charts" as some participants put it).  In each case, there is a need to **build industry policy capacity and leadership**, to enhance credibility as a partner and ensure that the initiative has a champion.  There is also a need to **support more coherence within the federal government** (e.g., bridging the policy-operations gap between AAFC and CFIA), and to **engage government at a more senior level** in a more systematic way that supports implementation.  **Increased collaboration with PHAC** to will also be important to reinforce the links between animal health and welfare and human health.  In each case, the need for cost-effectiveness and momentum requires the **use of existing mechanisms and templates** to the extent possible.  While explicit discussion of the Council's leadership role was not extensive, it is the obvious candidate to champion the initiative and was identified as such by many participants (while no other body was suggested).

Figure 2 illustrates the possible foundational initiatives that could be taken over different stages of the overall enterprise.

Figure 2
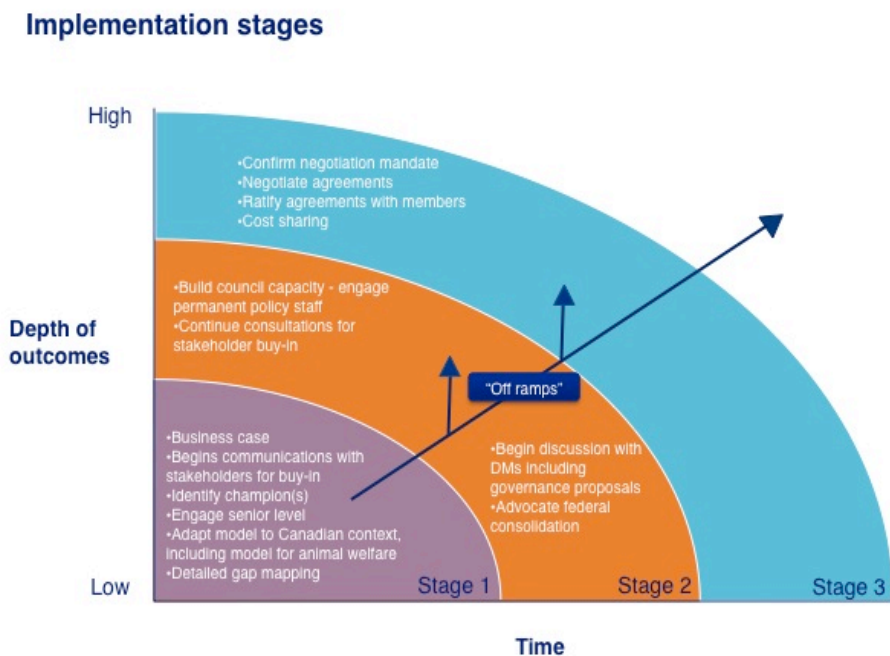


The steps listed on the graphic are illustrative; actual initiatives and their sequencing would depend on the business case.