



CANADIAN VETERINARY  
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Speaking notes submitted by Dr. Duane Landals  
on behalf of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA)  
To the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health  
On its study of Antimicrobial Resistance  
November 9, 2017

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Une profession, une seule voix.**

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Speaking Notes: Dr. Duane Landals

*Representing the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA)*

Mr. Chairman and Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee, representing the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association.

I am a member of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association's Veterinary Pharmaceutical Stewardship Advisory Group and Chair of the multi-sector Antimicrobial Surveillance Expert Advisory Group, led by the association. I am a past president of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, as well as the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association. I was the Vice President of the World Veterinary Association for two terms. I am also a veterinarian who has owned and managed a rural, mixed animal veterinary practice for 35 years in Alberta. During my working career, I worked for 25 years as a veterinary clinical practitioner and served for 14 years as Registrar for the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association, the professional regulatory organization responsible for the practice of veterinary medicine in Alberta, under provincial statute.

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association provides a national and international forum for over 7,200 veterinarians working in all of Canada's provinces and territories as private general and specialist practitioners, researchers, educators and public servants. In addition, the association counts 7,300 veterinary technicians and technologists as affiliate members. Veterinary practitioners provide services to owners of pets, livestock and other animals. In addition to their contributions to public health and food safety; healthy and humanely raised animals are vital to Canada's reputation as a producer and exporter of billions of dollars of animals and products of animal origin.

Veterinarians provide unique expertise on the health and welfare of all types of animals. We have:

- specific expertise in animal health and disease
- knowledge and understanding of the biology of domesticated and wild animals
- practical experience and understanding of the care and management of animals
- practical experience in the recognition of the signs of suffering in animals

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association strongly supports the responsible use of antimicrobials by the veterinary profession to protect both animal and human health and welfare.

Veterinarians are best positioned to assess the benefits and risks of antimicrobial use in animals, and *have a professional responsibility* to explain to their clients the importance of judicious use of antimicrobials. To conserve the efficacy of antimicrobial drugs, veterinarians strive to achieve a balance between maximizing animal health and welfare and minimizing *antimicrobial resistance*.

For over 20 years, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association has been an advocate for federal regulatory and policy changes to enhance the responsible use of antimicrobial drugs. In this regard, the association participates in national organizations such as the National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Council and Antimicrobial Stewardship Canada (AMS Canada) who have developed antimicrobial resistance/antimicrobial use strategies.

On an international scale, the association is part of the Government of Canada's delegation to the OIE, (World Organisation for Animal Health). Both the OIE and the World Health Organization have stressed the importance of raising awareness of the health risks posed by antibiotic resistance and to promote good practice in this area of concern, to limit the emergence and spread of resistant bacteria throughout the world. The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association has also written joint positions on *Responsible and Judicious Use of Antimicrobials* with the American Veterinary Medical Association and Federation of Veterinarians of Europe.

As you may be aware, International One Health Day was held on November 3 and the 2017 World Antibiotic Awareness Week runs from November 13 to 19. The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association promotes these two events as they showcase a One Health approach, that is, an approach to medicine that recognizes that the health of humans, animals and the environment are inextricably linked. Veterinarians and registered veterinary technicians/technologists play a key role in improving the health and welfare of the animals they treat in a manner that supports One Health.

The One Health approach is particularly relevant to the development of collaborative strategies for responsible antimicrobial use and thereby supports the control of antimicrobial resistance.

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association recognizes antimicrobial resistance as a growing threat in Canada and around the world. It is crucial that public health, veterinary, agricultural, and regulatory communities work together to minimize the emergence and continued spread of antimicrobial resistance.

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association works with international and national partners to urge action on:

- Eliminating unnecessary antimicrobial use and improving stewardship in humans and animals
- Improving surveillance of antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobial use
- Preventing and controlling the spread of all infections, including those that are drug-resistant, and
- Stimulating research and innovation

During 2017, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association has facilitated a workshop to begin the foundational work to build a national system of surveillance of antimicrobial use in animals by the veterinary community. Funded by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, with in-kind support from association members, key partners in animal and human health, including the

involvement of producer groups, gathered to develop a collective understanding of the existing state of antimicrobial use surveillance in the veterinary context, and to identify information gaps and requirements to design efficient and effective data/information gathering methods. The workshop, for which I was Chair, was the first phase of what is expected to be a multi-year project.

In a separate project funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association commenced the review and renewal of its Guidelines for the Prudent Use of Veterinary Antimicrobial Medications, first published in 2008. The project is updating and expanding its guidelines for prudent antimicrobial use across six veterinary sectors (swine, poultry, beef, dairy, small ruminants and companion animals) and will pilot a prototype tool set to review effectiveness and guide further improvements. Participants in the initial workshop in May 2017 included Canadian veterinarians, veterinary researchers and educators, and government officials. In a separate project, on behalf of the association, I am developing preliminary guidelines for veterinary care of bees and will present this to the Canadian Council of Veterinary Registrars.

As you are all aware, the Government of Canada, through Health Canada, released a document titled *Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance and Antimicrobial Use: A Pan-Canadian Framework for Action*. Held up as an example of leading guidance on antimicrobial stewardship was the document *Veterinary Oversight of Antimicrobial Use — A Pan-Canadian Framework for Professional Standards for Veterinarians*, developed during 2016 as a collaboration between the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association and the Canadian Council of Veterinary Registrars. The Veterinary Oversight Framework represents a significant step by the veterinary profession in Canada towards addressing the veterinary responsibilities for oversight of antimicrobials to accompany current and ongoing changes to federal policies and regulations.

Taken together the above initiatives of which the association is a part will support and guide the evolution of veterinary oversight of antimicrobial use in Canada over the next several years.

The Canadian Animal Health Products Regulatory Advisory Committee of which the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association is member along with participants from the drug industry, food producers, feed producers, Health Canada, and Canadian Food Inspection Agency is currently assessing the planned implementation and potential impacts of Health Canada's moving all medically important antimicrobials to the Prescription Drug List by December 2018.

This committee recognizes the importance of collaboration and helping to develop plans around consistent communication regarding the transition, engagement of stakeholders, and implementation of key timelines. As part of a communications strategy developed by this committee, the Veterinary Drugs Directorate of Health Canada agreed to develop a Web "Landing Page" allowing for up to date time-lines and consistent messaging across multiple sectors. The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association will update veterinarians across Canada on information with regards next steps and associated timelines for the upcoming changes.

Through a One Health approach, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association will continue to help Canada's commitment to responding to the threat of antimicrobial resistance as described in the Federal Action Plan, Antimicrobial Resistance and Use in Canada: Building on the Federal Framework for Action. The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association looks forward to continuing its collaboration with various stakeholders to develop concrete ways to reduce the use of antimicrobials through prudent use, bringing to the table our knowledge, skills and experience as veterinarians.

We are encouraged by the interest of the Canadian government and this Committee regarding this very important issue. The CVMA believes it is necessary for the federal government to provide leadership and support as we move forward, in areas that include:

- >partnering with stakeholders in improving antimicrobial stewardship, including potential funding
- >coordination with and among stakeholders
- >coordination among and between provinces and territories
- >coordination with international initiatives
- >coordination and investment in pertinent research and innovation

My sincere thanks for you taking the time to allow me to submit to your committee.