



Countryside Veterinary Clinic, LLP

October 2016 Newsletter

VFD's (*Veterinary Feed Directives*): What Are They? Do I Need One? How Do I Get One? Peter G. Ostrum, DVM

Because of the growing concern surrounding bacterial antibiotic resistance in the human population, the FDA is seeking to curtail the use of antibiotics fed to cattle. As a result, the guidelines for medicated feed will soon be changing. New FDA regulations, effective January 2017, will require producers to obtain prior authorization to use medicated feed from their veterinarian in the form of a written Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD). Compliance will be mandatory.

For a veterinarian to write a VFD for a livestock producer, a veterinary client patient relationship (VCPR) must exist. A valid VCPR has 3 components:

1. The farm veterinarian assumes responsibility for clinical judgements regarding the herd's overall health.
2. Timely visits to the farm are required to allow the veterinarian to gain sufficient knowledge of the herd to make appropriate clinical recommendations. It has generally been accepted that a yearly visit is acceptable to fulfill this criteria.
3. The veterinarian is available for follow up evaluations if needed.

Once the VFD is written, it must be submitted to the feed mill where the medicated feed will be mixed. The VFD will be very specific regarding which group of animals will receive the feed and for how long. Producers will be required to follow the labeled feed directions exactly as written.

Antibiotics that will be regulated through a VFD are only those antibiotics deemed medically important to human health. Currently, these include tetracyclines, sulfas, neomycin and tylocine. Antibiotics that will **not** require a VFD include ionophores (Rumensin and Bovatec), dewormers (Safe-Guard) and anti-coccidials such as amprolium (Corid). Furthermore, those antibiotics that are administered via injection, tablet, bolus or water are exempt from VFD regulations.

In our dairy practice there are really only 2 likely instances when antibiotics are fed for treatment purposes. The first is the use of oxytetracycline/neomycin medicated milk replacer for calf scours. The second is the common practice of feeding AS-700 (oxytet/sulfamethazine) or Aureomycin (chlortetracycline) to the weaning pens when young stock occasionally suffer respiratory disease.

If you are currently using a medicated milk replacer or are feeding an antibiotic such as AS-700, please inform your herd veterinarian. A VFD can be written, if truly needed, but a discussion regarding your animal's specific clinical situation needs to take place with your veterinarian first. Management plays a key role in the prevention of both calf scours and pneumonia to the point where blanket treatment with medicated feed may not be warranted.

No doubt you will be reading and hearing more about VFD's in the near future from your feed nutritionist and pharmaceutical representative. (Arlen Roggie) Zoetis has a very good web site that can provide more information if needed. www.zoetisus.com/responsible-antibiotic-use/vfd.aspx.

Please consult with your herd veterinarian regarding any questions that you may have regarding the new VFD regulations.



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