



# CEDAR GROVE VETERINARY SERVICE NEWSLETTER



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## VETERINARY FEED DIRECTIVE: IT HAS BEEN ONE YEAR ALREADY

Do you remember January 2017? A new president was sworn in, the movie "Moonlight" won Best Picture at the 74<sup>th</sup> Golden Globes, and tornadoes raged through Georgia and Mississippi. While those may have some importance, most don't pertain to dairy farming in Wisconsin. However, one change by the FDA did have a big impact at the start of 2017 on many local farmers and the agriculture industry: the Veterinary Feed Directive.

The goal of the Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) rules were to place the purchase/use of medically important antibiotics used in feed under the control of veterinarians. This new regulation offered an opportunity for veterinarians to become more involved in the overall herd health programs on their clients' operations. It is estimated that prior to 2017, 2,500 VFD's were written per year primarily for a small number of swine medications. During 2017 it is estimated that

about 125,000 VFD's were issued. Of those 66% were for cattle, 32% were for swine, 1% for poultry, and 1% for sheep flocks.

Understandably, this new transition led to a lot of confusion for veterinarians, producers, and feed mills. It seems that many have adapted to the new rules, but there still seems to be a few points that are causing misunderstandings. Hopefully, revisiting some of the common areas of confusion will help.

**1) Categorization of Feed-Grade Antibiotics:** Feed grade antibiotics are categorized into three types. Type A are the most concentrated forms and are mixed with other ingredients. Type B and Type C are created from the combination of other feed ingredients plus Type A antibiotics. This was confusing for some since it does not require a VFD to buy Type A antibiotics, but it does require registration as a VFD distributor and a VFD to feed them. Type

## TEST YOUR DAIRY FARMING KNOWLEDGE

1) According to the USDA, which state had the highest average price for cull cows (at \$1750 per head) in 2017?

- a) Wisconsin
- b) Colorado
- c) California
- d) Florida

2) Which president is credited with having the last cow to live and graze at the White House (cow's name was Pauline Wayne)?

- a) Howard Taft
- b) Teddy Roosevelt
- c) Woodrow Wilson
- d) Richard Nixon

3) What percent of people in the US live on farms?

- a) 10%
- b) 5%
- c) 2%
- d) 0.5%

B and C antibiotics require a VFD to both buy and feed the product.

### 2) "Pulsing" Applications:

Before 2017, it was common for a farmer to buy a feed grade antibiotic and pulse feed it by using it for 5 days, then 5 days of no antibiotic, and then repeating treatment. It cannot be stressed enough that any repeated treatment with a feed-grade antibiotic requires a new VFD and must follow the product label.

3) **Duration vs Expiration:** A VFD includes an expiration date and the all the product that is covered by that VFD must be used by the expiration date. If product remains after the expiration date, a new VFD must be obtained before more the antibiotic can be legally fed. The duration is the length of a time an antibiotic can be fed such as 14-day treatment or a 5-day treatment cycle. Once the duration of treatment is over, if the animals require re-treatment, a new VFD is required.

### 4) Indications for Treatment:

One of the major difference between the VFD rules and the rule that govern the use of other injectable antibiotics is that feed-grade antibiotics can not be used off-label for any reason. For example, if a feed-grade antibiotic is

labeled for pneumonia only, a valid VFD cannot be written for that product to treat scours. Additionally, if the label indicates that the product can only used for the treatment of pneumonia, the product can only be legally fed if active pneumonia is present in the herd.

5) **Records:** Records are a cornerstone of the new VFD regulations. The electronic or paper copies of the VFD's must be kept by the veterinarian, feed mill, and farmer for 2 years. So even though your veterinarian and co-op have a copy of the sheet, every farmer needs to also have a record of every VFD issued to them. Additionally, records need to be kept by the producer as to the amount of feed-grade antibiotics fed, the group of animals the product was fed to, and when the animals both started and stopped treatment.

### 6) Enforcement of the laws:

By far and way the most common question asked by farmers is how these new rules will be enforced. While it may be easy to become complacent about the FDA coming to this area to investigate, it should be noted that they have done audits in other parts of the country already. Therefore,

enforcement of these rules is a valid concern for farmers, feed mills, and veterinarians. Everyone involved in the VFD process is responsible for complying with the rules. The FDA recommends that for farmers to comply with the regulations they need to *"follow the approved labeled directions on the VFD, including feeding the animals detailed on the VFD, not feeding the VFD feed after the expiration date and maintaining a copy of the VFD for at least two years"*

Overall, the VFD rules have been going well considering all the changes that have occurred. As always, if anyone ever has any questions about whether they are doing something right or wrong they should ask a veterinarian or the feed mill.



### Dairy Farm Knowledge Answers

1: B 2: A 3: C