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 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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All Antibiotics for Livestock will soon Require a VFD

It has been a few years now since the VFD kicked in for antibiotics in feed. Now it will change more as Susan Himes, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension explains. This appeared in the Beef Blog this week.

Cattle, and all other livestock, will soon require a vet's prescription for injectable antibiotics. No longer will producers who need injectable antibiotics for their cattle be able to just grab them at their local feed store or order them online.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service wants producers to be aware that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is continuing the phasing in of a law that requires a prescription for any antibiotic use in animals raised for human consumption, as well as for all companion animals.

Prescriptions, livestock and your vet

A prescription is already required for most antibiotics delivered to livestock, and the remaining three categories of injectable antibiotics available over the counter will soon be joining the list of medically important antimicrobials that require a veterinarian's prescription.

"It will cause a little bit of difficulty because producers who want and need to use antibiotics are going to have to work with their beef cattle or livestock veterinarians and develop a veterinary client-patient relationship (VCPR) in advance of any disease issues," says Joe Paschal, AgriLife Extension livestock specialist, Corpus Christi.

Paschal recommends producers should, if they haven't already, develop a relationship with a local veterinarian to be prepared for these changes. People should also be aware that these laws apply to companion animals like horses.

"This means that your veterinarian knows who you are, knows the kind of livestock you are raising and what you are doing with them, understands your management, and that you agree if they come out to diagnose an illness and use an antimicrobial to treat a disease or illness, you will follow their directions, including dosage, duration and withdrawal," he says.

FDA rules and regulations

The FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine stated a two-year phase-in period would be allowed once the FDA Government Guidance document is finalized. A draft version is currently available online at <http://bit.ly/33Mq4Em>.

The FDA has had a law in place since 2017, which made most antibiotics administered to livestock by prescription only. These new guidelines further extend the need for veterinarian oversight by including the remaining injectable antibiotics.

"The amount of antibiotics used by agriculture has been dropping in recent years," says Thomas Hairgrove, veterinarian and AgriLife Extension specialist, College Station. "The producers I've spoken with don't seem concerned that these remaining injectables will now require a prescription too."

After a peak in 2015, FDA studies show antibiotic use has declined. In 2017 alone, use of medically important antibiotics dropped 33%.



Tylosin, penicillin and tetracyclines are among some of the more popular antibiotics still available over the counter as injectables — for now. In 2018, the FDA published a five-year plan for phasing out all antibiotics without a veterinarian’s prescription. The plan should be fully implemented by 2023, although compliance is expected as soon as 2020.

Practicing good biosecurity

“In the long run, practicing good biosecurity, correctly diagnosing illnesses and the proper prescription of the right antibiotic may help shorten the incident of the disease, improve the productivity or return of the health of the animal, and reduce overall antibiotic use in livestock, pets and in humans,” says Paschal.

Since some antibiotics are used in both livestock and humans, the FDA’s concern is that antibiotic-resistant bacteria could develop more quickly from the widespread use of certain antibiotics that are medically important to humans — negatively affecting both humans and animals.

“Antibiotic resistance is not new, penicillin was discovered in the late 1920s and widely used in humans by the 1940s,” said Paschal. “By 1950, the first case of resistance was discovered in humans. This is a step in the right direction to protect these valuable compounds to prevent diseases.”

The greater the use of antibiotics, across all species, the greater the number of antibiotic-resistant bacteria or “superbugs” that can develop.

“Although the percentage of antibiotics used in agriculture is declining, we want to continue to use them judiciously and intelligently,” says Hairgrove. “Data shows ag is responding in a positive way, and I think our industry is doing a heck of a job.”

Farm Bill Meeting Opportunities

As we move into December, I felt it was important to run these dates, times and locations again for the Farm Bill meetings. OSU Extension is providing education about the options that producers have to choose from. There will be several meetings throughout the state with some being during the day and some in the evening.

The following meetings are a reasonable driving distance for producers in Adams County:

December 2 at 7:00 p.m. at the OSU South Centers in Piketon

December 3 at 3:00 p.m. at the Ohio Valley Career and Technical Center in West Union

December 4 at 7:00 p.m. at the Scioto County Career and Technical Center in Lucasville

December 5 at 1:00 p.m. at the Hi-Tech Center in Hillsboro

December 12 at 6:00 p.m. at the 4-H Hall at the Clermont County Fairgrounds in Owensville

Pesticide Re-certification

As always there will be several Pesticide Re-certification opportunities for private applicators in Southern Ohio. The Adams County Re-certification will include Fertilizer and Pesticide on Thursday January 9 at Frisch’s in West Union. YOU MUST pre-register by calling Barbie at the OSU Extension

Office and there will be a fee of \$10 for Fertilizer only, and \$35 for Pesticide including Fertilizer. Call the office at 544-2339 or stop by at the Adams County Government Annex to register.

Other locations and dates in surrounding counties include:

OSU South Centers on December 19 beginning at 5:00 p.m. call 740-354-7879

Highland County Extension Office on Jan. 15, in Hillsboro starting at noon, call 393-1918

Brown County Fairgrounds on March 19 at 5:30 p.m., call 378-6716

Dates to Remember

Dec. 16 Pesticide and Fertilizer Certification Exams for Private and Commercial Applicators at the Old Y Restaurant at noon. In January we will go back to the normal exam dates on the second Monday of each month.