
New FDA Antibiotic Rules Apply to Youth Livestock Exhibitors

For 4-H youth livestock exhibitors, parents and project advisors, Jan. 1, 2017, will usher in major changes in accessing medicated feeds for project animals. That's when the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will implement new rules, known as Guidance 209, for antibiotic use in all animals raised for food.

Antibiotics identified as medically important (to human health) will no longer be available for growth promotion purposes, including for 4-H show animals.

The use and distribution of antibiotics in animal agriculture is changing and producers of all sizes need to begin preparing to adapt in the coming year. Focusing on the one-health concept of combating antibiotic resistance, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is working to ensure the judicious use of humanly medically important antibiotics. Changes include eliminating the growth promotion use of human medically important antibiotics and expanding the list of feed-grade antibiotics classified as Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) drugs. Historically, a majority of feed-grade antibiotics used in or on animal feeds have been available to producers over-the-counter, without approval from a veterinarian. By Jan. 1, 2017 the FDA will move all human medically important feed-grade antibiotics to the VFD drug process.

What does this mean for 4-H Youth exhibiting livestock?

Youth exhibitors and their families must work with a licensed veterinarian with whom they have an established veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR) in order to receive permission to order and use feed containing a VFD drug. The veterinarian's primary role is to advise and guide the producer (the client) in determining which medications are appropriate for their animals (the patients). This relationship must be established and recognized by the veterinarian prior to any VFD order being written. Feed distributors will require a valid VFD, provided by the veterinarian, prior to supplying customers with the regulated feed product. VFDs will need to be renewed every 6 months, based on renewal guidelines set by FDA.

Over-the-counter sales of medically important antibiotics administered in feed and water will end on or before January 1, 2017. Access to feed-grade antibiotics will require a veterinary feed directive (VFD) for a specific group of animals for a specific timeline as established by the herd veterinarian. Water medications will require a prescription.

Plan now for changes in feed purchases

4-H livestock exhibitors often have just a few animals and buy bagged feed from the local feed or farm supply store. With FDA's new rules, these stores may no longer carry feed that exhibitors are used to buying. Exhibitors will need to contact a veterinarian if they don't already have one and get a comprehensive health plan in place. This will include which antibiotics are needed to maintain good health along with other animal husbandry tools, such as biosecurity and vaccinations.

New record-keeping rules will be introduced

FDA's new rules will usher in new record-keeping requirements for producers, including youth with 4-H livestock projects. Veterinarians who issue VFDs will need to keep the original form for two years. Youth exhibitors/parents/advisors also will need to keep a printed or electronic copy for two years.

Feed mills or distributors also will be required to keep a copy on file for two years. Water prescriptions will need to be kept for one year. All of these records must be made available to FDA on request.

**For more information, contact Dan Jennings, University of Illinois Extension
Animal Science Educator, djjennin@illinois.edu, 815-395-5710**