Department of Primary Industries

IM13/2533

Senator Scott Ryan
Email: fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Ryan

I refer to your letter of 6 December 2012 concerning the inquiry into the progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the 1999 Joint Expert Technical Advisory Committee on Antibiotic Resistance (JETACAR). The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP, Minister for Primary Industries, has asked me to respond to you on her behalf.

In the interests of NSW DPI and stakeholders the following points should be noted:

1. Both human health and animal health stand to benefit from the JETACAR reforms. There may be costs in the short term. However, in the long term the approach should help avoid or delay major human health and major animal health crisis.

2. The potential economic benefit of the JETACAR reform process to the animal industries has been understated. Australia is in a strong position to demonstrate to trading partners its strong credentials in antimicrobial resistance. This has particular relevance to the multi-billion dollar trade in meat products. A barrier to achieving this advantage is the shortage of objective surveillance information of the type recommended by JETACAR.

3. Since JETACAR recommendations were handed down, there have been major human health incidents abroad that underscore the need for better medical use of antimicrobials. Other incidents have emphasised the importance of more firmly managing antimicrobial use in animals.

NSW DPI also makes the following points in responding to the call from the senate finance and public administration references committee:

1. NSW DPI is in support of the correct implementation of the JETACAR recommendations. NSW DPI has a strong record of historical support and interest in the issue.

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2. It should be made clear that antimicrobial resistance is an issue across a range of portfolios and a whole-of-government position should be developed.

3. All parties should appreciate that the issues are technical and complex. There is no simple solution to the problem of antimicrobial resistance.

4. A comparison of implementation of JETACAR with the equivalent program in Canada is worth noting. The Canadian Integrated Program for Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance (CIPARS) evolved from a review by the Canadian Government similar in nature to JETACAR. The Canadian review was in fact subsequent to and inspired by JETACAR. In contrast to the JETACAR implementation, the Canadian response was well funded, well resourced, and well managed by an identifiable team of professionals having a strong over-arching (truly integrated) understanding of antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobial use in animals, food and man. As a result, the Canadians have produced good quality surveillance that has provided critically important intelligence used to improve both human and animal health. For details see: http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cipars-picra/pubs-eng.php.

5. NSW DPI would like to nominate Dr David Jordan, Principal Research Scientist with Biosecurity NSW as a contact for any future enquiries on JETACAR. Dr Jordan can be contacted on david.jordan@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely

Dr Satendra Kumar
Acting Executive Director Biosecurity NSW

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