Prince Mahidol Award Conference (PMAC) 2018

Parallel session 4.4

Title: Finding the win-win solutions for better health from a better food system

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The animal protein industry is committed to the production of safe and affordable food. In a world with growing demand for a wide range of animal proteins there’s no silver bullet to meet this growing demand and we will need large- and small-scale agriculture to nourish more than 9 billion people by 2050.

The presentation will discuss what leading large-scale production companies and governments can do to address the vulnerabilities created by antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and zoonotic diseases in the global food system and how companies can advocate for change across sectors. Within the context of creating win-win solutions for a global food system, the industry is advocating for national and international policy solutions that 1) recognize and enable agricultural innovations, and 2) strive to enable trade through proportionate and science-based risk management solutions.

To navigate a global food system, producers and processors of animal proteins must find scalable and sustainable ways to raise, transform, and distribute protein both locally and across borders. AMR and zoonotic diseases (e.g. Avian Influenza) represent vulnerabilities to realizing these goals.

Farmers and producers are doing critical work to protect animal and human health in this increasingly resource-constrained world and the effective integration of a wide range of scalable agricultural technologies into the global food system will be increasingly important. With access to new tools and approaches for animal husbandry, farmers will be prepared to adapt to changing climate, meet challenges of evolving animal diseases, and demonstrate the resilience necessary to deliver productivity gains to meet tomorrow’s food demand.

Key areas of innovation for animal producers are access to antibiotics and antimicrobial interventions. Antibiotics have been used for many years to prevent, treat and control animal diseases and to efficiently raise livestock for food. However, there is ongoing scientific debate whether the use of antibiotics in animals can adversely affect human health by increasing AMR.

While supporting antibiotic reductions, Cargill also advocates for the judicious therapeutic use of animal antibiotics to protect public health, food safety and animal well-being. Judicious use prevents sick animals from entering the food supply and ensures animals do not unnecessarily suffer from disease. To address the challenges of AMR, many in the industry support the *One Health* approach lead by the WHO and support a rigorous globally harmonized regulatory system that ensures drugs are safe and used responsibly. This engenders consumer trust.

Cargill is committed to reducing the use of human antibiotics in animals used in food production while we maintain our commitment to food safety and animal welfare. We promote transparency in antibiotic use and work with stakeholders and customers to develop metrics to measure use in our supply chains. We are also looking at alternative approaches to managing diseases in animals through the use of new antimicrobial strategies such as prebiotics, probiotics and managing gut health. These technologies show great promise to both complement existing antimicrobial technologies and in some cases replace them.

One of the most significant vulnerabilities to the global food system for animal protein products is the emergence and detection of a zoonotic disease. Detection and reporting of a disease in an exporting country can have dramatic and long-lasting impacts on the trade flows of animal products and in some cases negatively impact global food security.

It is well understood that the most important aspects related to the control of zoonotic diseases is the development of an adequate science-based risk management policies that respects transboundary regulations and are proportionate to the risk. The scope and compliance requirements of the importing countries risk management (RM) plan determine the relative impacts of these agricultural supply chains. Finding risk management solutions that adequately address containing zoonotic diseases without unnecessarily restricting the global food system continue to evolve and be refined.

Finding the right balance between adequately protecting public health and enabling trade requires proportionate and science-based RM solutions continue to be developed, tested and implemented. The best solutions can be found through dialogue in partnerships between governments, industry, and NGOs to develop long-term solutions. Increasingly we are seeing opportunities for the private sector to have a seat at the table through public-private partnerships and we are eager to be part of that dialogue.