

Four Steps to Prepare for On-farm VFD Implementation

Elanco offers tips to prepare for impending VFD implementation.

At the Cattle Industry Convention & NCBA Trade Show, Elanco provided information to help beef producers better understand and prepare to implement veterinary feed directive (VFD) regulations. The new rule established by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for managing antibiotic use in livestock will go into effect Jan. 1, 2017, which means now is the time for producers to update their herd-health plans. Elanco has developed informational resources about the VFD and suggests four steps farmers and ranchers can take to meet this deadline.

4. Mark your calendar to review SOPs at regular intervals, perhaps annually, to ensure your health protocols remain up-to-date and effective.

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“With just 11 months until the final VFD rule is in place, it’s important that every cattle operation start preparations so there are no surprises,” says Kerry Keffaber, veterinarian and advisor for scientific affairs and policy at Elanco. “Collaboration plays a critical role in implementing these updated regulations successfully. That is why working closely with your veterinarian and feed supplier is the first of four steps we recommend for good antibiotic stewardship.”

Four steps

Producers can get a start making sure their health and feeding programs reflect the new VFD rules with four key steps:

1. Strengthen relationships with your veterinarian and feed supplier, enlisting their help as you review your operation’s current health protocols.
2. Evaluate the various rations and feeds in your operation, and identify the ones that include shared-class antibiotics affected by VFD rules.
3. Work with your veterinarian and feed supplier to update standard operating procedures (SOPs) for antibiotic use, and begin training employees on the revised SOPs.

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way to ensure compliance while protecting animal health and food safety. In turn, this has the potential to encourage consumer confidence that antibiotics are being used judiciously when administered to animals.”

More about VFD regulations

In June 2015, the FDA published new VFD regulations to promote judicious use of antibiotics, protect public health and help limit the development of antimicrobial resistance. The rules provide direction for antibiotics deemed “important for human medicine” and used in both animals and humans: penicillins, cephalosporins, quinolones, fluoroquinolones, tetracyclines, macrolides, sulfas, glycopeptides and others.

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By next January, these shared-use antibiotics no longer will be used for growth promotion. Additionally, antibiotics approved to prevent, control or treat a disease can be used only under the oversight of a veterinarian. Easy-to-understand details about VFD requirements are available at VFD Central (feedstuffs.com/vfd.aspx), an online educational resource provided by Elanco and *Feedstuffs*.

Additional commitment to responsible antibiotic use

Elanco continues its commitment to the responsible use of antibiotics as outlined in its eight-step antibiotic stewardship plan, which was introduced at the White House Forum on Antibiotic Stewardship. This plan outlines the company’s blueprint for safeguarding animal and human health, along with a commitment to create 10 new alternatives for treating the most challenging animal diseases.

“When looking at how to use antibiotics responsibly, it’s important to consider all available science, knowing how vital it is to avoid creating regulations or policies that move faster than the science,” says Keffaber. “Policies eliminating all antibiotic use in animals aren’t right for animals or consumers, so we must work together for practical solutions that don’t put animals at risk.”

