September 4, 2012

Dear Minnesota Dairy Producer:

Presently, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is evaluating whether the existing antibiotic and drug residue surveillance program of six classes of Beta Lactam drugs (penicillins) is in line with current animal health products used on the nation’s dairy farms. What this FDA evaluation will find is unknown. However, the findings are likely to generate new media attention and raise concerns among consumer groups - particularly with regard to any shortcomings or gaps the evaluation may identify in the current surveillance approach.

You have the ability to show your commitment to food safety in a simple and powerful way. By incorporating a few straightforward steps in your dairy’s management routine, you can greatly lower the chance of antibiotic residue in your milk. To help, we are sending all Minnesota dairy farmers a fact sheet and resource guide. We hope these materials can help by pointing out some common causes of residue problems and some simple steps you can take to minimize the chance of those problems on your farm.

Dealing effectively with the issue of antibiotic residue is vital to the long-term health of Minnesota’s dairy industry. That’s why I urge you to join other Minnesota dairy producers in setting a goal of zero tanker and meat tissue residue violations. Zero tanker and meat tissue violations should be the goal of everyone involved in the dairy industry, and by joining the effort, you send a clear signal to consumers and public officials. You will also have the support and backing of state organizations that serve dairy farmers, including the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, the University of Minnesota, processors and industry groups. We stand ready to provide information and assistance to help you achieve the zero-residue goal.

By demonstrating a commitment to zero residue, we position our dairy industry as a strong and proactive partner. Most important of all, we demonstrate that our farmers and processors can be counted on to deliver quality, safe food. Thank you for your efforts to make Minnesota milk the safest and most wholesome in the nation.

Sincerely,

David J. Frederickson
Commissioner