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COW SENSE CHRONICLE

JUNE 2016

VETERINARY FEED DIRECTIVE RULE WILL CHANGE USE OF FEED-GRADE ANTIBIOTICS

Greetings from Bozeman! Have you heard about the Veterinary Feed Directive rule for feed-grade antibiotics that goes into effect the end of this year? This month, I'll give a brief overview; also, be sure to check out the VFD Short Course schedule on page 3. The MSU Extension Beef Cattle Program will be conducting educational meetings throughout the state starting in late July.

Antibiotic use in livestock and humans continues to undergo greater scrutiny as antibiotic resistance evolves. Antibiotic resistance is a main reason for implementation of the new VFD rule. First, let me emphasize that this rule deals with antibiotics fed to animals, not injectable antibiotics. Secondly, not all antibiotics currently fed to animals are included in this rule. In the past, feed-grade antibiotics have been labeled for control, treatment, and prevention of disease, as well as growth promotion and feed efficiency. These last two will no longer be labeled uses of feed-grade antibiotics.

The FDA has published two "Guidance for Industry" proposals, #209 and #213. The first deals with the use of medically important antibiotics in food-producing animals, and the second recommends that drug companies voluntarily align their product use with GFI #209. "Medically important" refers to antibiotics that are used in both human and animal medicine.

Guidance #209 has two main proposals: 1. the use of medically important antibiotics in food-producing animals should be limited to those uses that are considered necessary for assuring animal health; and 2. the use of medically important antibiotics in food-producing animals should be limited to those uses that include veterinary oversight or consultation. Guidance #213 asks drug companies to voluntarily revise their product labels to remove growth promotion and feed efficiency claims and provides for moving over-the-counter products to prescription or veterinary feed directive (VFD) status.

As previously mentioned, medically important antibiotics are those used both in human and animal medicine. Because growth promotion and feed efficiency uses are not necessary to ensure animal health, they are going to be removed from the labels of medically important feed-grade antibiotics. Furthermore, use of medically important feed-grade antibiotics will require veterinary oversight, which is where the veterinary-client-patient relationship and the veterinary feed directive (VFD) comes in to play.

A veterinary-client-patient relationship is defined in the Code of Federal Regulations in three parts. First, the veterinarian has assumed responsibility for medical judgments about the animals and the client has agreed to follow the veterinarian’s instructions. Second, the veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the animal(s) to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal(s) and makes timely visits. And third, the veterinarian is available for follow-up in case of adverse reactions or treatment failure. If your operation uses medically important feed-grade antibiotics and a veterinarian hasn’t set foot on your operation in 20 years, it might be a good time to start building a relationship.

A VFD consists of paperwork for the drug in question which is filled out by a veterinarian and gives a description of the livestock to be treated, some instructions to the feed mill, and an expiration date (maximum 6 months). The feed mill must have the VFD before feed can be distributed, and the feed mill must notify the FDA. Electronic VFD forms are being developed to reduce the physical paperwork load. VFD records will need to be kept by the veterinarian, client, and feed mill or other sales point of the feed.

What will change for livestock producers and veterinarians as a result of these FDA Guidances? Growth promotion uses of antibiotics in feed will no longer be allowed (see examples in Table 1 below), and use of “medically important” feed antibiotics will need a VFD and can only be used for treatment, control, or prevention. Each state’s regulations or veterinary board will define what is a valid veterinary-client-patient relationship, and “medically important” water medications will move to prescription status. At this time, it looks like the Montana definition of a valid veterinary-client-patient relationship will be the federal definition described above.

Table 1. Classes of medically important antibiotics and feed-grade examples.

Class of Antibiotic	Feed-Grade Examples
Aminoglycosides	Neomycin, Streptomycin
Lincosamides	Lincomix®
Macrolides	Pulmotil®
Penicillins	Pnicillin, CSP
Streptogramins	Stafac®
Sulfonamides	Sulfamethazine, Aureomix®
Tetracyclines	Aureomycin®, CTC

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What won't change? Use of non-medically important drugs such as ionophores (Rumensin®, Bovatec®) and coccidiosis treatments (Corid®, Deccox®) will remain unchanged. The ability to use feed-grade antibiotics that are currently labeled for treatment, control, and prevention won't change, but will need a VFD. Injectable medication uses will remain the same, and extra-label uses of feed-grade medications is currently and will continue to be illegal. Feed mill operators will continue to supply feed medications and veterinarians should still be involved in medication decisions.

Check out the list of VFD Short Course host cities and dates below. All meetings will start at 1 pm, look for meeting locations in the July Cow Sense Chronicle or contact your local Extension agent to learn more about short course meetings in your area.

VFD SHORT COURSE HOST CITIES SUMMER 2016

KALISPELL	JULY 26
MILES CITY	AUGUST 3
BILLINGS	AUGUST 4
GLASGOW	AUGUST 9
HAYRE	AUGUST 10
LEWISTOWN	AUGUST 11
SIDNEY	AUGUST 16
BUTTE	AUGUST 24
MISSOULA	AUGUST 25