

What Livestock Producers Need to Know

Dr. Christine Navarre cnavarre@agcenter.lsu.edu

What is the Veterinary Feed Directive Rule?

VFD is an FDA rule concerning antimicrobials mixed into, or put on top of, feed or mineral for livestock.

It transitions many feed/mineral medications that are currently available “over-the counter” into the VFD drug category.

It goes into effect on **January 1, 2017**.

It is very much like a written or electronic prescription used for prescription drugs.

It pertains to antimicrobials used in livestock that are considered “medically important” in people. Examples are:

- Penicillins.
- Cephalosporins.
- Tetracyclines.

The medically important drugs will no longer be allowed to be used for growth promotion, but they can potentially be used for prevention, control and treatment of diseases

It does not pertain to ionophores or other antimicrobials not important in people. Examples are:

- Rumensin®
- Bovatech®
- Cattlyst®
- Decoxx®

What about drugs added to water?

Drugs for water use will be transitioned from OTC to prescription.

A VCPR with a veterinarian will still be required.

What are lingering issues?

Drug manufacturers have until the January 1, 2017 deadline to determine which drugs currently available will be transitioned to VFD drugs and to make changes to the labels.

Some drugs currently available may not be transitioned and will become unavailable.

There are requirements for feed manufacturers and distributors

This could possibly impact availability of products

How does it change what livestock producers do?

A *VFD drug* will need a *VFD order* (like a prescription) filled out by a veterinarian for a producer to buy a feed or mineral containing a VFD drug.

Ex. Chlortetracycline for use in feed or mineral for anaplasmosis control will no longer be available over-the-counter (OTC).

A VFD order will need to be issued by a veterinarian.

Producers who mix their own feed containing a VFD drug and sell to other producers be considered a “distributor” and will have additional requirements.

How does it change what veterinarians do?

By law, a veterinarian must have a relationship with a livestock producer called a *Veterinary Client Patient Relationship (VCPR)* to issue a prescription.

Now a VCPR also is required to issue a VFD order.

The VCPR is defined in state veterinary practice acts and in federal law (see definition at the end).

To establish this relationship, the veterinarian visits the farm or ranch on a regular basis so he or she has knowledge of what type of animals are raised and how, and the health status of the animals.

What constitutes “a regular basis” is based on the type of operation and health status of the animals.

It might be yearly, every six months, monthly, etc.

What do livestock producers need to do NOW?

If you do not already have a relationship established with a veterinarian, do so now.

Don't wait until you need a VFD order.

If a veterinarian writes a prescription or a VFD without establishing a VCPR, they are subject to loss of their license to practice and could be charged with a state or federal offense.

Veterinarians will need time to become familiar with the operation before they can legally establish a VCPR.

Take this time to have your veterinarian review all drug use on the operation to make sure you have medically sound and legal practices.

A valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship is one in which:

- (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) is or are kept.