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Standing Committee on Health
Sixth Floor, 131 Queen Street
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

February 9, 2026

Re: Input for study on antimicrobial resistance

Dear Members of the Standing Committee on Health,

On behalf of the National Cattle Feeders' Association (NCFA), thank you for the opportunity to provide input into your study on antimicrobial resistance. NCFA represents cattle feeders across Canada and advocates for policies that support animal health and welfare, food safety, and the long-term sustainability of the Canadian beef sector.

As the Committee examines the drivers of antimicrobial use and resistance in Canada, it is important that the role of cattle feedlots is accurately understood and appropriately reflected in your analysis and recommendations. Canadian feedlots operate within a robust regulatory and stewardship framework and are subject to oversight by Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Medically important antimicrobials are available by prescription only and are used under veterinary oversight through established veterinary-client-patient relationships, supported by record-keeping requirements and mandatory withdrawal periods to protect public health.

Feedlots provide a highly controlled environment that enables close monitoring of cattle health, early disease detection, and targeted treatment when animals become ill. This structure supports responsible antimicrobial use by ensuring treatments are timely, precise, and based on veterinary guidance. Prompt treatment of sick animals is essential to maintaining animal welfare and reducing the spread of disease within a population, and should not be characterized as routine or indiscriminate antimicrobial use.

Canadian cattle feeders have made significant investments in prevention-focused practices that reduce reliance on antimicrobials. These include comprehensive vaccination programs, optimized nutrition, enhanced biosecurity measures, facility design that minimizes stress and disease transmission, and the adoption of low-stress cattle handling practices. Together, these measures align closely with Canada's One Health approach by addressing antimicrobial resistance through integrated human, animal, and animal-health-focused strategies.

Several challenges facing the cattle feeding sector relate to the development of, and access to, new antimicrobial products intended for livestock production. There is an opportunity for government to support targeted research in this area to broaden the range of antimicrobials available, while also informing optimal antimicrobial stewardship and animal welfare outcomes.

The Canadian livestock sector would also benefit from more efficient approval processes for veterinary products, including timely assessment and review of new products and greater recognition of approval decisions from trusted international jurisdictions. Compared to some countries, Canada is a relatively small market for large-animal veterinary products, and as a result, some manufacturers may be reluctant to pursue lengthy and costly registration processes for products with potentially limited return on investment.

As the Committee considers policy responses to antimicrobial resistance, NCFA encourages the adoption of science-based, risk-proportionate approaches that recognize both the progress made and the practical realities of animal agriculture. Policies that unnecessarily restrict access to essential animal health tools risk unintended consequences, including compromised animal welfare, increased disease incidence, and potentially leading to greater antimicrobial use over time.

NCFA believes that Canadian feedlots are an important part of the solution to antimicrobial resistance and should be recognized as active partners in antimicrobial stewardship. Continued collaboration among policymakers, regulators, veterinarians, producers, and researchers will be critical to ensuring effective, balanced, and sustainable outcomes.

Thank you for your consideration of these perspectives. NCFA would welcome the opportunity to continue engaging with the Committee as your study progresses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Deleeuw", is positioned above the typed name and title.

Brad Deleeuw
Chair, National Cattle Feeders' Association