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Dedicated to the Multiple Use of Public Lands & the American Way of Life

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Veterinary Feed Directive Will Impact Whole Livestock Industry, But Many Aren't Aware of the Regulation

reprinted from the Greeley Stampede

Veterinary Feed Directive will impact whole livestock industry, but many aren't aware of the regulation

Last year, the Food and Drug Administration implemented the Veterinary Feed Directive, or VFD, which will require farmers to get prescriptions on most antibiotics they would normally get over the counter for their livestock feed.

Christine GabelExpand Photo
Brett Kaysen

To learn more about the Veterinary Feed Directive, go to the Food and Drug Administration's website at www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/DevelopmentApprovalProcess/ucm071807.htm. "www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/DevelopmentApprovalProcess/ucm071807.htm.

Regulated under the VFD

The Food and Drug Administration implemented the Veterinary Feed Directive, or VFD, which will require farmers to get prescriptions on most antibiotics that they would normally get over the counter for their livestock feed. The program will begin Jan. 1, 2017.

List of regulated antibiotics:

- Aminoglycosides
- Diaminopyrimidines
- Lincosamides
- Macrolides
- Penicillins
- Streptogramins
- Sulfas
- Tetracycline

What is not regulated under the VFD:

- Ionophores
- Bacitracin
- Bambermycins
- Carbadox
- Other nonantimicrobial drugs or other drugs that are already regulated.

When the Veterinary Feed Directive goes into effect in 2017, it will impact nearly everyone in the livestock industry.

But at the Colorado Farm Show this week, when Christine Gabel, territory business manager with animal health company Zoetis asked a room of farmers and ranchers if they'd heard of it, she was met with silence. Most looked to their neighbors, foreheads crinkled under the brims of cowboy and baseball hats.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



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Beyond the Cattle Guard *Annual Meeting 2016 Overview*

Members enjoyed listening to both Travis McNiven, State Natural Resource Advisor for U.S. Senator John Barrasso and Caroline Lobdell, Attorney and Executive Director of the Western Resource Legal Center.

Travis covered in helpful detail the committees on which the Senator Barrasso serves and that directly affect public land ranching and agriculture. He also explained and clarified the Presidential Memorandum: Mitigating Impacts on Natural Resources from Development and Encouraging Related Private Investment. This 'craftily worded' document could cause havoc down the line in terms of future activities. The wording has the potential to require payment for future possible impacts from planned actions. This bears watching by the Guardians.

Sage-grouse and how it relates to new and amended federal land plans on both BLM and USFS areas. He emphasized that just because the sage grouse was not listed this past fall as 'endangered' it should not be assumed that all is well. These new agency plans and amendments are imbedded with onerous regulations that result in more restrictions and complexities. He underscored how important it will be for permittees to pay close attention to everything that is in their files and to have a copy of their own of all information in their files.

Attorney Caroline Lobdell gave an eye-opening presentation on the various legislative and judicial efforts that are attempting to move things from animal welfare all the way to animal rights.....and animal 'personhood'. These incremental efforts are serious and real. Ranchers are advised to seek out more information and educate themselves and their state and local elected officials of what is happening. Check out: www.wrlegal.org for a place to start.

It was a worthwhile afternoon, and for those of you who missed it.....plan on attending next year and networking with folks on the go and in the know.

Happy Trails! *Kathleen*

Our thanks to those members who have taken a moment to send us your phone number and e-mail addresses. One by one we are improving our data base.

Now for the rest of you little saddle bronc riding leprechauns that are lost in space, we remain hopeful that the luck of March will bring more updates our way.

Please either e-mail UPDATE to: guardians@hughes.net, or mail update to Guardians of the Range, P. O. Box 472, Worland, WY 82401

WE WILL BE BEYOND THANKFUL!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"It's going to impact all of us," Gabel said, surprised and concerned so few people knew about the regulation.

Last year, the Food and Drug Administration implemented the Veterinary Feed Directive, or VFD, which will require farmers to get prescriptions on most antibiotics they would normally get over the counter for their live-stock feed.

Farmers worry this could have dramatic effects on their operations.

Come Jan. 1, 2017, every livestock producer who uses an antibiotic considered important to human health, such as penicillin or sulfa, will have to comply. The regulation covers antimicrobial drugs administered via feed or water, but not via injection. It also will hit every retailer that sells these products and every veterinarian.

The directive was created to limit the use of antibiotics only for disease treatment, control and prevention, rather than for growth or maintenance purposes, Gabel said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, every year in the U.S., at least 2 million people are infected by bacteria resistant to antibiotic treatment, and more than 20,000 people die from these infections. The directive was put in place to mandate judicious antibiotic use in live-stock to reduce the risk of antibiotic resistant bacteria.

