

Statement of Principles
National Farmed Animal Health Strategy

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Contributing Organizations:

Dairy Farmers of Canada
Deans of Veterinary Colleges
Chicken Farmers of Canada
Canadian Poultry & Egg Processors Council
Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
Canadian Turkey Marketing Agency
Canadian Sheep Federation
Canadian Pork Council
Canadian Meat Council
Canadian Egg Marketing Agency
Canadian Cattlemen's Association
Canadian Broiler & Hatching Egg Marketing Agency
Canadian Animal Health Coalition

Statement of Principles **National Farmed Animal Health Strategy**

Vision

A proposed vision for the National Farmed Animal Health Strategy is 'to be the recognized world leaders in animal health, while sustaining and growing Canada's farmed animal industries'. The animal health strategy will protect the health status and condition of food-producing animals while sustaining strong domestic and international markets for live animals and their products.

The National Farmed Animal Health Strategy (NFAHS, or the Strategy) would serve as the means through which to clarify (1) the role of stakeholders as well as (2) how responsibilities should be shared with regards to program development, funding, delivery, oversight, etc.

A National Farmed Animal Health Strategy entails a plan and direction for Canada's animal health system that is:

- Multi-jurisdictional
- Multi-stakeholder
- A systems-based and
- Comprehensive in its approach.

Objectives

A National Farmed Animal Health Strategy must address a range of objectives:

- To safeguard human and animal health
- To safeguard the Canadian economy
- To protect and raise the health status of farmed animals
- To manage risks in the continental and international markets
- To foster strong domestic and international markets for live farmed animals and their products.
- To enhance the confidence of customers, producers, markets & public ('the 4 C's of confidence').

Background

Canada's livestock industry generates 50% of the country's Farm Cash Receipts -- 58% of Receipts before other payments. This is generated by approximately 155,000 producers, or 44% of the total. The industry is a significant portion of the Canadian economy, and the country's animal health status and systems are key to that industry.

Animal health, like public health and food safety, is a public good for which responsibility is shared by federal, provincial and territorial governments. Governments are responsible for protecting Canadians from the risks associated with animal diseases while the farmed animal industry recognizes that it too has a significant role to play.

Canada's animal health programs have been highly successful, fostering economic growth for the country as a whole, and contributing to the safety of human health. Examples include the eradication of Brucellosis and Tuberculosis, importation of exotic breeds, and implementation of identification. These have all had positive implications for public health and the economy as a whole, and have resulted in world-wide recognition for Canada's food animal industry as a world leader. While the programs of the past were typically 'government owned,' the current and future programs are increasingly based upon industry / government partnerships which – while successful – are being implemented in a piecemeal approach with short term project based funding and no overall plan

A strategic approach – a National Farmed Animal Health Strategy (NFAHS) -- is required to enhance Canada's animal health system. Major animal health policies, particularly those required to address aspects of a major contagious disease outbreak were not addressed in the initial Agricultural Policy Framework (APF). In fact there is no mention of animal health in the initial APF. The NFAHS strategy must be incorporated as a separate pillar within the federal-provincial Agricultural Policy Framework (APF-II).

With this in mind, Canada's food animal industry proposes that steps be taken to:

- Position the Strategy as a new, '6th pillar' within APF-II, built upon a balanced, multi-jurisdictional and multi-stakeholder, systems-based approach to animal health;
- Implement the Strategy as part of a broader National Animal Health Strategy;
- Ensure industry involvement from the outset in strategy and program development, and in many cases program delivery;
- Clarify roles and expectations;
- Ensure a shift from short term project based funding and initiatives to longer term program based initiatives;
- Build on or expand upon the current 'animal health systems,' avoiding duplication while at the same time addressing the broader range of needs;
- Consider joint industry / government partnerships, as the vehicle of first choice for future delivery programs, to provide for cost effective and consistent program delivery.

Key Elements

Some key elements relative to a National Farmed Animal Health Strategy include:

- Prevention
 - Emergency prevention and preparedness are as important as emergency response and recovery, and are legitimate ongoing investments
 - The competitiveness of the agri-food sector depends upon timely and effective policies and processes for regulated products for the agri-food industry
 - Effective alternatives to mandatory programs must be considered, such as voluntary & market driven;
 - Ensure that standards applied domestically are applied on imports

- Prepare
 - Review and upgrade critical infrastructure to meet current and future needs
 - Industry and government must enhance Canada's influence on international standards and agreements
 - Economic risk is a legitimate concern, and needs to be addressed concurrently with animal and public health risk assessments
 - Effective 'Animal Health Systems' must address a broad range of activities and needs – e.g. emerging issues, production limiting diseases, etc. – extending beyond the realm of programs defined by emergency management (plan, prepare, respond, recover), Health of Animals Act (regulated diseases) and food safety.

