FAQ: FDA VETERINARY FEED DIRECTIVE (VFD)

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has changed federal laws regarding the use of some medically important antibiotics to minimize the opportunity for drug-resistant organisms to develop. These changes will affect how livestock producers purchase and use some feed-administered medications to animals on or before Jan. 2017. This FAQ seeks to answer basic questions. More details are available through your veterinarian or at: **www.fda.gov/safefeed**.

What is a VFD?
A VFD is a written statement issued by a veterinarian that authorizes the use of a VFD drug/combination in or on an animal feed. The VFD describes specific terms of use for the drug. A VFD is similar to a prescription, but more detailed.

When is a VFD required?
A VFD is required for all drugs that are considered "medically important antibiotics", or MIAs. MIAs are the medicine family used in human health. The scientific community is concerned that, over time, continued use of MIAs in food animals will lessen their effectiveness in treating human disease. As a result, the FDA is strictly limiting their use as feed-based animal drugs. A VFD drug is limited to use under the professional supervision of a licensed veterinarian.

How do I know if a drug is a VFD, rather than an OTC drug?
Read the label. Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs do not have a VFD cautionary statement.

What is an "expiration date" on the VFD?
The expiration date specifies the last day the VFD feed may be fed. This is a requirement. VFDs expire based on the label or, if not specified, up to 6 months from date of issue.

As a client, can I feed a VFD feed past the VFD expiration date?
No. A VFD feed/combination VFD feed must not be fed to animals after the expiration date on the VFD. Continued use requires a written renewal by the DVM.

How does a producer obtain VFD feed?
- Producers must obtain a VFD order from a veterinarian, then send (or take) the order to a feed manufacturer or supplier to obtain the VFD feed.
- Producers who manufacture their own feed must have a VFD to obtain the medicated VFD feed ingredient(s).
- Producers who manufacture feed for others should be aware that they are acting as a distributor and additional requirements apply. More information on manufacturing and distributing VFD feeds is available at: www.fda.gov/safefeed.

What does professional supervision mean?
The veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR) is the basis of professional supervision. The veterinarian writing the VFD must be licensed to practice in the state the VFD is issued, and have sufficient knowledge of the animal(s), and be available for emergency follow-up, if needed.

How do I use a VFD feed?
The VFD feed must be used only according to the VFD order and label specifications.

What is "extralabel use" of a VFD drug and is it allowed?
"Extralabel use" is use of a drug in a manner not in accordance with the approved labeling. Extralabel use of medicated feed, including feed containing a VFD drug/combination, is not permitted, including changing drug level and species use.

Client's Responsibilities
As a client, a producer must:
- Only feed feedstuffs containing a VFD drug/combination to animals as prescribed by a licensed veterinarian.
- Not feed a VFD feed/combination to animals after the expiration date on the VFD.
- Provide a copy of the VFD order to the feed distributor (unless the issuing veterinarian sends it directly to the distributor).
- Maintain a copy of the VFD order for a minimum of 2 years.
- Provide VFD orders for inspection upon request.

What is not covered?
Water-soluble medications require a prescription, not a VFD. This rule does not affect Ionophores such as Bovatec, Rumensin, and anti-coccidials drugs.

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January 2016