Coalition for Animal Health

February 7, 2013

The Honorable Joe Pitts
Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health
U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Pitts,

We are writing in support of timely action on the reauthorization of the Animal Drug User Fee Act (ADUFA). As a community of livestock producers, companion animal care providers, veterinarians and medicine manufacturers, we strongly urge your support of this critical legislation.

ADUFA is in its third generation of the program, and is modeled off of the Prescription Drug User Fee Act (PDUFA) and the Medical Device User Fee Act (MDUFA). ADUFA authorizes the FDA to collect fees from animal health companies to enable the Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) to meet performance standards. ADUFA has been critical in streamlining the regulatory process to get much needed products to market.

An effective and efficient animal drug approval process is essential, both to the health and well-being of animals and to overall public health. The long-recognized threats of zoonotic diseases, such as food borne bacteria that can cause illness in people, demonstrate that the need to protect public health by protecting animal health has never been more important. An efficient review process allows for the availability of new and innovative products to meet these challenges. It also encourages animal health companies to continue investing in the research and development of new products. Those investments, spread across research facilities in over 40 states, totaled approximately $690 million in 2010.

Healthy animals are the foundation of a safe food supply and contribute to the safety of meat and milk for consumers. While livestock and poultry producers have adopted extensive systems and techniques to prevent animal disease outbreaks, medicines remain a vital tool in the health care management system. One of the chief goals of any production system is the protection of animal health in order to provide consumers with the safest possible product. Over the past several years, studies have demonstrated how maintaining animal health contributes to the safety of our food supply.

Animal medicines approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) also allow companion animals to live longer and healthier lives. Treatments for cancer and arthritis are examples of drugs that make our companion animals more comfortable as they grow older, providing owners additional years of enjoyment and companionship. As people live in closer proximity to their companion animals, the availability of medicines to keep animals healthy is important to keeping humans healthy.
CVM and the animal health industry have agreed on a reauthorization proposal that provides an estimated $118 million in fees over the next five years and specifies timelines and improvements to ensure timely decisions on an animal medicine submission. Providing an effective array of medicines takes not only research and development, but a rigorous and timely regulatory review process.

The animal drug review process at the FDA is a stringent, science-based process that protects public health by making safe and effective animal health products available on a timely basis. The additional resources provided by this legislation will strengthen the agency and enhance CVM’s ability to meet its public health and animal health mandates.


Sincerely,

American Association of Avian Pathologists
American Association of Bovine Practitioners
American Association of Swine Veterinarians
American Dairy Science Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Meat Institute
American Pet Products Association
American Sheep Industry Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
Animal Health Institute
Biotechnology Industry Organization
Cat Fanciers’ Association
National Association of Federal Veterinarians
National Cattlemen’s Beef Association
National Chicken Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
National Grain and Feed Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Pork Producers Council
National Turkey Federation
North American Meat Association
Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council
The Animal Council
United Egg Producers
United States Animal Health Association
U.S. Poultry & Egg Association