

PRESERVING THE BENEFITS OF ANTIBIOTICS FOR PEOPLE AND ANIMALS

Rationale

Antibiotics and other antimicrobial agents are used widely against pathogens for protection of human and animal health. Production of sufficient safe and nutritious animal-sourced foods for human consumption is necessary for the security of the US and global food supply. To ensure this production and animal well-being, proper management of livestock includes appropriate use of vaccines, parasiticides, good handling and housing practices, and appropriate nutrition. These practices can reduce, but not eliminate, disease incidence. Prudent use of antimicrobial agents remains necessary for prevention, control, and treatment of infectious disease in food animals.

Although microorganisms can naturally develop resistance to this class of drugs, concern about increasing incidence of drug resistance is growing among scientists, health professionals, and the public. Loss of effective antimicrobial therapies poses a potential threat to public health. As one outcome of these concerns, growth promotion and feed efficiency claims are voluntarily being removed from medically-important feed-grade antibiotics. These antimicrobials will move from over-the counter to veterinary feed directive (VFD)¹ status. This change in labeling will require livestock producers to work closely with licensed veterinarians for authorized use of VFD antimicrobial drugs. Recommended guidelines for both producers and manufacturers have also been issued by the FDA^{2,3}. To safeguard the effectiveness of antimicrobial therapies and reduce the emergence of drug resistant organisms, antimicrobial drugs must be used judiciously in both humans and animals, according to scientific evidence-based practices.

Policy Statement:

The American Society of Animal Science (ASAS) strongly supports the judicious use of antimicrobial therapies in food animal care in a manner that protects the health and welfare of the animals, preserves the efficacy of antimicrobial therapies for protection of both human and animal health, and sustains the earth's resources through efficient food production.

Policy Objectives:

- Support research and science-based policy development to protect animal health, enhance animal-sourced food production, and preserve medically-important antimicrobials for human health applications.
- Continue use of antibiotics and other antimicrobial agents in food animal populations for efficacious treatment of disease and maintenance of good health in a manner consistent with policies of the American Veterinary Medical Association⁴ and other relevant organizations.
- Promote educational programs for livestock producers, consumers, and veterinarians to increase knowledge and understanding of science-based, judicious use of antimicrobial products.
- Actively engage participation by individuals across industry, academic research, and regulatory bodies in development of best, evidence-based practices, risk assessment, and regulations for veterinary use of antimicrobial agents.

References:

1. Veterinary Feed Directive final rule: <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/06/03/2015-13393/veterinary-feed-directive>.
2. CVM GFI#209 The Judicious Use of Medically Important Antimicrobial Drugs in Food-Producing Animals.

- <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/AnimalVeterinary/GuidanceComplianceEnforcement/GuidanceforIndustry/UCM216936.pdf>
- 3. CVM GFI #213 - New Animal Drugs and New Animal Drug Combination Products Administered in or on Medicated Feed or Drinking Water of Food-Producing Animals: Recommendations for Drug Sponsors for Voluntarily Aligning Product Use Conditions with GFI #209.
<http://www.fda.gov/downloads/AnimalVeterinary/GuidanceComplianceEnforcement/GuidanceforIndustry/UCM299624.pdf>
 - 4. AVMA Policy Statement on Judicious Therapeutic Use of Antimicrobials.
<https://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Pages/Judicious-Therapeutic-Use-of-Antimicrobials.aspx>
 - 5. AVMA Policy Statement on Approval and Availability of Antimicrobials for Use in Food-Producing Animals. <https://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Pages/Approval-and-Availability-of-Antimicrobials-for-Use-in-Food-Producing-Animals.aspx>

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