



ASSOCIATION OF
PUBLIC &
LAND-GRANT
UNIVERSITIES



Association of American
Veterinary Medical Colleges

a joint project on **ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE IN PRODUCTION AGRICULTURE**

On behalf of the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, I want to thank Dr. Sally Rockey and the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research's Board Members for this opportunity to discuss the Task Force on Antibiotic Resistance in Production Agriculture—a first of its kind, joint initiative with the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities. The AAVMC-APLU Task Force, which harnesses the collective expertise, capacity and missions of our colleges and universities, was developed to ensure that agriculture and animal health are considered integral partners in the reduction and mitigation of antibiotic resistance.

We know that antibiotics have dramatically improved human, animal and plant health—enabling millions of people to live longer and productive lives, significantly reducing morbidity and mortality in our animal populations and even improving gains in animal productivity. However, antibiotics themselves have led to the development of antibiotic resistance, a key problem threatening the sustainability of current practices in production agriculture.

Antibiotic resistance exemplifies the type of problem that Congress tasked the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research with solving—a nationally and internationally significant issue requiring collaborative, cutting edge research and development, innovative public-private partnerships and an issue that allows the Foundation to complement and advance the research mission of the USDA. For nearly two decades, the USDA has been working to address antibiotic resistance. However, the agency has admitted that considerable work remains in this area. It is clear that current fiscal constraints have hampered the USDA's ability to implement their proposed initiatives to combat antibiotic resistance.

For too long, the role of production agriculture in antibiotic resistance has been a considered zero-sum game. The AAVMC-APLU Task Force, with its expertise in animal health and agriculture, challenges this historical notion and believes that enhanced farm animal productivity, resilience and health should be pursued concurrently with any action to combat antibiotic-resistant bacteria. In order to ensure that antibiotic resistance is addressed in a way which also enhances animal health and welfare, the joint AAVMC-APLU Task Force on Antibiotic Resistance in Production Agriculture has developed a series of education, outreach and research recommendations. The Task Force will work to form a national consortium of experts, hold ongoing educational workshops, develop pilot projects focused on combating antibiotic resistance and create a University Research Organization to facilitate collaborative research and educational initiatives.

Of course tackling a problem with such far-reaching impacts on food and agriculture is going to take a collective effort. The AAVMC and APLU have accepted the responsibility and challenge to be an integral partner in the future reduction and mitigation of antibiotic resistance. We believe that the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research is well positioned to serve as the catalyst in the fight against antibiotic resistance—a fight that will complement and advance the research mission of the USDA by fostering collaboration among farmers, foundations, scientific societies, research organizations, public and private companies and government agencies.