



Council of Canadian Academies
Conseil des académies canadiennes

News Release

The Council of Canadian Academies Releases an Expert Panel Report
Healthy Animals, Healthy Canada

For Immediate Release

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Ottawa (September 22nd) – Increased global trade and migration, higher population densities, and climate change all affect the nature of risks associated with animal diseases and human health. The pace of these changes, the growing interconnectedness of so many risks and consequences, and the potential impact of mitigation strategies make the process of assessing and managing risks increasingly complex.

To better understand these evolving 21st century challenges, the Council of Canadian Academies brought together a group of 12 eminent experts to discuss how Canada can remain at the forefront of animal health risk assessment practices, therefore protecting the health of animals, people, the environment, and economy. Today, the Council released the Expert Panel's report, *Healthy Animals, Healthy Canada*. The report, sponsored by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), is an evidence-based, independent assessment of approaches to animal health risk assessment in Canada.

"The well-being of animals and humans and the environment in which we live are linked in many ways," said Dr. Alastair Cribb, Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Calgary and Chair of the Expert Panel. "These links have become very apparent over the last decade as countries around the world have experienced, for example, SARS, BSE and H1N1. After examining the evidence, the Panel determined that although animal health risk assessment in Canada is built on a solid foundation of knowledge and expertise, risk assessment practices can be enhanced by taking a more integrated approach."

The Panel also found that in order for Canada to stay at the forefront of animal health risk assessment there are numerous activities that can be improved such as: strengthening expertise and knowledge capacity; considering a broader range of consequences related to an animal health event; improving communication among risk assessors, managers and stakeholders; enhancing the transparency of the decision-making process; and setting aside resources for foresight assessments.

"CFIA should be commended for putting forward such an important question for assessment," said Elizabeth Dowdeswell, President and CEO of the Council of Canadian Academies. "We are confident that the Panel's report will provide the evidence needed to assist CFIA and other organizations as they consider the future of animal health risk assessment in Canada."

To access the Media Backgrounder please visit: www.scienceadvice.ca/en/animal-health.aspx.

For more information, or to download a free copy of the report in English or French, please visit www.scienceadvice.ca/en/animal-health.aspx.

About the Council of Canadian Academies

The Council of Canadian Academies is an independent, not-for-profit corporation that began operation in 2005. The Council supports evidence-based, expert assessments (studies) to inform public policy development in Canada. Assessments are conducted by independent, multidisciplinary panels of experts from across Canada and abroad. The Council's reports are published and made available to the public free of charge in English and French. For information please visit the Council's website at www.scienceadvice.ca.

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