VFD Preparation:
Beyond the veterinary feed directive paperwork—
Beef production with less antibiotics

Randall Spare, DVM
Ashland Veterinary Center, Ashland, Kansas

Goal of Veterinary Feed Directive: VFD
1. Prevent further development of antibiotic resistance observed in human medicine.
2. Reduce the use of medically important antibiotics in production agriculture.

Judicious Use of Antibiotics
1. Public scrutiny is here to stay.
2. We must embrace accountability.
3. Seek to use antibiotics as a last resort.
4. Diligently seek to prevent disease.
5. Release disease pressure on our livestock.

Veterinary Feed Directive?
When an approved medically important antibiotic is used in the feed, there must be a prescription or a Veterinary Feed Directive issued by a veterinarian who has a VALID VETERINARY PATIENT CLIENT RELATIONSHIP with the operation.
Veterinary Feed Directive?

- A VFD holds us ALL accountable for our actions.
- VFD creates veterinary oversight.

VFD creates full circle communication between producer, feed distributor and veterinarian.

Extra label use is NOT permitted for feed grade antibiotics

- Pinkeye…NOT LEGAL
- Footrot…NOT LEGAL
- Tetracycline used for Anaplasmosis control ONLY
- Bovine Respiratory Disease

THIS IS THE LAW TODAY

Where do you start?

- Do you have a Veterinary Client Patient Relationship?

**VCPR is defined by your state**

1. A veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making medical judgments regarding the health of animals and the need for medical treatment, and the client (owner) has agreed to follow veterinarian instructions.

VCPR defined by your state

2. There is sufficient knowledge of the animals by the veterinarian to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animals.
VCPR defined by your state

3. The veterinarian is readily available for follow up. Such a relationship can exist only when the veterinarian has recently seen and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animals...by timely visits to the premises.

Diagnosis and treatment of animal health?

- Who does it?

Veterinary responsibility for VFD?

- FDA: Veterinary oversight ensures medically important antibiotics will be used in feed according to label directions and only when appropriate to meet specific animal health needs.

What does your veterinarian know that a pharmaceutical rep. or drug delivery individual may not know?

Pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, area under the curve, antibiotic breakpoint, withdrawal dates, route of administration, length of treatment, half-life of a drug, biotransformation, mode of excretion, volume of distribution... for a start.

- It is OK to demand that our profession knows your needs and determines to serve.

- Find a veterinarian that cares and hold him/her accountable.

2016 Angus Convention, Indianapolis, Ind.
Is it possible that beef production has used antibiotics as a crutch to cover up mismanagement?

Absolutely!

Improvement starts when we understand and know normal...

Once we understand, we can make management choices to improve health and mitigate risk.

A 2016 example of need for change:

650 pound, known genetic steers sell on Superior Livestock.

Less than two hour haul to a Western Kansas feedyard.

Four days later, 3% of the load was dead and accrued a $40 per head medicine cost!

WHAT HAPPENED & WHY?

What happened and why?

January through March calving

- Supplement feeding—cows leave calves
- Stockmanship needs improvement
- Preweaning vaccinations
- Shipping needs attention
- Cows purchased—BVD status?
Components of Immunity in the Calf

We can change behavior if...

- Choose to understand and apply normal immune function...
- Innate Immune system
- Birth—Colostral absorption
- “Branding”—prime the immune system
- Pre-Weaning—boost immunity
- Weaning—maintain rumen health

Example #2 Fall calving:

- Cows maintain BCS on grass
- Calving weather condition
- Fetal programming (fetal nutrition)
- Better colostral intake
- Optimum weaning conditions

Management techniques to enhance robust immune status:

- Nutritional considerations: gestation, near parturition, colostrum production and absorption
- Temperament during calving: fearful, stressors of environment
- Managing the rumen of the calf before, during and after weaning
- Vaccination: DVM’s have a lot of misplaced pride in vaccination protocols! 😊
Pay attention to the basics

- BVD Free: AN ABSOLUTE MUST!
- Prime the immune system.
- Stimulate the immune system prior to stress events in the life of the calf.
- Manage cowherd vaccines for infectious risks for each geographic area.

Management summary: Stewardship

Much is accomplished with no vaccine or antibiotic.

We are in control of our behavior. Therefore, we determine if our calf crop has market access.

Where is the weak link in my program?

A Final Challenge to Producers...

I encourage each of you to make an honest assessment of your antibiotic usage, consult your veterinarian and pledge to reduce usage by greater than 50% in 2017.
START HERE

1. Invite your DVM to meet you at your operation.
2. Collectively, honestly assess your current management and health practices.
3. Make a plan.