

factsheet

LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION ASSURANCE

Element 2

Responsible use of veterinary chemicals

For the health and wellbeing of the animals under your care it is important that treatment is given where necessary using the most appropriate drug, dose rate and method of application.

When using veterinary medicines and pesticides, care must be taken not only to ensure that treatment produces the most effective results for your animals, but that it will not cause unacceptable residues in the carcass at the time of slaughter.

This factsheet provides information on the responsible use of veterinary chemicals for anyone working with cattle, sheep or goats.

National registration of veterinary chemicals

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) must register all proprietary veterinary medicines and pesticides used to treat livestock in Australia. A drug is only registered if the APVMA is satisfied that the product does not pose an undue hazard to public health or the environment, it is safe and effective when used according to approved recommendations, and it will not unduly prejudice trade between Australia and its trading partners. On registration, products are classified into a drug schedule, which determines the legal requirements for possession, storage, handling and use. This ensures that the veterinary medicines and pesticides available in Australia, when used as directed, are safe and effective.

Storage

The veterinary drugs used to treat livestock must be stored in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Check carefully for instructions regarding storage requirements such as level of refrigeration and protection from sunlight.

Schedule 4 drugs must be stored in a locked area (room, cupboard, drawer or refrigerator), with access restricted to authorised persons only. Schedule 4 drugs are veterinary prescription only medicines that have the words 'PRESCRIPTION ANIMAL REMEDY' or 'PRESCRIPTION

ONLY MEDICINE' on the label. They are commonly used for treating livestock. Examples are antibiotics, non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, corticosteroids, local anaesthetics and tranquilisers.

Product quality and spoilage

Livestock must not be treated with any veterinary medicine or pesticide that is not in its original container, is contaminated or spoilt in any way, or has passed the product expiry date.



Withholding period

The withholding period for meat is the minimum time after an animal is treated with a veterinary medicine or pesticide before it may be legally slaughtered for human consumption. Withholding periods are set to ensure that chemical residues, if any, in the carcass are below the maximum residue limit allowed for that chemical in food in Australia. In general, slaughter and feeder animals should not be treated with a veterinary drug if the withholding period exceeds the expected date of departure from a property.

Export slaughter intervals

Many veterinary medicines and pesticides now have an export slaughter interval (ESI) listed in addition to the meat withholding period. The ESI is the minimum time recommended after an animal is treated before slaughter for consumption in an overseas country that has a lower maximum residue limit than applies in Australia. ESIs are revised throughout the year. The ESIs printed on your National Vendor Declaration (NVD) forms may be out of date. To ensure that you have the latest version, visit www.mla.com.au/esi

Off-label use

A drug is used 'off-label' if it is used other than strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's label or product insert. Off-label use of a veterinary medicine or pesticide is not illegal if prescribed by a veterinarian who assumes full responsibility. However, off-label uses that are banned under all circumstances include:

- Using a veterinary medicine or pesticide registered for oral or external use as an injection;
- Using chloramphenicol, organochlorines, diethylstilboestrol or nitrofurantoin antibacterials to treat livestock;
- Using sulphonamide antibacterials, except for sulphadiazine, sulphadimidine, sulphadoxine, sulphaquinoxaline or sulphatroxazole, to treat livestock;
- Using arsenical compounds as an external livestock treatment;
- Using implanted growth promotants (IGPs) other than precisely in accordance with label directions; or
- The use of a product in any manner if the manufacturer's label specifically states that the product is not to be used in that manner.

Record keeping

Element 2 of the Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program requires producers to keep a record of all veterinary medicines and pesticides used to treat livestock. This record must include:

- Treatment date
- Animal identification (individual or mob identification as appropriate)

- Product used
- Dose rate
- Withholding period

Disposal of unwanted drugs and empty containers

Unwanted drugs and empty drug containers must be disposed of in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and local environment protection authority requirements.

Treatment checklist

It is important to think carefully before treating livestock with any veterinary medicine or pesticide. A useful checklist is as follows:

- Is treatment really necessary?
- Will treated animals get an effective dose and course of treatment?
- Are there likely to be adverse side effects?
- Is there a better treatment alternative?

Try to restrict veterinary drug use to situations where treatment is clearly necessary, treated animals will get an effective course of treatment, and there is minimal risk of adverse side effects, including carcass residues.



For more information

Factsheets are available from MLA on the use of veterinary chemicals for *external parasites, fluke and anthelmintics (worm treatments)*, as well as on the use of *anti-inflammatory drugs and antibiotics* in cattle, sheep and goats. To obtain any of these factsheets, or for further information, contact 1800 683 111, visit www.mla.com.au/lqs or email lpa@mla.com.au

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