

# Top 8 Questions on Veterinary Feed Directive Answered

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FDA recently came out with industry guidelines that require changes to the use of feed medication in livestock. Here are the answers to some commonly asked questions about these changes...

## 1. What prompted the government to change the rules regarding antibiotic use in livestock? Why now?

A growing concern in the United States is bacterial resistance to antibiotics. As a result, the government is looking more seriously at the use of antibiotics across both human and animal medicine. There is no science that supports a link between antibiotic-use in livestock with antibiotic resistant bacterial infections in humans. Despite this fact, there is still interest in having increased direction for antibiotic use in livestock. Antibiotics are sometimes a necessary part of raising food animals. Without them animal welfare may be compromised and food safety may be put at risk. By regulating animal medicine more closely, the government can assure the public that farmers use antibiotics responsibly and do not pose a risk to human health.

## 2. What do these new rules accomplish?

There are two main goals for the new rules outlined by the FDA: First, is to discontinue the sub therapeutic (growth promotion) use of medically important antibiotics. Second is to increase Veterinary direction of therapeutic uses (prevention, control and treatment of disease) of medically important antibiotics.

### 3. Which medications are considered “medically important”?

The government has placed medications into categories based on their importance to human medicine. The only antibiotics considered not important are Bacitracin (BMD), Carbadox (Meccadox), Tiamulin (Denegard), Narasin (Skycis), Melengestrol Acetate (MGA), Monensin (Rumensin), Ractopamine (Paylean), and Bambermycin (Flavomycin).

Examples of drugs considered critically or highly important to humans include:

**Swine:** Avialamycin (Kavault), Chlortetracycline (Aureo), Lincomycin (Lincomix), Neomycin (Neo-Oxy 10/10), Oxytetracycline (Terramycin), Penicillin (ASP 250), Sulfamethazine (Aureo S 10/10), Tilmicosin (Pulmotil), Tylosin (Tylan) and the Virginiamycin (Stafac).

**Cattle:** Chlortetracycline (Aureo), Oxytetracycline (Terramycin), Tylosin (Tylan)

### 4. What do the changes mean for the average producer?

For the average producer there will be two big changes. The first is companies that produce feed medications will no longer sell those medications that are labeled only for growth promotion. All medically important antibiotics that are fed through the feed for growth promotion will go away. The second big change is for antibiotics to be used for prevention, control, or treatment of disease. For those antibiotics that are in the category of being important for human medicine, a Veterinary prescription or Veterinary Feed Directive (prescription for a feed antibiotic) will be required.

### 5. When do changes go into effect?

Changes regarding products labeled for feed efficiency/growth promotion are in effect now. Over the upcoming months, drug companies will be working towards removing the products with growth promotion labels. Companies have until December of 2016 to complete this task.

Changes regarding the need for prescriptions or Veterinary feed directives will go into place on January 1<sup>st</sup> of 2017. As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 all producers will need to work alongside a Veterinarian to medicate their livestock with antibiotics categorized as important to human medicine.

## **6. How will producers get prescriptions and Veterinary feed directives (VFDs) when these changes go into effect?**

VFDs and prescriptions can only be obtained through licensed Veterinarians. In order to write your prescription or VFD the Veterinarian will need to establish a Veterinary/ Client / Patient relationship (VCPR). This relationship includes three parts. First, the Veterinarian will assume responsibility for the clinical judgments about your herd's health. Second, they will establish sufficient knowledge of your herd by virtue to examination and/or visits to the facility. Third, they will provide any necessary follow-up evaluation or care of your livestock. Some states include other criteria as well. Please check with your Veterinarian to find out more about your specific state. A Veterinarian can only provide you with a prescription or VFD if they feel comfortable, they have established a Veterinary/ Client/ Patient relationship with you.

## **7. What can producers do to prepare for the upcoming changes?**

The best thing a producer can do to prepare for these changes is to form a VCPR. Call a Veterinarian and have them out to your herd. Help them understand your flow of livestock and any reoccurring disease issues you face. Start working with a Veterinarian long before January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. When you have sick livestock and need prescriptions or VFDs you will need to have a VCPR to obtain them. If you have a relationship with a Veterinarian already in place, you will get your prescriptions and VFDs faster. Faster medical intervention is always in the best interest of the animal.

**8. What is CFE doing to prepare for the changes?** At CFE we are working hard to improve our abilities to get prescriptions/VFDs to our locations in a timely manner. We are currently updating our prescription/VFD program as well as continuing to work with web based software programs to better assist us to be more effective and efficient. As Distributors, we are working to document and establish a VFD program to be equipped to assist our customers come January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

More government administration regarding antibiotic use in food animals is coming. These changes may increase the amount of work it takes to properly treat, control and prevent animal diseases, but the changes will not impede on our ability to provide a safe and healthy supply of animal food to the people of the United States and the world.

Please don't hesitate to contact us with questions or concerns regarding the upcoming changes. We look forward to serving you throughout this transition into 2017. For questions on this article or VFDs, contact Chris Lincecum (Feed Safety Director) [clincecum@coopfe.com](mailto:clincecum@coopfe.com) or Jack Kruse (VFD/Liquid Feed Manager) [jkruse@coopfe.com](mailto:jkruse@coopfe.com).