

We recently discussed the use of antibiotics in cattle, and presented some new changes that are taking place in regards to antibiotic regulations. Because regulations are becoming more strict, producers should be doing all they can to adhere to these rules, and produce a safe product for consumers. One way that we can do this is by taking special note of drug label instructions and withdrawal times. This week we will elaborate on withdrawal time, define what it is, and evaluate its importance in any food animal operation.

On the label of every antibiotic and product for food animal use is a note that states the meat withdrawal time for that product. This indicates the time from when the animal was last treated to when the animal can be slaughtered for safe consumption. Any time a food producing animal is treated with a drug there is a chance that chemical residues of that drug may be in or on the food products made by that animal. This is when withdrawal time is critical, as it provides ample time for the animal's system to clear any residue levels that may be detected in the edible tissues.

Because each drug is different and affects the animal differently, it is important to note that not every drug has the same withdrawal, so each label should be analyzed before giving an antibiotic. Below, we have created a small table that represents various drugs and their individual withdrawal times. Again, please note that the withdrawal time varies from drug to drug and varies depending on the dosage and route of administration.

| <b>Drug/Product Used</b> | <b>Withdrawal Time</b>                          |
|--------------------------|---|
| Penicillin               | 4 days (when given intramuscularly)             |
| LA 200 (Oxytetracycline) | 28 days (given intramuscular or subcutaneously) |
| LA 300 (Noromycin 300)   | 28 days (given IM or SQ)                        |
| Draxxin                  | 18 days (given SQ)                              |
| Excenel                  | 4 days (given IM or SQ)                         |
| Nuflor                   | 28 days (given IM) and 38 days (given SQ)       |
| Banamine                 | 4 days (given IV)                               |

Because withdrawal time is the best way to know when it is safe to sell a food animal for slaughter, it is important to always strictly adhere to drug label instructions. Some factors that negatively affect withdrawal time occur when dose given, route of administration, amount given per injection site, and duration of treatment are not done according to label instructions. Failure to follow drug label instructions may not only result in involvement of the FDA in your operation, but poses a health risk to consumers as well. If an animal is tested for residue after slaughter and amounts greater than the tolerance level are found, the carcass will be condemned. Any violations that occur may result in inability to sell more cattle until the problem is resolved. With more advanced technology constantly coming out, producers should be aware that it is becoming easier to detect residue of many drugs in the carcass at once.

If you make the decision to give your cattle an antibiotic or any other product, we urge you to strictly follow the dosage and administration guidelines on the label. Take note of the withdrawal time of that product, and adhere to it as well to ensure that no illegal drug residue levels are found in the carcass. If you have any questions about antibiotic use, or withdrawal times in cattle, please contact us.

Thanks,

Jesse Richardson, DVM

Henderson County Veterinary Hospital

903-675-5613

hcvethospital.com