Thank you

- Veterinarians who participated
- USDA/ERS
Background

- FDA Revised Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD)
- Guidances for Industry #209 and #213
  - Effective January 2017
- Qualitative evaluation of the economic implications for veterinarians
Some questions

- What are the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs related to Guidances and revised VFD?
- What are some economic challenges and barriers?
  - Any changes to the veterinary-patient-client relationship (VCPR)?
  - Need to obtain further licenses?
- Will veterinarians adjust business practices?
- How did the FDA actions economically affect veterinarians?
Methods

- 2 Qualitative, directed interviews
  - Average interview length 20-30 minutes
- Veterinary opinions on the regulations/guidelines
- Case studies in each major livestock sectors
  - Expected and short-term economic effects for veterinarians
Methods

- Veterinarians randomly chosen from the AVMA directory database
  - Graduated between 1977 and 2015
  - Work with food producing animals >50% of the time

- Initial contact by email, phone interviews
  - Second telephone interview with the same veterinarians

- Confidential interviews
Results

- 414 attempted contacts
- 379 valid email addresses
- 22 participants
Results

Type of practice
- Poultry
- Dairy
- Beef
- Swine
- Mixed

Where are they from?
- South
- Atlantic
- Plains
- West
- Midwest

N=22
Most felt adequately prepared to deal with the new regulations and guidances
- Enough information available from multiple sources
- Some unresolved questions
  - Primarily from dairy veterinarians - some felt dairy has been ignored or abandoned by the changes

“I’ve been able to answer my clients’ questions (at least so far)”
Results - 1st interview

- None needed to obtain a license from another state as a result of the expanding VFD
- Many planned to charge for the increased time needed to write a VFD
  - Most veterinarians’ clients would pay extra for the extra time needed to write a VFD
  - None of the veterinarians considered writing VFDs as a potential income source

“I will have to see how much time is really spent writing VFDs”
Smaller producers and hobby farmers will be most impacted

Time needed to comply with the new regulations and labels

Who will enforce the changes?

- What will be the veterinarian’s role?
- State board of pharmacy may want to get involved with VFDs

“Will veterinarians be considered the culprits?”
Results - 2nd interview

- FDA regulations and guidelines had little effect on day-to-day practice
  - No net economic effect on practice
  - Increase in paperwork cited
  - Some client resistance to veterinarian oversight
- Increased communication between veterinarians and their clients about antibiotic use
  - Starting point for further discussions
    - Uncovered management practices that clients could change
    - Antibiotic use may have been masking underlying management issues

“Clients and veterinarians are talking to each other about alternatives and husbandry practices more now”
No veterinarian dropped or refused a client solely because of the VFD guidances
- A few contacted by potential clients asking for a VFD to be written without a VCPR

Nearly all veterinarians charged to write a VFD
- Costs ranging from $15 per VFD to $150 for a yearly charge
  - Some bundled the cost of a VFD in their visit charges
- Costs mostly came close to compensating for the added time and expense of writing a VFD
Results-2nd interview

Veterinarians who had not written VFDs in the past noted the increased time taken to properly write a VFD
  - But wrote fewer VFDs than they had anticipated
  - Swine veterinarians did not increase time to write VFDs

Some of their clients made a decision not to add antibiotics because of the real or perceived hassle in obtaining a VFD
  - Some antibiotics in feed using a VFD exceeded the amounts or duration that had been used by their clients prior to 2017

“It will be interesting to see what happens with CTC in the next year”
The number of clients who had previously used OTC antibiotics surprised some veterinarians, as well as the quantities of OTC that had been used by their clients.

“Some clients have been surprised at how restrictive the options are if antibiotics are given only according to labeled uses.”
Limitations

- Self-report
- Small numbers
- Short term
- Trust

"Before I write my name on the board, I'll need to know how you're planning to use that data."
Conclusions

“Overall, the FDA changes have not been the train wreck that people thought it would be.”
Conclusions

- Sufficient information given to veterinarians
  - Government and non-government
- No or net neutral economic impact
- New regulations and guidances have not resulted in poorer health or welfare outcomes for animals short term
- Clients had not optimally used antibiotics when they were OTC drugs
- Expect overall antibiotic use to decrease in 2017
Implications and questions

- Need to monitor and evaluate animal health and economic effects longer term
- Veterinarians do not want to be FDA enforcers
- How FDA does plan to monitor or enforce the requirements?
  - Will more injectables be used?
- Some drug combinations no longer available
  - VFDs may hamper veterinarian’s ability to treat animals in the best manner
  - FDA should allow more flexibility in VFDs
Questions?

“I need someone well versed in the art of torture—do you know PowerPoint?”