

Ross Mosteller
District Extension Agent
Livestock & Natural Resources

Veterinary Feed Directive

If you've been following my columns, you will have noted that I tend to write about what may be happening to me on a personal level. The theory is, if it is timely for me, it might just be for others? That is the case again this week, as I got to go through the process of working with my veterinarian on a veterinary feed directive (VFD) this week. This is likely old news for most, but hopefully a good refresher none the less. Information in this article comes from Dr. A.J. Tarpoff and the publication, *Veterinary Feed Directive: What Producers Should Know about Antimicrobial Use in Feed* <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3289.pdf>

The current rules on VFD have been in place since January 2017. A VFD is a written statement authorizing the use of a medically important antibiotic in or on the feed (*this includes milk and milk replacer*). The VFD form, either in print or electronic formats, will contain the veterinarian and client's contact information, the location of the animals, date of approval, expiration date of the order, name of VFD drug, type of animal being fed, number of animals to be fed, indication for the drug, level of the drug in the feed, any withdrawal or special instructions, number of refills if ordered, correct statement indicating no off label use, and the veterinarians signature.

VFD drugs are antibiotics that are used in food producing animals that are medically important in human medicine. The most common drugs that will be affected are the tetracyclines (*chlortetracycline, oxytetracycline*), Sulfas, Tylosin, Neomycin, and Virginiamycin. The directions on the label are for the indication (*treatment or control of a disease*), dose (*the amount fed each day*), and duration (*days the animals are fed the drug*). Veterinarians can only issue a VFD for labelled directions. Many of these products were previously, widely available over the counter medications; easily being able to be purchased and fed according to label.

VFDs contain an expiration date. The expiration date on the VFD is not the same as the duration of use. Duration of use is the period of time which the animals should be fed the VFD drug for label indication. The expiration is the last day of the authorization to feed a VFD. The FDA has set a maximum of 6-month expiration on a VFD order. If a producer has VFD feed on hand, but the expiration date has passed, a new VFD must be made to legally continue to feed.

Three copies of the VFD order are made. The original will be kept by the issuing veterinarian, one copy will be sent to the feed distributor, and the other copy will be given to the producer. These orders must be kept on file by the producer for 2 years after the issuing of the VFD. If an FDA inspection occurs, the VFD order must be provided upon request.

The use of antibiotics in feed for food producing animals has come under scrutiny over the past decade or so. The growing issues with bacteria developing resistance to medically important antibiotics in human medicine have been a major driver of these changes. The FDA has put the use of medically important antibiotics under the guidance of veterinarians.

The Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) is the way in which veterinarians will work with producers to ensure the judicious use of these antibiotics with FDA oversight. Use of these antimicrobials by producers must be authorized by their veterinarian in the form of a VFD. For more general information on antibiotics, K-State has developed the following website as a resource: <http://www.ksuantibiotics.org/>