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VFD Countdown, part 3

This month's column will focus more on the specifics of the Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD). A VFD is an order that allows the inclusion of certain medications into the feed of food animals. Fundamentally, a VFD is similar to a prescription but oversight is usually provided through the state department of agriculture via feed mill licensure rather than the state board of pharmacy. Additionally, extra label drug use is not allowed with VFD drugs compared to prescription drugs where the medical professional has some ability to adjust the dosage, duration, indication or species.

In October 2015 the FDA released new VFD regulations because the previous regulations were not designed for the widespread usage that we expect by moving most of the current feed grade antibiotics from over-the-counter to VFD status. Just like a prescription, a VFD is issued by your veterinarian. Federal regulations require that for a VFD to be valid it must be issued by a licensed veterinarian that has knowledge of the health and management of the animals. According to federal regulation there must be a valid Veterinarian-Client-Patient-Relationship (VCPR) prior to issuing a VFD.

The requirements of a VCPR are:

- 1) A veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making medical judgments regarding the health of (an) animal(s) and the need for medical treatment, and the client (the owner of the animal or animals or other caretaker) has agreed to follow the instructions of the veterinarian;
- 2) There is sufficient knowledge of the animal(s) by the veterinarian to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal(s); and
- 3) The practicing veterinarian is readily available for follow-up in case of adverse reactions or failure of the regimen of therapy. Such a relationship can exist only when the veterinarian has recently seen and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal(s) by virtue of examination of the animal(s), and/or by medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal(s) are kept.

Although regulations do not define "recently seen" it has been suggested that at least every 6 months would be appropriate.

The new FDA regulations allow the VFD to be transmitted electronically (fax or web based) instead of being issued in triplicate as a hard copy. However, telephone orders are not allowed, the VFD must be issued as a document even if it is transmitted electronically. Another important change in the VFD regulations is that it can be issued for an approximate number of animals instead of tons of feed. This change allows producers and nutritionists to supply the proper ration as long as dosage of antibiotic meets the label requirements.

The next article in this series will focus on some of the specific information needed in a valid VFD. If you have not attended a VFD informational meeting yet, ISU extension, Iowa Farm Bureau and the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association will be providing 10-12 regional meetings across Iowa in late August. Check with your Beef Extension Specialist or local IFB for a meeting near you.

ICA Receives NRCS Grant

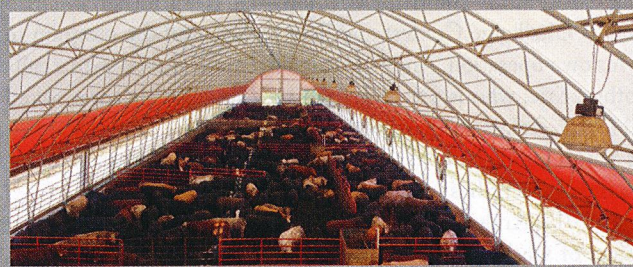
The Iowa Cattlemen's Association was recently awarded a Conservation Collaboration Grant. The goal is to leverage NRCS resources, address local natural resource issues, encourage collaboration and develop state- and community-level conservation leadership.

The project will utilize funds to hire an in-house Grazing Advisor to inform Iowa cattlemen and encourage them to make environmentally conscious decisions when it comes to managing their land. The ICA Grazing Advisor will collaborate with NRCS, ICA and project partners to enhance the management of grasslands, improve soil health and water quality in targeted watersheds, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and implement approved nutrient reduction strategy practices.

The project is slated to start October 1 of this year. Parties interested in applying for the ICA Grazing Advisor position should contact Justine Stevenson at justine@iabeef.org.

Stewards of the Land project partners include the Iowa Cattlemen's Foundation and Prairie Creek Seeds.

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