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AnimalhealthEurope welcomes recognition of essential role of vaccination in prevention, control and eradication of animal diseases

Brussels, 22 January 2024; As the Belgian Presidency to the Council of the EU organises a Ministerial Conference on Animal Health this January, AnimalhealthEurope is pleased to see recognition of the essential role of biosecurity measures and vaccination as tools in the fight against animal diseases.

Commenting ahead of the conference to be held on 24 January, AnimalhealthEurope Secretary General Roxane Feller said:

“We welcome the aim of the conference in highlighting the importance of a preventive approach to animal health care, with a view to avoiding serious animal health and welfare issues and mass culls. With highly pathogenic avian influenza and African swine fever in the spotlight, we can only encourage such high-level exchange on the uptake of vaccines and other preventive methods where available to ensure better protection of animals when necessary.

And where vaccines for certain diseases are not yet available, our members continue to invest in research and development that will ultimately lead to the production of safe and effective vaccines. In the meantime, our members are investing in products that can help monitor and control the spread of animal diseases such as rapid diagnostics and biosecurity tools.”

Responsible treatment of disease in animals will always be necessary, but the animal medicines industry today is increasingly focused on disease prevention and animal resilience as well as smart monitoring and earlier diagnosis to facilitate better interventions to improve animal health. It is important that the continued innovation in and availability of a wide range of animal health products is not unduly limited by overly burdensome regulatory processes or purely political decision-making.

Protecting animals through vaccination prevents transmission and slows further spread. Working together, industry and authorities can respond rapidly to halt or slow transmission of existing and newly emerging diseases, such as Lumpy Skin Disease in cattle which was halted in south-east Europe just a few years ago, largely thanks to a regional vaccination programme.

Technological advances over the years have meant that one single vaccine injection can incorporate more than one disease or disease strain to provide combined protection against several strains of micro-organisms or several diseases. Use of modern technologies also make it easier to control and eradicate disease without having to slaughter healthy animals, by making it possible to differentiate vaccinated animals from infected animals.

Alongside vaccination, efficient biosecurity is an important measure to prevent animal disease, yet some simple biosecurity steps can be misunderstood by those casting a more critical eye over Europe’s farming sector. It is important to raise awareness on the many



benefits for animal welfare brought by biosecurity measures such as housing animals indoors.

With the support of policy makers, vets, farmers and all animal owners, should look to the future with prevention top of mind. Through continued access to the full range of tools available, such as vaccines, biosecurity measures, diagnostic tools, digital monitoring, etc. to protect our planet, and safeguard both its animal and human populations in a One Health manner for the next generations to come.

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Notes for editors:

AnimalhealthEurope represents 12 of Europe's leading manufacturers of animal medicines and 16 national associations in 19 countries, covering 90% of the European Market.

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