



Veterinary Notes

Are you ready for changes in animal antibiotic laws?

Carla L. Huston, DVM, PhD, ACVPM, Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine

Antibiotics are necessary to treat and control many diseases of cattle. Animal antibiotics are available as either over-the-counter (OTC), prescription (Rx), or through a veterinary feed directive (VFD). For prescriptions and VFD's, veterinarians are responsible for authorizing the proper medications, in a legal manner, only to those animals who truly need them. In turn, producers are responsible for the proper use and administration, according to drug label and documentation of all prescription and VFD medications used in their animals.

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates drugs, feeds, and devices used in livestock such as cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and poultry because they are used in animals that will enter the human food supply. It's that simple. You may recall in 2017 when OTC antibiotics used in animal feeds or water moved to veterinary feed directive (VFD) or prescription status as part of the FDA's 5-year plan to promote antibiotic stewardship. The goal of this plan is to only allow the use of medically important antimicrobials in animals when necessary for treatment, control and prevention of specific diseases. Under the next phase of this plan, the remaining antibiotics will shift from OTC to prescription only in June 2023.

What this means is that several antibiotics currently available to livestock owners as injectables, boluses, or intramammary tubes will no longer be available over-the-counter. Common OTC antibiotics which will require a prescription include oxytetracycline, penicillin G procaine and benzathine, sulfa-based drugs, cephalixin/cephapirin benzathine, tylosin, gentamicin, and lincomycin.

A full list of affected products can be found here: <https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/antimicrobial-resistance/list-approved-new-animal-drug-applications-affected-gfi-263>. While this change does not require the purchase of products from a veterinarian, going forward, producers will

be legally required to obtain a prescription from a licensed veterinarian with which the producer has a valid veterinary-client-patient relationship (VCPR).

As always, livestock producers will have to have a valid veterinary-client-patient relationship (VCPR) in order to purchase any prescription products. A valid VCPR is important for both veterinarians and livestock producers because it communicates a type of "agreement" between parties on the responsibility and care for the animals. A VCPR exists when all of the following conditions are met (Title 21, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 530 or 21 CFR 530):

- The veterinarian has assumed responsibility for making clinical judgments regarding the health of the animal/herd and the need for medical treatment AND the client has agreed to follow his/her directions.
- There is sufficient knowledge of the animal(s) by the veterinarian to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal(s).
- The veterinarian is readily available for follow-up in case of adverse reactions or failure of the regimen of therapy.
- Such a relationship can exist only when the veteri-



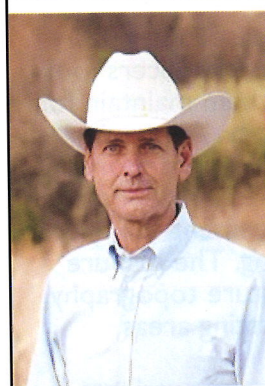
narian has recently seen and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal(s) by virtue of examination of the animal(s), and/or by medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal(s) are kept.

It is illegal for a veterinarian to dispense or write a prescription or VFD for an animal/herd they have not seen or are unfamiliar with. Furthermore, drugs used in food animals must be used according to their labelled directions, unless the veterinarian feels that an extra-label drug use (ELDU) is indicated. The FDA allows ELDU only under the context of an established VCPR, and only with products that are not prohibited for ELDU. Withdrawal times for any product used off-label as well as per label must be provided by the veterinarian. Extra-label use of any medicated feed off-label is strictly prohibited and has been for many years.

Now is the time to discuss the changing drug laws with your herd veterinarian and review medications that you currently use. Evaluate your herd health record-keeping practices since new rules will require additional recordkeeping and documentation. Most importantly, if you do not already have a good relationship with a trusted veterinarian, start seeking one out and establish that relationship now before an emergency occurs or they need access to drugs that are no longer available over the counter. This will help the veterinarian become acquainted with your individual management practices and the potential needs of your operation.

We enjoy one of the best and most affordable food supplies in the world thanks to the hard work of many – farmers, ranchers, veterinarians, processors, packers, distributors, government workers, and others. So when we eat, it is our responsibility as cattle

stand and follow the laws and be prepared to meet the new and changing standards set in the years to come. As always, consult your herd veterinarian or extension livestock specialist if you have questions on the upcoming changes in drug laws.



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