

Veterinary Feed Directive

KFB Issue Engagement

April 2017

In an effort to enhance engagement on issues that face the farmers and ranchers of Kansas Farm Bureau, the KFB board of directors has implemented an issue engagement project. Approximately once a month, a new topic will be covered by a board member, and our goal is to receive feedback from you, our members.

After reviewing the information, members will have an opportunity to provide input, ask questions and further engage on these issues. Your input will go directly to KFB's board of directors.

Watch an informational video at <https://youtu.be/B12sYCGAXxg>.

The use of antibiotics, antibiotic resistance and how it relates to animal agriculture has become a hot topic recently. Concerns about antibiotic resistance has been the subject of scientific and political debates for decades, and in recent years, has become headline news and caused a considerable amount of concern among consumers. The science continues to evolve and despite complexities and uncertainties, steps are being taken to mitigate risk. It should be noted that no case of antibiotic resistance in humans has ever been traced to the use of antibiotics in livestock. Antibiotics are important and necessary for farmers and ranchers to ensure the animals they are raising for food are healthy and well cared for. Antibiotics used in livestock production are carefully researched and highly regulated. Producers follow withdrawal periods to ensure the food they produce is safe for consumers. The Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) rule that was fully implemented on Jan. 1, 2017 limits the use of medically important (used in human health) antibiotics in livestock production. The intent of the VFD rule is to implement measures that address public health concerns while assuring animal health needs are met.

One of the greatest public concerns is the use of antibiotics in feed for growth promotion and improved feed conversion. To help address this concern, the VFD rule does not allow antibiotics to be used for growth promotion or feed conversion by limiting their use to therapeutic, which means treatment, control and prevention. It also requires veterinary oversight and a written VFD for the use of those antibiotics. Under the new VFD rule, water-soluble products have been changed to prescription status, so medicated drinking water requires a prescription, and medicated feed requires a VFD (if the antibiotics in the feed are considered medically important). Before obtaining a VFD, the producer must first establish a veterinarian/client relationship, which means the veterinarian must have a close working knowledge of the producer's operation, livestock and management.

The VFD rule does provide the agriculture community an opportunity to demonstrate how carefully antibiotics are utilized in food animal production and a chance to reassure consumers regarding antibiotic resistance. Veterinarians have always been important team members on every farm and ranch. Vet consultations and VFDs also afford farmers and ranchers a chance to analyze how antibiotics are used and decide upon the method most effective.

Antibiotics are critical to farmers and ranchers and the wellbeing and health of their livestock. Their use must be protected to ensure a safe, abundant supply of food to the consumer, which is something farmers and ranchers take pride in. Continuing the conversation with consumers about the safety of antibiotics in agriculture is crucial. Farmers and ranchers must also continue to review, research and refine their use of antibiotics to ensure that they are effective in livestock production.

Veterinary Feed Directive

KFB Issue Engagement

April 2017

As you learn about and discuss this issue, please consider the following questions. Your input is crucial as Kansas Farm Bureau continues to develop and enhance its grassroots policies.

- What kind of issues, if any, are you experiencing with the implementation of the VFD rule?
- What is KFB's role in this issue? Is more education needed? Is AFBF policy sufficient?

Answer these questions by going to <https://www.votervoice.net/KSFB/Surveys/3809/Respond>.

Current AFBF Policy:

11. *Animal Antibiotics*

11.1. To protect the continued use of critical animal health products we support the following:

11.1.1. Clarification and further review of FDA's veterinary feed directive (VFD) in regards to therapeutic drug use protocols. We also support a plan for education regarding the purpose and implementation of the VFD for producers, feed distributors and veterinary professionals;

11.1.2. FDA's Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) preserving the right for producers to use feed additives and injectable antibiotic products;

11.1.3. Sound science as the basis for decision-making and policy development regarding antibiotics/antimicrobials used in food animal production;

11.1.5. Regulation of antibiotics/antimicrobials at the national level to avoid a state-by-state patchwork of regulation;

11.1.7. Rather than limitations or elimination of animal health and food safety protection tools, we would accept veterinarian oversight of antibiotic use, where veterinarian oversight is defined as a working relationship with a licensed veterinarian and allow for the purchasing of animal pharmaceuticals using a prescription without the requirement of purchasing directly from a veterinarian;

11.1.12. Amending the VFD to allow veterinarians to prescribe extra-label use of antimicrobial drugs in animals when warranted, including in the treatment of minor species. The VCPR establishes sufficient oversight of veterinarians for extra-label use when necessary.