

The Final Countdown to Antibiotic Changes

Producers Urged to Take Action Now



Call it a New Year's resolution or simply starting your 2016 to-do list early, but animal health experts are urging producers to ensure that they're ready before the Food and Drug Administration's new antibiotic regulations take effect in January 2017.

"If they haven't already done so, producers should sit down with their veterinarians and determine what they need to do to comply with the new veterinary feed directive (VFD) and prescription requirement for water-based medications," said Jennifer Koeman, DVM, Pork Checkoff's director of producer and public health.

Recordkeeping of on-farm antibiotic use will be pivotal in the success of the new regulations, Koeman said.

"It's a critical step, but one most producers should be familiar with thanks to their certification in the Pork Quality Assurance® Plus program, she said. "However, requirements, such as keeping original copies of VFDs for two years will be adjustments."

Remember "USCARE" this Year

While you probably don't need another acronym in your life, the Pork Checkoff offers USCARE as a way to remember the six key steps producers need to complete in 2016 to ensure successful compliance with the new regulations.

- ✓ **U**nderstand the new feed (VFD) and water (Rx) rules.
- ✓ **S**trengthen your vet-client-patient relationship (VCPR).
- ✓ **C**ommunicate with your feed mill.
- ✓ **A**ssess your herd-health and welfare strategies.
- ✓ **R**enew your commitment to responsible antibiotic use.
- ✓ **E**nsure your record-keeping compliance.

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"These steps are designed to help producers prepare for the upcoming changes," Koeman said. "It's an easy way for producers to ensure that they've done due diligence to be ready to go by 2017."

Leading and Collaborating on Antibiotic Use

Whether it's cooperating with the American Association of Swine Veterinarians, state pork associations, government agencies and other agricultural organizations, the Pork Checkoff continues to work on this critical issue on behalf of producers.

"Collaboration is key to what we do across our industry," said John Johnson, National Pork Board chief operating officer. "We share information about the safeguards in place for antibiotic use in pork production, showing our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement. And we are focused on pork safety, quality and nutrition, which are all important to producers, retailers and consumers."

Collaboration also is key as the industry prepares to successfully navigate the upcoming changes.

"It's best to start the year by simply talking to your farm employees and veterinarian about what lies ahead," Koeman said. "It might just reveal some hidden opportunities for even greater success."

FDA Moves Forward on Antibiotic Guidance

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is taking a new approach on the judicious use of medically important (to treat human illness) antibiotics in food-animal production. It involves voluntary cooperation by all sectors. Here's a snapshot of FDA's time line to implement these changes.

Guidance 209: In 2010, FDA outlined its intent and recommendations regarding growth promotion uses of medically important antibiotics in food-animal production. This action applies to both feed-grade and water-based antibiotics. FDA also specified that veterinarian oversight will increase for the remaining therapeutic applications (prevention, treatment and control) of medically important antibiotics.

Guidance 213: On Dec. 11, 2013, FDA initiated a three-year transition process to complete its food-animal antibiotic strategy. This action requests animal-health companies to outline intentions to voluntarily remove any production/growth-promotion uses from product labels of medically important antibiotics. The guidance also eliminates over-the-counter status of these medications and increases veterinary oversight for on-farm therapeutic use by requiring a veterinary feed directive (VFD) for feed applications and a prescription for water treatments. Jan. 1, 2017, is when implementation begins.

Final VFD Rule: On June 3, 2015, FDA announced the final VFD rule. According to the agency, the final rule outlines specific details of the VFD process for medically important (to treat human infections) feed-grade antibiotics.



Consider Strategies to Maximize Responsible Use

Antibiotics are an important tool in effective herd health programs. Using them responsibly is every producer's goal, which means it's important to explore other strategies to protect herd health first.

"Moving forward, you'll still have access to these important tools," said Jennifer Koeman, the Pork Checkoff's director of public health and worker safety. "However, producers should look to non-antibiotic tools to boost herd health and reduce the need for antibiotics."

Lisa Becton, DVM, the Checkoff's director of swine health and education, and Chris Hostetler, the Checkoff's animal science director, offer these protocols for producers to consider before reaching for an antibiotic solution.



Biosecurity – Prevent diseases by controlling traffic of pigs, people, vehicles and other items that can carry diseases into a herd, such as boots, coveralls and supplies.

- Apply all-in/all-out pig flow, preferably by site, but at least by room. See that workers honor this flow in their daily movements.
- Thoroughly clean, disinfect and heat/dry facilities or rooms between pig groups. This includes feeders, waterers and all other equipment.
- Never commingle pigs of different ages and sources among sites. Also limit commingling within a site as much as possible.



Vaccinations – Successful vaccination depends on targeted use of vaccines at the right time for the right health concern.

- Use diagnostics to confirm health issues.
- A vaccination program customized to your herd can help control and prevent disease.
- Never shortchange the process. Work with your veterinarian on the appropriate vaccines for your herd.
- Store and handle vaccines correctly to ensure viability.

