

Dear Member of Parliament/Provincial Legislature Member,

Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria mutate or acquire resistance genes, rendering antibiotics used to treat infections ineffective. Antibiotic resistance increases the likelihood of treatment failure, longer hospital stays, increased mortality, and higher health care costs.

According to the World Health Organization, antibiotic resistance “compromises health security, and damages trade and economies.” Experts warn that we are entering a post-antibiotic era where, as in the time before the discovery of antibiotics, previously manageable infections can once again kill.

Antibiotics are given to farm animals for three reasons: to treat infections, to reduce the risk of infections and to promote growth. The routine sub-therapeutic use of antibiotics to prevent infections, also known as *prophylactic use*, and the use of antibiotics as growth promoters both contribute greatly to the emergence and spread of antibiotic resistance bacteria.

***The Canadian Medical Association recommends that a prescription from a veterinarian be required for all antibiotics used in the raising of farm animals or for any agricultural purpose.***

To preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics, considered crucial to both human and veterinary medicine, the non-therapeutic use of antibiotics in animal feed should be banned. The call for mandatory veterinary prescriptions for all agricultural use of antibiotics needs your support. Currently, only Quebec requires veterinary oversight of antibiotics given to farm animals. Efforts should also be made to address the problem of antibiotics being imported under the so-called “own use importation loophole” and the continued extra-label use of antibiotics as growth promoters. All agricultural use of antibiotics should be carefully tracked and monitored.

Federal and provincial regulations stipulate which antibiotics can be used in animals. These regulations restrict the use of first-line human antibiotics for animal medicine, but this approach is too limited as many of the antibiotics used in animals are closely related to those used in humans. **A veterinary prescription-only standard of access to antibiotics for animals should be instituted. All provinces should require a veterinary prescription and/or supervision for all antibiotics used on farms.**

As a concerned health care professional working in the field of Infection Prevention and Control I am asking both my federal and provincial governments to act by amending legislation to prohibit the unregulated use of antibiotics in animal husbandry.

Sincerely,

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(Your name and Position)