



## Governmental Relations

On behalf of the American Veterinary Medical Association, I want to thank Dr. Sally Rockey and the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research Board of Directors for this opportunity to comment on the initial seven priority target areas for the Foundation.

I am Gina Luke, assistant director of governmental relations at the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). The AVMA, founded in 1863, is one of the oldest and largest veterinary medical organizations in the world, with more than 86,500 member veterinarians worldwide engaged in a wide variety of professional activities and dedicated to the art and science of veterinary medicine.

The AVMA urges the Foundation to include in its target areas research on animal diseases and vaccine development for major diseases affecting livestock including beef and dairy cattle, swine, poultry, small ruminants, aquaculture as well as horses working on farms and ranches.

Infectious diseases continue to be a major cause of economic losses to the food animal industry, both directly by affecting the health and productivity of animals, and indirectly by affecting food safety and causing trade restrictions.

We need to gain a better understanding of the immune system and defense mechanisms in the intestine of livestock species. This is necessary to develop new and more effective vaccines.

Some infectious agents derived from animals and animal products can also cause disease in human beings. Emergent and resurgent zoonotic diseases are among the most important infectious disease threats facing public and animal health. Prevention and control of infectious diseases is important to maintain the safety and security of the nation's food supply.

Vaccines against several livestock diseases of economic significance are lacking, too costly or only partially effective. Vaccines are the most cost-effective intervention against infectious diseases and become even more important as concerns about antimicrobial resistance increase.

Livestock vaccine research goes underfunded even though we live in a global society where the transport of people and animals by the thousands happens every single day. New infectious diseases continue to emerge or spread from other parts of the world facilitated by increasing transport between countries.

The AVMA urges FFAR to support basic research into these areas as well as applied research into vaccine development. There is increasing concern about antimicrobial resistance in the human and veterinary medical community. More research is needed to understand and prevent the spread of antimicrobial resistance genes and to identify new targets for the development of novel classes of antimicrobials.

Again, on behalf of the AVMA thank you for this opportunity to provide input into the Foundation's target areas.