Environment – Provide the proper environment for animals' age, weight and stocking density.

- Adjust ventilation systems to manage gases and humidity levels and to provide fresh air.
- Manage barn temperatures to meet pigs' needs.
- Eliminate drafts.



Feed additives – So far, no antimicrobial alternative has proven as universally effective as antibiotics alone. Evaluate each alternative for the pathogen and application in question.

- Acidifiers, probiotics and essential oils may be options.
- Active proteins may help in young animals.
- Zinc and copper, which have antimicrobial properties, may be considered for swine.



Housing – Provide the proper environment for animals' age, weight and stocking density.

- Wean pigs at 21 to 28 days of age, sending heavier, more robust pigs on to the growing phase. Older pigs require less medication or specialized diets, which also reduces production costs.
- Eliminate drafts and manage barn temperatures to meet pigs' changing needs.
- Adjust ventilation to manage gases and humidity levels and to provide fresh air.

DON'T WAIT... BE READY!

The NEW Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) for medically important feed-grade antibiotics and prescription rule for water-based antibiotics

TAKE EFFECT ON JAN. 1, 2017.



Visit pork.org/antibiotics for more information.

PQA Plus® Provides Foundation for Antibiotic Use

To get the best handle on the basics of antibiotic use and compliance, producers should turn to what they already know and rely on – the Pork Checkoff's Pork Quality Assurance® Plus (PQA Plus®) program. Together with consultation with their herd veterinarians, producers should be able to navigate the changes coming from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) new antibiotic use guidelines and the expansion of the veterinary feed directive (VFD) rule.

Today, more than 60,000 producers have completed the PQA Plus on-farm education and certification program. All major packers require producers to participate in the program before they will purchase their market hogs.

The program's Good Production Practices continue to provide the basic platform for pork producers and their employees to ensure responsible antibiotic use on the farm, day in and day out.

"PQA Plus outlines the principles of responsible antibiotic use," said Jennifer Koeman, director of producer and public health for the Pork Checkoff. "Producers have a long history of using antibiotics responsibly. With the PQA Plus principles already in place, we are well in line with the new FDA strategy."

Note: A new version of PQA Plus will be launched in June during World Pork Expo, including a new and expanded section on responsible antibiotic use.

Antibiotic Principles of PQA Plus

Principle 1: Take appropriate steps to decrease the need for the application of antibiotics.

Principle 2: Assess the advantages and disadvantages of all uses of antibiotics.

Principle 3: Use antibiotics only when they will provide measurable benefits.

Principle 4: Fully implement management practices described for responsible use of animal health products into daily operations.

Principle 5: Have a working veterinarian/client/patient relationship and follow the responsible antibiotic use guidelines.

One Health Umbrella:

Shared Responsibility, Opportunity to Combat Antibiotic Resistance

Because antibiotic resistance is a global concern, the worldwide "One Health" approach to combat antibiotic resistance is critical to human and animal health. One Health is a collaborative effort of multiple stakeholders to attain optimal health for people, domestic animals, wildlife, plants and the environment. Medical doctors and patients, veterinarians and farmers, together with government, academia and industry stakeholders, are cooperating. Pork producers play an important role in the shared effort to use antibiotics responsibly to help minimize the potential emergence of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. In the end, this comprehensive and inclusive approach will protect both human and animal health.

Inside: **BE READY** for the upcoming antibiotic use changes.



📄 pork.org or 📞 the **Pork Checkoff Service Center @ (800) 456-7675**

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"We'll simply meet this challenge head on and see how we can turn it into an opportunity."

National Pork Board
President Derrick Sleezer
Cherokee, Iowa

Turning a Challenge into an Opportunity

By now, most of you are aware that in January 2017, livestock producers will need to adhere to new antibiotic regulations from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. While this will be a change in some respects, it's not that different than other changes our industry has faced. We'll simply meet this challenge head on and see how we can turn it into an opportunity.

As I see it, the Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) and the new prescription requirement for water-based medications will require more paperwork and coordination, but that may not be completely bad. For example, the collaboration with our veterinarians and feed mills will have to be enhanced before we get to 2017. What could be viewed by some as extra steps could lead to important insights into how we're using antibiotics on our farms and how we might be able to reduce the need for them. These changes are important in our role of addressing societal concerns on antimicrobial resistance.

How will this work? Careful assessment of how we manage herd health on our farms and questioning our standard operating procedures will help ensure that we're doing all we can to use antibiotics responsibly when they are needed.

To keep informed on the VFD and related regulations, bookmark pork.org/antibiotics on your computer or smart phone. That's home to the Pork Checkoff's Antibiotics Resource Center, and it's where you'll find the latest information and resources about this important issue throughout 2016.

Yes, the countdown to the new antibiotics rules is on. Armed with solid information and a can-do attitude, we'll make 2016 a year of opportunity and progress.

Derrick Sleezer, Cherokee, Iowa
National Pork Board President



This special-topic newsletter is sent periodically to you by the Pork Checkoff.
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