



Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Makes New Recommendations For Use of Antibiotics in Farm Animals

Since 2012, the FDA has been working on revised recommendations for the marketing and administration of antibiotics in farm animals. These recommendations are now being enacted, which means big changes for all farmers and ranchers. The following is a brief overview of the changes, as well as what you should do moving forward.

WHY IS THIS CHANGE TAKING PLACE?

The incidence of antimicrobial-resistant infections in humans has the potential to pose a serious public health threat. Evidence shows that overuse and improper use of antibiotics in livestock can lead to an outbreak of antimicrobial resistant infection in the animals, which can then spread to humans. For example, in 2017 an outbreak of multidrug-resistant Salmonella was linked to dairy calves, leading to the hospitalization of numerous children across 15 states.

Ensuring the judicious use of medically important antimicrobial drugs in animals can help. In an article published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Doctor Megin Nichols says, "As a veterinarian, one of the things I learned from this outbreak is how important it is for veterinarians and human doctors to use antibiotics responsibly."¹

HOW WILL THIS IMPACT YOU?

Animal drug manufacturers are now making voluntary labeling changes which transition drugs that were once available over-the-counter to prescription-only to help ensure their judicious use. That means many drugs will now be available only through a veterinarian.

For more information, view the Guidance for Industry (GFI) #263 Frequently Asked Questions document

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The CDC has also listed recommendations for fighting antimicrobial resistance

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WHAT YOU SHOULD DO NEXT

Work closely with your veterinarian, who can provide oversight and make recommendations as to when antibiotics are needed and which ones they should prescribe. If you don't currently work with a veterinarian, the time to connect with one is now.

Implement best practices to prevent the introduction and spread of disease—both among animals and among the people working on your farm. Simple measures, like cleaning procedures, complying with animal welfare standards, and basic hand-washing can go a long way in reducing the need for antibiotics altogether.

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/patient-stories/Megin-salmonella.html>