

VFD

Understanding the Veterinary Feed Directive

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The use of medications in feed has been an effective and convenient method to prevent and treat certain disease conditions in groups of livestock. The proper use of feed medications has changed and will need to be under the oversight and order of a veterinarian. The order is known as a veterinary feed directive (VFD).

Veterinary Feed Directive for Medicated Feed

A veterinary feed directive is a written statement issued by a licensed veterinarian in the course of the veterinarian's professional practice that orders the use of a VFD drug in or on an animal feed. This written statement authorizes the client to obtain and use the VFD drug in or on animal feed to treat the client's animals only in accordance with the directions for use approved or indexed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

A veterinary feed directive also is referred to as a VFD order. According to FDA Guidance Policy 213, all medically important antimicrobial drugs will be used with appropriate veterinary supervision. VFD-medicated feed requires that a veterinarian, under a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship, examine and diagnose animal conditions and determine that the use of a VFD-medicated feed is necessary.

Veterinary Supervision

A VFD can be written for the use of a medicated feed as long as the animals and operation are under the supervision of a veterinarian and in the course of the veterinarian's professional practice. The veterinarian also must be licensed and in compliance with appropriate state and federal regulations. The VCPR (veterinary client-patient relationship) still is implied here, but specific language will not be used. A valid VCPR exists when:

- The veterinarian assumes responsibility for making medical judgments regarding health and the need for medical treatment, and the client has agreed to follow the veterinary instructions.
- The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the animals to make a general or preliminary diagnosis.
- The veterinarian is available for follow-up in the case of animals having adverse reactions or failing to respond to therapy. In addition, the veterinarian must be familiar with the operation and make periodic visits to the operation.
- In most states, veterinarians will need to be licensed in the state in which the animals are located.

Veterinarian Responsibility

The veterinarian issues a VFD by filling out a preprinted, multipart form (preapproved by the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine) supplied by the drug sponsor. These forms will be available for downloading at the drug sponsor's website. The producer then presents this form to the feed supplier, who will manufacture and distribute the feed in accordance with the VFD.

VFD feed can be fed only in a manner consistent with the FDA conditions of approval, and extra-label use is strictly prohibited. VFD feed may not be distributed without a signed VFD form. The veterinarian, producer and company supplying the VFD feed must all retain copies of the signed VFD form for a minimum of one year.

Valid VFD

To be a valid VFD, the following information is required:

- Veterinarian's name, address, telephone number, email address and fax number
- Client's name, address and telephone number, and if the VFD is faxed, the fax number
 - The VFD can be transmitted electronically via email.
 - The VFD cannot be communicated via telephone.
- Identification and number of animals to be treated/fed the medicated feed, including identification of the species of animals and the location of the animals, whether it is a postal address, legal description or premise ID
- Date of treatment and, if different, the date the VFD drug was issued
- Name of the animal drug and the approved or index-listed indications for use
 - If approved combination drugs are used, then both drugs must be listed.

- Level of animal drug in the feed and the number of animals to be treated
- Feeding instructions with the withdrawal time
- Any special instructions and cautionary statements necessary for the use of the drug in conformance with the approval
- Expiration date of the VFD
 - The expiration date cannot exceed six months or is limited by the expiration date of the product.
- Number of refills (reorders) if necessary and permitted by the approval
- Veterinarian's license number and the name of the state issuing the license
- The statement: "Extra-label use, (i.e., use of this VFD feed in a manner other than as provided for in the VFD drug approval) is strictly prohibited."
- Any other information required by the VFD drug approval regulation

Summary

An understanding of the changes in the use of feed additive medications is important for livestock producers and veterinarians. All feed-grade medications used for disease prevention and therapy will require veterinary oversight and an accompanying veterinary feed directive.

Livestock owners working with properly licensed practicing veterinarians can acquire a VFD, which allows the purchase and proper use of feed-additive medications. Feed-grade medications can be used only according to label and dose indications, and no provisions allow for their use to promote growth and efficiency.

References

www.fda.gov/downloads/AnimalVeterinary/GuidanceComplianceEnforcement/GuidanceforIndustry/UCM052660.pdf

www.avma.org/KB/Resources/FAQs/Pages/AVMA-The-Veterinary-Feed-Directive-Veterinarian-Q-A.aspx

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