

May 23, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

The Honorable Robert E. Lighthizer
United States Trade Representative
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Mr. Secretary and Mr. Ambassador:

The undersigned associations acknowledge and support the work the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) have done to highlight and address unfair international trade practices. The United States has an established science-based risk assessment approach for protecting animal health and welfare and public health through the prevention, treatment, and control of disease. We urge you to continue placing a high priority on combating trade barriers not based on science that inhibit access to modern medicines and technologies for U.S. veterinarians, farmers, and ranchers. These trade barriers hurt U.S. exports, risk animal and crop health, and limit the availability of safe and effective tools needed to provide the world with an abundant supply of food.

The European Union (EU) recently passed into law the concept of “reciprocity” to unjustifiably restrict the use of antimicrobials in food animal production exported to the EU¹, and is in the process of crafting regulations to bring the new law into effect. Unless modified through this implementation stage, this provision will effectively impose EU hazard-based antibiotic use measures on meat, milk, egg, and fish producers in countries that export to the EU, including the U.S. The impact will be severe, as veterinarians in countries wanting to export to the EU will lose their capacity to determine the best options available to prevent, control, and treat animal disease, including options vetted by the science-based risk assessment process for global food safety standards established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex). This may result in negative consequences for food safety, public health, and animal health and welfare.

The new EU law is part of a disturbing trend. The EU is also in the process of imposing new hazard-based restrictions on pesticide use that could affect billions of dollars of U.S. exports.

We ask the U.S. to remain vigilant in defending against such policies in all forums, including international trade negotiations, the World Trade Organization (WTO), Codex, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Thank you for your continuing work to combat unfair trade practices, for defending science-based risk assessment standards, and for your attention to this important issue.

¹ REGULATION (EU) 2019/6 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on veterinary medicinal products, Article 118.

Sincerely,

American Farm Bureau Federation

American Feed Industry Association

American Sheep Industry Association

American Veterinary Medical Association

Animal Health Institute

CropLife America

National Aquaculture Association

National Association of State Departments of Agriculture

National Cattlemen's Beef Association

National Chicken Council

National Milk Producers Federation

National Pork Producers Council

National Renderers Association

National Turkey Federation

North American Meat Institute

Pet Food Institute

U.S. Hide, Skin and Leather Association

U.S. Dairy Export Council

U.S. Meat Export Federation

CC:

The Honorable Ted McKinney, USDA Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs

The Honorable Gregg Doud, USTR Chief Agricultural Negotiator