



Veterinary Feed Directive

A Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) is a written statement from a licensed veterinarian that authorizes a farmer to obtain and use a VFD drug in or on animal feed. VFD drugs are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and must be used in accordance with approved label directions. **Extra label use of a VFD drug is strictly prohibited.**

FDA last updated the VFD regulations VFD in 2015. Effective January 1, 2017, all use of medically important antimicrobial drugs in or on animal feed are considered VFD drugs and, accordingly, must be authorized by a licensed veterinarian and used in compliance with the VFD regulations. Additionally, medically important antimicrobial drugs can no longer be used in feeds for growth promotion or improved feed efficiency.

VFD regulations require veterinarians to issue all VFDs within the context of a veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR). The VCPR must include that the veterinarian engages with the farmer to assume responsibility for making clinical judgments about animal health, have sufficient knowledge of the animal by conducting examinations and/or visits to the facility where the animal is managed, and provide for any necessary follow-up evaluation or care.

VFD IN DAIRY INDUSTRY

There are no VFD drugs approved for use in lactating or dry cows. **Extra label use of a VFD drug is strictly prohibited.**

Medically important antimicrobial drugs are not fed to dairy cows for growth promotion or feed efficiency reasons due to potential milk residue issues, thus the revised VFD regulations have not affected antibiotic use in dairy cows.

Ionophores are not used in human medicine and not a medically important antimicrobial drug. Ionophores are fed to dairy cows, cause no residues in milk and are not subject to the VFD regulations.

Chlortetracycline, neomycin, oxytetracycline, and virginiamycin are the only VFD drugs approved by the FDA to be used as feed additives for heifers for the treatment, control and prevention of bacterial pneumonia and bacterial enteritis. As medically important antimicrobial drugs are subject to VFD regulations, these must be obtained from a veterinarian in the context of a VCPR.

WATER SOLUBLE DRUGS

In addition to the VFD changes, starting January 1, 2017 medically important antimicrobial drugs fed through water (water soluble) are no longer available over the counter and must be obtained with a veterinarian prescription. Chlortetracycline, neomycin, oxytetracycline, and sulfa drugs are sometimes used in medicated milk replacers for the treatment or prevention of bacterial pneumonia and bacterial enteritis. These also must be obtained from a veterinarian in the context of a VCPR.

