

February 6, 2025

Honorable Rachel Talbot Ross, Senate Chair
Honorable Bill Pluecker, House Chair
Maine Joint Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee
State House Station 100
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Chair Ross and Chair Pluecker:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on LD 113, which mandates that a label must be placed on a food or food product derived from aquaculture, livestock or poultry that received mRNA vaccine material. We respectfully oppose this measure.

The Animal Health Institute is the national trade association representing the companies that make the animal medicines, vaccines and parasiticides that keep animals and humans healthy. As one of the top tools for keeping animals healthy, vaccines help prevent the need for later treatment, which reduces animal suffering and losses. Vaccines are a safe, proven way to protect animals from diseases like rabies, parvovirus, and E. coli. In turn, this helps protect public health—fewer sick animals and disease outbreaks means a reduced chance of transmitting illnesses from animals to people.

Vaccines used for animals are regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Center for Veterinary Biologics (CVB), which assesses safety, efficacy and quality in all products. All commercial vaccines administered to animals undergo rigorous testing as part of the licensing process at USDA/CVB. The Center requires sponsors to provide data demonstrating the safety, effectiveness and quality of the product. Once products are on the market, USDA collects data on any adverse events associated with the vaccine.

There is no scientific study or evidence to suggest any short- or long-term negative consequences to humans or animals due to the inclusion of mRNA in platform vaccines, or any vaccine that is licensed by the USDA. USDA mandated withdrawal times of 21-60 days ensure that components in the vaccine have long left the body prior to the slaughter or milking of vaccinated animals. mRNA naturally breaks down in the body within this time period.

In the U.S., no animal vaccines using the same mRNA technology that is used in human vaccines have been licensed or are in use. However, animal vaccines using different types of RNA have been licensed, and it is anticipated that mRNA vaccines for animals will be developed. They represent a promising way to treat major viral disease that can cause sickness and death in flocks and herds. Information on the safety profile of currently licensed vaccines is publicly available. Additionally, the USDA continues to monitor the safety of vaccines through pharmacovigilance.

Impacting public perception by requiring labeling would be a setback for animal health and welfare. It would create a chilling effect for innovators finding new ways to prevent diseases in animals. Such

innovations are important for reducing the need for traditional antibiotics and safeguarding our food supply from viral diseases. Preventing disease rather than treating and mitigating disease saves resources and keeps animals healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mandy Hagan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mandy Hagan
Director, State Government Affairs