



*Statement from Canada's
Chief Veterinary Officer*

For immediate release

Council of Canadian Academies report on animal health risk assessment

OTTAWA, Sept. 22, 2011: On behalf of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), I would like to thank the Council of Canadian Academies for their report on animal health risk assessment in Canada, *Healthy Animals, Healthy Canada*.

This timely and comprehensive report affirms Canada's approach to animal health risk assessment and validates the investments we have been making in this area since 2009, when the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food requested this review.

We value the Council's expertise and insight, and will review the report in detail in order to further inform our continued efforts to improve the transparency of our processes, and to expand the scope of our analysis of consequences with our partners and stakeholders.

The report concludes that Canada's animal health risk assessment is built on a solid foundation of knowledge and experience and that the CFIA's risk analysis framework is consistent with established international guidelines.

The report also notes that an integrated, multi-dimensional approach that considers potential human, animal and environmental consequences would provide increased value to decision makers and stakeholders.

Canada is viewed as a global leader in multi-dimensional "One Health" approaches to effective managing of the interface between animal, human and eco-system health as advocated by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Health Organization (WHO). As the report acknowledges, the CFIA's animal health risk assessment process already considers a range of potential consequences, including human, environmental and economic impacts.

The report also recognizes that the CFIA has been working with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) towards greater integration of animal and human health risk assessment.

We agree with the Council that it is important to take further steps towards this integration to achieve a broader Government of Canada approach. We are continuing to invest in closer collaboration with PHAC through the working group on Canadian Integrated Risk Assessment for Zoonoses. For example, we have conducted joint animal and human health risk assessments on pandemic H1N1 transmission from swine to domestic mammals, birds and humans, and on the risk of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza coming to Canada from endemic countries.

We will also continue to carry out assessments of potential environmental consequences associated with animal health hazards, as per our ongoing arrangement with Environment Canada.

Looking ahead, we agree with the Council that there is a need to create greater animal health risk assessment expertise in Canada. To that end, for the past three years we have been funding the Canadian Regulatory Veterinary Network with the University of Prince Edward Island to develop expanded epidemiology and risk assessment capacity.

We live in a globalized, rapidly changing world marked by environmental changes, and increased trade and travel. A specific, local animal health incident may have far-reaching consequences—not only for animals, but for people and for the eco-system.

In collaboration with our federal, provincial, territorial and international partners, we are working to further develop our ability to look at animal health risk assessment through this global, multi-dimensional, public policy lens.

Dr. Brian Evans
Chief Veterinary Officer

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