That's something nearly everyone should be able to get behind, said Brett Kaysen, dairy productivity specialist at Zoetis.

"At the end of the day, really what we want is the most healthy animals on the farm level to support the most healthy protein going into the food chain," Kaysen said.

Gabel gave a presentation on the first day of the show, and again with Kaysen on the second day of the show, which concluded Thursday. Both of them emphasized animal health already is ranchers' priority; this is just changing the system.

So how will this new requirement look?

As an example, when a dairy cow calves, after the initial feeding, the mother's milk is too valuable for the calf to nurse. That milk is how the farmer makes his money, so the calf goes on a milk replacer, which often is medicated. Medicated milk replacer is one of the feed-grade antibiotic products that falls under the Veterinary Feed Directive. For the farmer to put the calf on this milk replacer, he must get a prescription from his veterinarian, fill it at a distributor who has registered that specific prescription with the FDA and ensured every qualification of the directive is met, then keep the

records of that transaction for two years.

What happens when the dairy cow goes into labor unexpectedly during a blizzard and the prescription isn't ready for the calf's arrival? Filling a prescription isn't a same-day process, said Stuart Gebauer, sales manager in the feed division for Agfinity. Farmers and ranchers won't be able to call distributors with last-minute requests like these under the new regulation.

It also means the relationship between producers and veterinarians must be stronger, Gabel said. Veterinarians will be held liable for abuses of directive prescriptions, so if they don't think a producer is using an antibiotic properly, or even if they don't have a good understanding of their operation, they might not issue the prescription to begin with.

"(They) need to be comfortable with you as an operator and your operation," Kaysen said.

Gabel said now is the time to start fostering those relationships. Since the VFD regulation will be in effect by the start of 2017, there's time for both producers and vets to ask each other their questions.

In one of the presentations, Laura Negley of Eads asked what this meant for rural areas with shortages of veterinarians. Gabel didn't have the answer, but she said it's an issue that needs to be addressed in the coming year so livestock producers in small counties aren't left behind.

Several producers also raised concerns about whether the costs of the oversight and potential audits will trickle down to the rancher. The answers on this aren't clear either, and likely won't be until the regulation kicks in.

Nevertheless, Gabel said it's important to raise awareness now, so there are fewer surprises in 2017.

"It's coming," she said, "whether we're ready or not." •

Behind Closed Doors

Share your photos of ranch life with the Guardians! Complete photo credit will be given to you. E-mail your photos and any pertinent caption information to guardians@hughes.net.



Photo by Kathleen Jachowski

GUARDIANS OF THE RANGE

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PAGE 4

GUARDIANS OF THE RANGE

MARCH 2016

Investigative Report on EPA's Gold King Mine Blowout Released by House Committee on Natural Resources Majority Staff

Today, the House Committee on Natural Resources released a Majority staff report detailing information uncovered during the Committee's ongoing investigation of the EPA's Gold King Mine blowout near Silverton, Colorado in August 2015.

The 73-page report documents the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) and the Department of the Interior's (DOI) inaccurate and misleading accounts of the events and decisions that led to the blowout and deconstructs their conflicting accounts. (Report can be viewed at http://natural-resources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/house_committee_on_natural_resources_gold_king_mine_report_feb._11_2016.pdf and http://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/house_committee_on_natural_resources_gold_king_mine_report_appendices.pdf).

"When government actions result in harm, it's our duty to know who was responsible and why decisions failed. They haven't been forthcoming in this regard," Committee Chairman Rob Bishop (R-UT) said. "This report peels back one more layer in what many increasingly view as a pattern of deception on the part of EPA and DOI. We will need heavier

efforts to squeeze out the full truth. The agencies continue to withhold information requested by the Committee. They need to come clean and produce the missing documents."

"After almost six months, we are still trying to get to the bottom of the catastrophic spill and find out who to hold accountable," stated Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Chairman Louie Gohmert (R-TX). "If these EPA employees were anything other than government officials, they would have already been on their way to prison wearing orange jumpsuits. This report points out the many inconsistencies within the EPA's and DOI's reports on the spill and shines a light on their gross incompetence."

The Majority's findings in the report are based on EPA's Internal Review, released on August 24, 2015, its related Addendum, released on December 8, 2015, the DOI's Technical Evaluation of the Gold King Mine Incident, released on October 22, 2015, related documents obtained by the Committee from federal agencies and private contractors, and interviews with multiple individuals with firsthand knowledge of the Gold King Mine, the EPA crew's activities at the site, and the peer review process for the DOI Technical Evaluation. •