- Response
 - Mass depopulation and the resulting need for mass carcass disposal are necessary tools at present; a reality that requires active recognition and preparedness together with support for development of alternatives
 - Effective emergency response is critical, and requires demonstrable capabilities and capacities within both industry and government

- Recovery
 - Recovery from a major disease outbreak that involves a market collapse will impact the Canadian economy and does require a broad range of financial management tools, including a specific disaster relief program addressing direct and indirect impacts throughout the industry.

Finally, there has been a trend in recent years towards industry / government partnerships in developing, implementing and delivering recent or current animal health programs. We expect this trend to continue but effort is needed to ensure that these partnerships are established in a sustainable and congruent manner.

Components of a National Farmed Animal Health Strategy

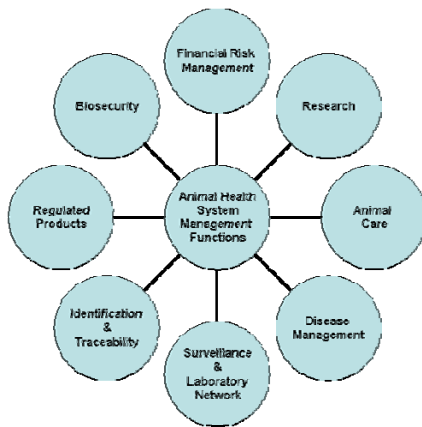
A range of program components and functional components are involved in a National Farmed Animal Health Strategy.

Program components should be viewed as

- complementary and synergistic pieces of a large puzzle – a puzzle that is in fact the NFAHS.
- tools of a larger strategy – or in some cases strategies, since some tools support a range of strategies such as animal health, public health, food safety and trade development.

A 'spoke and hub' model is used to describe the relationship of programs in the NFAHS.

- The 'hub' consisting of animal health management functions.



- The 'spokes' comprising or addressing the programs of a NFAHS include:
 - Financial Risk Management
 - Research
 - Animal Care
 - Disease Management
 - Surveillance & Laboratory Network
 - Identification & Traceability
 - Regulated Products
 - Biosecurity

Within the 'hub' of the 'spoke and hub' model described above, are the functional components required to manage the animal health strategy. These include the following components, with industry involvement in each:

- governance
- decision making
- communications & awareness
- regulatory renewal
- management of human and capital resources
- international standards, guidelines and negotiations.

Each of the above requires clear parameters defining the involvement of partners in both levels of government and in industry.

Each 'spoke' consists of a major programming area, and may itself have several components. While not 'cast in stone' these programs include:

- Financial Risk Management
 - A suite of defined programs -- that provides producers with adequate financial protection against impacts arising from animal health risks, e.g.

disaster and market collapse funding, business interruption and recovery, and the Health of Animals Act.

- Research
 - Research aimed at supporting diagnostics, improving surveillance through more accurate and less expensive tests, improving knowledge of diseases, and supplying science based support to activities related to the farmed animal health strategy.
- Animal Care
 - Initiatives predicated on the premise that good care in the Canadian context fosters healthy and productive animals, rather than premises derived from international or animal rights / activists perspectives.
- Disease Management
 - New and existing programming addressing all aspects of the 'prevent / prepare / respond / recover' model, with an increased emphasis on new approaches to prevention including awareness
 - A contagious animal disease preparedness plan, moving beyond the current FADES Agreements and involving both levels of government and industry
 - Including the capacity and capability for zoning (e.g. West Hawk Lake initiative), regionalization, and compartmentalization (e.g. corporate model being developed in the poultry sector) in accordance with OIE guidelines, as are already implemented by some competitors and requested by some trading partners
- Surveillance & Laboratory Network
 - A federal, provincial and academic laboratory network
 - Ongoing monitoring of existing and emerging risks and issues
- Identification & Traceability (ID & T)
 - New programs that adequately support each of the ID&T core principles (premises ID, animal ID and animal movement)
 - Develop effective policies, procedures and plans which will allow Canada the ability to contain animal diseases in order to maximize animal health and ensure market access.
- Regulated products
 - With programs addressing the following issues: Product (drug & vaccine) availability; Regulatory approval processes; Harmonization of policies (Canada / US); Revision of current policies, e.g. Own Use Importation (OUI), Minor Use / Minor Species (MUMS); Pricing in the NA market
- Biosecurity
 - A whole of industry approach addressing common objectives in a market neutral manner, and providing for sector- or regional- specific means of achieving those objectives

Concluding Remarks

The support demonstrated by industry leaders in preparing this statement and by government leaders in acting on it is ultimately what will drive further development and eventual implementation of the Strategy.