

Guidelines for Responsible Use of Antibiotics

The agricultural community has gone beyond the legal requirements of safe antibiotic use and created guidelines to give producers an additional tool to use to make proper decisions about the use of antibiotics.

The American Veterinary Medical Association, veterinary groups that are specific to different livestock species, producer groups and the Food and Drug Administration have collaborated to produce guidelines for safe and responsible use of antimicrobials. These guidelines, designed to minimize the need for antibiotic use and maximize their effectiveness when needed, can be found at <http://www.avma.org/reference/jtua/default.asp>.

These guidelines are used as the basis of production education programs. The National Pork Board, for instance, has instituted the Take Care – Use Antimicrobials Responsibly Program (www.npb.org). Similarly, the guidelines are used in the beef industry's Beef Quality Assurance Program.

Another program to guide safe drug use is the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank (FARAD). FARAD is a National Food Safety Project administration through USDA's Cooperative State, Research, Education, and Extension Service. It is a computer-based decision support system designed to provide producers, extension specialists and veterinarians with practical information on how to avoid environmental contaminant residues and antibiotic residues in food (www.farad.org).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention sponsor the *Get Smart: Know When Antimicrobials Work on the Farm* program aimed at responsible use of antimicrobials on the farm. (http://www.cdc.gov/narms/get_smart.htm). The program is the companion of CDC's Get Smart program designed to promote responsible use of antibiotics in human medicine. Get Smart on the Farm is aimed at reducing emergence of resistant food borne pathogens that could be transferred to people via food or environmental sources.

These programs represent public and private voluntary efforts designed to ensure antibiotics are used effectively to control and treat animal disease while at the same time safeguarding public health.