

USE OF DRUGS IN SHOW ANIMALS

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Various preventive and therapeutic medicines may be used for management in market livestock and poultry. These include vaccines and bacterins, antibiotics and antibacterials, parasiticides and corticosteroids. Exhibitors of show animals are responsible for ensuring that carcasses are free of violative and illegal residues of drugs, chemicals and feed additives. Therefore, only substances approved for the animal species being treated should be used, and these must be administered prudently. For example: Compounds such as tranquilizers, diuretics, caffeine and alcohol are not approved for show animals.

WITHDRAWAL TIMES

Approved substances generally have established withdrawal times. These are printed somewhere on the product label, package, package insert or feed tag. The withdrawal time is the length of time required for a substance to be reduced to a safe (tolerance) level in the animal's body prior to slaughter. The drug, chemical or feed additive is to be withdrawn for the number of days listed on the label before the animal is slaughtered. If there is no withdrawal time on a product label, it means the substance is safe and has no withdrawal.

PREVENTATIVE DRUGS

Animals may be given vaccines or bacterins that stimulate them to build immunity to specific diseases. Vaccinated food animals are not to be slaughtered until the withdrawal time has ended.

Approved antibiotics, antibacterials and parasiticides may be used to prevent diseases for which there are no vaccines or bacterins. These substances can be administered continuously in the animal's feed or water. But medicated feed and water are not to be fed within the product's published withdrawal times prior to slaughter. Nor are medicated food animals to be slaughtered until the withdrawal time has expired.

THERAPEUTIC DRUGS

When a medical condition is diagnosed, a therapeutic or treatment program may be established which makes use of APPROVED antibiotics, antibacterials, dewormers, coccidiostats and insecticides. These substances are not to be administered within their withdrawal times prior to slaughter. Treated food animals are not to be slaughtered until the withdrawal time has expired.

Corticosteroids (cortisones), which are sometimes used to treat certain musculoskeletal conditions, are prescription products. Prescription products can be used only by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian. The veterinarian prescribing the medication will give you instructions as to the withdrawal time. These instructions are to be followed precisely.

TESTING

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) collects samples (urine, kidney, liver, fat and muscle) of some show animal carcasses at slaughter. These samples are tested for residues of approved and unapproved substances. Residues of approved substances must be below the safe level, and there must be no residues of unapproved substances. Otherwise the carcass will be condemned.

In addition to testing at slaughter, livestock show officials may collect urine and blood samples at the show grounds for submission to laboratory testing. If the livestock show rules require that market animals not be within the withdrawal time of any drug, chemical or feed additive at the time of weigh-in, a violative sample may cause an animal to be disqualified.

It is illegal for an exhibitor to administer a drug, chemical or feed additive by a route, at a dosage, for a condition or to a food animal species not indicated on the product's label. Such practices can alter the determined withdrawal time and can cause violative residues at slaughter. Use of any unapproved substance in a food animal species is illegal, even if the substance is approved for a different species. This is because safety, efficacy and withdrawal time data have not been established for species not listed on the label.

An exhibitor should follow all label and package insert instructions for any drug, chemical or feed additive used to prevent or treat disease or injury. This will ensure that buyers will receive safe, high quality animal food products. Also, the exhibitor should consult with a veterinarian, county extension agent, and/or agricultural science teacher about livestock show rules and federal laws regarding residue avoidance and food safety programs.