

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION

David Kirkpatrick

Phone: 847-285-6782

Cell: 847-409-0519

Email: dkirkpatrick@avma.org

AVMA responds to court ruling on use of antibiotics in food production

(SCHAUMBURG, Illinois) March 28, 2012 – The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) reaffirmed its support of the responsible use of antibiotics in food animals after a federal court ruling demanded that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) start proceedings to withdraw approval of certain uses of antibiotics used in food production.

United States Magistrate Judge Theodore H. Katz ruled March 22 that the FDA must start proceedings to withdraw approval of what the FDA currently refers to as “production uses” of penicillins and tetracyclines in food-producing animals. As part of the withdrawal process, manufacturers of the products can request hearings to allow them to provide scientific evidence that the production use of antimicrobial products does not pose a threat to public health.

“The AVMA acknowledges the growing concern regarding antimicrobial use and resistance in animals and people, and supports the judicious use of antimicrobials to maximize public and animal health benefits while minimizing risks,” said AVMA Chief Executive Officer Dr. Ron DeHaven. “The judicious use of antimicrobials plays a key role in preserving the health of our nation’s food animals and the safety of our nation’s food supply. Many agree that there is a need for greater veterinary oversight of antimicrobial use in food-producing animals, and the AVMA is currently working with the FDA to develop practical means to increase this veterinary oversight.”

DeHaven cautioned, however, that any decision to withdraw approval or ban any antimicrobial uses should be based on solid science and risk-based assessment, and not on anecdotal reports and speculation.

“It is crucial that safe and effective antimicrobials remain available for use in veterinary medicine to ensure the health and welfare of animals and, consequently, the health of humans,” DeHaven said. “The AVMA will continue to work closely with the FDA to formulate a sound, science-based strategy to deal with this complex issue.”

###

The AVMA, founded in 1863, is one of the oldest and largest veterinary medical organizations in the world, with more than 82,500 member veterinarians worldwide engaged in a wide variety of professional activities. For more information about the AVMA, visit www.avma.org.