

Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD)

At West Central Veterinary Services, we are trying to be at the forefront of the new regulations affecting all livestock producers and most 4-H exhibitors. To help answer questions you may have regarding Veterinary Feed Directives, we have designed a FAQ. While we are still a few months away, January 1st, 2017 will be here before you know it. Planning for this change now is the utmost importance. At WCVS, each of our 4 clinics will help you get the answer to your questions in the most timely manner possible.

Thank you,
WCVS Veterinarians

Why the new regulations?

The FDA has been working for many years to implement a plan to eliminate all animal production uses (feed efficiency and growth promotion) of "medically important" antibiotics and bring the remaining animal health uses under veterinary supervision. Medically important antibiotics are those that are used in both human and animal medicine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates at least 2 million people become infected annually with resistant bacteria. Animal production uses contribute to this problem. The intent is to implement measures that address public health concern while assuring animal health needs are met.

The VFD rule will end over-the-counter (OTC) sales of medically important antibiotics intended for use in feed or water, placing their use under the supervision of a veterinarian within the context of a valid VCPR.

What is a VFD?

A VFD is a written (non-verbal) statement issued by a licensed veterinarian that authorizes the use of a VFD drug or combination VFD drug in or on an animal feed. This written statement authorizes the client to obtain and use animal feed containing a VFD drug to treat the client's animals only in accordance with the conditions for use approved by the FDA.

When will this take effect?

In December 2016, the feed labels will change. "Increased rate of weight gain" or "improved feed efficiency" will be voluntarily withdrawn. After the label changes, these production uses will no longer be legal. However, therapeutic uses are to be retained which include "treatment, control, and prevention." Therapeutic uses are to be determined by a veterinarian, not the producer. Starting in January 2017, VFDs will be required.

What is a VFD drug?

A "VFD drug" is a drug intended for use in or on animal feed that is limited to use under the professional supervision of a licensed veterinarian.

What drugs are affected?

Established Drug Name	Examples
Chlortetracycline (CTC)	Aureomycin, CTC, Chloratet
Chlortetracycline/sulfamethazine	Aureo S, Aureomix S, Pennchlor S
Chlortetracycline/sulfamethazine/penicillin	Aureomix 500, Pennchlor SP
Lincomycin	Lincomix
Oxytetracycline (OTC)	Aureomycin, Pennox, Terramycin
Tylosin	Tylan, Tylosin, Tylovet
Tylosin/sulfamethazine	Tylan Sulfa G
Forfenicol	Nuflor
Tilmicosin	Pulmotil

What drugs are not affected? (Most commonly used products listed)

Established Drug Name	Examples
Injectable medications	No injectable products affected
Ionophores	Monensin "Rumensin"
Anthelmintics	Ivermectin, Fenbendazole "Safeguard"
Beta agonists	Ractopamine "Paylean"
Coccidiostats	Decoquinatate "Deccox"

In situations where a combination of a medically important drug and non-medically important drug/hormone are fed together, a VFD is required. Example: Cattle feed with Rumensin and Tylan together in the same bag will need a VFD, whereas cattle fed with just Rumensin will not need a VFD.

Who determines whether a drug is a VFD drug?

The FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine evaluates all feed grade drugs for safety and effectiveness to determine if they will require a VFD. We feel this is important for everyone to understand that these regulations are not under our control. As veterinarians, we have to abide by these new rules.

How does a producer obtain a VFD feed?

Producers must obtain a VFD order from their veterinarian, then send, or take, the VFD order to a feed manufacturer or supplier to get the VFD feed. Producers who manufacture their own feed must have a VFD in order to get the medicated VFD feed to manufacture from.

Does this apply to 4-H exhibitors?

Yes! This will be a big deal in our opinion. Most show feeds are currently medicated with something. This is a big unknown at this point as to what will happen going forward. However, as the rule currently reads, if you are a 4-H exhibitor and would like to feed a medicated complete feed, a veterinarian will have to issue you a VFD. In order for us to do this, we will have to visually inspect the animal(s).

What is a VCPR?

A veterinarian-client-patient-relationship (VCPR) is needed for all VFDs. A key element is the expectation that veterinarians have sufficient knowledge of the animals which means that the veterinarian has worked with the client, can make clinical judgments about patient health, has examined the animal and/or had visits to the facility where the animals are raised, and can provide follow-up care.

What are your responsibilities as a livestock owner?

A client recipient of an animal feed containing a VFD drug must:

- Only feed a VFD feed to animals based on a VFD issued by a licensed veterinarian
- Feed a VFD feed to animals by no later than the expiration date
- Provide a copy of the VFD order to the distributor if the issuing veterinarian sends the distributor's copy of the VFD through you, the client
- Maintain a copy of the VFD order for a minimum of 2 years (applies to 4H members as well)

Do VFD's expire?

Yes! This is a very critical part of the VFD. Feed purchased under a VFD can only be fed while the VFD is active. Certain drugs have a specific duration of use while others have an unspecified duration of use. No matter what, the longest expiration date possible is 6 months. With this being said, if the producer has feed left over after the VFD expires, the feed is no longer valid and cannot be fed. Feed inventory management will be critical for producers.

Example: For swine, the currently approved VFD drug, tilmicosin, has an expiration date of 90 days and a duration of use of 21 days. This means that when the VFD is issued, the client has 90 days to obtain the VFD feed and complete the 21-day course of therapy.

What should you expect at a feed mill or feed store?

Starting in January 2017, the only way you will be able to purchase feed with a "medically important" feed grade antibiotic is with a VFD from a veterinarian. Feed mills and stores will be very strict with this regulation as they will be required to keep records for a minimum of 2 years.

What label changes will occur?

Labels for VFD drugs will include a cautionary statement saying "Federal law restricts medicated feed containing this veterinary feed directive (VFD) drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian."

What if the feed mill doesn't carry a certain drug?

If the veterinarian does not specify that a substitution is not allowed, the feed manufacturer may use either the approved pioneer or an approved generic VFD drug to manufacture the VFD feed.